

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 13 December 1989

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

BILLS (4) - ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills -

1. Travel Agents Amendment Bill
2. Coal Industry Superannuation Bill
3. Business Franchise (Tobacco) Amendment Bill
4. Construction Industry Portable Paid Long Service Leave Amendment Bill.

PETITION - GOVERNMENT BUSINESS DEALINGS

Losses Concern - Election Enforcement

Hon Barry House presented a petition bearing the signatures of 28 citizens of Western Australia who, being deeply disturbed at the public disclosures of losses by the Government of hundreds of millions of dollars in various business dealings, call on the Liberal and National Parties to take action to force an election so that the Government may again be judged by the people.

[See paper No 801.]

PETITION - VIDEOS

X Rated - Banning Maintenance

Hon M.S. Montgomery presented a petition from 42 citizens of Western Australia expressing concern that X rated videos may be legalised in Western Australia, and requesting that Parliament maintain the ban on X rated videos as it has a strong obligation to protect women and children.

[See paper No 802.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY - 13 DECEMBER

Nos 32-35, 1 and 5 - Alteration

HON R.G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [2.41 pm]: I seek leave of the House to alter Notice of Motion No 1 appearing on today's Notice Paper so that the question of the establishment of the Standing Committees and the Standing Orders applicable thereto will be dealt with immediately concluding the passage of items Nos 1 and 5 on today's Notice Paper, which are the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill and the Appropriation (General Loan and Capital Works Fund) Bill.

Leave granted.

MOTION - ORDERS OF THE DAY 13 DECEMBER

Nos 32-35, 1 and 5 - Alteration

Hon R.G. PIKE: I move -

That Orders of the Day Nos 32 to 35 for Wednesday, 13 December be taken as Orders of the Day immediately following the third readings of Orders of the Day Nos 1 and 5 and that the question in respect of each of them be resolved prior to any motion being moved to adjourn the House to a date to be fixed by the President.

I have already given an explanation of this motion.

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [2.45 pm]: Mr President, I do not think I have any problems with this, but could you read out again the full effect of the motion that has now been moved?

The PRESIDENT: Hon R.G. Pike has moved that Orders of the Day Nos 32-35 on today's Notice Paper - that is, in relation to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, the Standing Committee on Legislation, the Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs and Statutes Revision, and the Standing Committee Rules - be taken after we have completed the third readings of today's Orders of the Day Nos 1 and 5, and at any time prior to a motion being moved that the House be adjourned to a date to be fixed.

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [2.46 pm]: Mr President, I support the motion moved by Hon Bob Pike. It is, as you suggested, an opportunity for this House to consider the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill 1989 and the Appropriation (General Loan and Capital Works Fund) Bill 1989 before consideration is given to the appointment of the three Standing Committees, plus the committee rules, which were moved by Hon Bob Pike in this House some time ago.

I should advise that the Leader of the House, the acting Leader of the National Party, Mr Pike, Hon Jim Brown, the Clerk of the Council, you, Mr President, and I met some days ago to discuss the mechanics of putting into effect Orders of the Day Nos 32-34 on today's Notice Paper. It was generally agreed at that meeting that there was a broad understanding and acceptance of the propositions, and it was my understanding that the Leader of the House wanted another meeting to consolidate the matters discussed at that meeting held last week.

I discussed the matter with Hon Bob Pike, and in part with the acting Leader of the National Party, and it was generally believed that given the fact that we are coming to the close of this session - although some members are convinced that we will be sitting very early in January - it would not be appropriate to have another meeting, and thereby delay consideration of these matters; and given that a general understanding has been reached, the proper place for further discussion of Orders of the Day Nos 32-35 on today's Notice Paper should in fact take place on the floor of the House so that the necessary action can be taken to put into place the proposed Standing Committees.

There is certainly nothing sinister in that proposition. In fact, my understanding is that Mr Pike has recognised the need for the Government to continue to press to fruition its Appropriation Bills. We do not want the appointment of those committees to delay any action in respect of those Bills; that was the reason for moving this motion today.

Question put and passed.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 December.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral) [2.49 pm]: I commence by looking briefly at the history of this Budget Bill. During the first reading debate, which was a relatively lengthy debate, the Liberal Party sought to defer a determination on the first reading, pending an election. Regrettably at that time the National Party did not support that course of action, and neither did the Government; so while we acknowledge the right of the National Party and the Government not to support it, we regret that an election was not part of the Budget deliberations. The community would like an election.

The Bill went to the second reading, which is the stage we have now reached, and the Liberal Party again indicated it would not support the continuation of the debate on the second reading until the Government was prepared to set up a Royal Commission to inquire into its business activities. Last night I moved that the debate be adjourned to the next sitting of the House, and I was very pleased when the National Party supported that adjournment. I hope that support continues until we are able to achieve the object of the exercise.

Hon Kay Hallahan: Your object.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The reason I did not move the motion that the debate be adjourned until such time as the Government sets up a Royal Commission is because I am not entitled to do that. Motions of that sort, which presume that certain things might happen, do not come within Standing Orders; a member cannot move the adjournment of a debate pending some other action taking place. As a result I was constrained to move that the debate be adjourned to the next sitting of the House, and I shall endeavour to explain the reasons for doing that. It

is still our intention to continue to move for the adjournment of this debate, and we shall continue to do that for as long as we have support from the National Party and until the Government is prepared to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry to investigate a whole range of activities which have taken place since about 1983. When I talk about a Royal Commission, I refer to an inquiry of the Fitzgerald type. Those who have taken an interest in the sort of inquiry which was headed by Mr Fitzgerald will know that that inquiry had greater powers than those available to a Royal Commission.

Hon T.G. Butler: You have all had this drilled into you; you have zombie noodles.

Hon Kay Hallahan: That's why.

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is extraordinary that backbench Government members seem to think that nothing has gone wrong in Western Australia during this Government's term in office. Only last week, in answer to a question by Hon Eric Charlton, which simply asked the Treasurer how much taxpayers' money the Government had lost in four business deals, the answer was given that the sum totalled about \$450 million. The Government has admitted in this House to losing over \$450 million of taxpayers' money, yet members such as Hon Tom Butler think that we have eaten zombie noodles.

We are very concerned about the situation, as are the 40 000 people who put a petition to this House about how a Government could get around to losing \$450 million. That is the sum the Government is prepared to admit to; we think it is more than that, and that is why we want an inquiry to find out how much more is involved. However, the Treasurer and the Premier are prepared to admit that they have lost \$450 million.

Hon B.L. Jones interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Members opposite seem to think there is nothing wrong with that.

Hon P.G. Pandal: That is half the education budget.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Members opposite have their heads buried in the sand.

Hon T.G. Butler: You prove to me anybody has got any benefit out of that and I will eat my hat.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Members opposite have no idea what is going on in the real world. That is why I am standing here asking for a commission of inquiry to find out the exact answers.

Hon T.G. Butler: You want a witch-hunt.

Hon John Halden: That is what it is all about.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Government says, "We have blown \$450 million, but we did not mean to do it; there is nothing wrong, it is all okay. Anybody who wants to know how we did it is engaging in a witch-hunt." How extraordinary!

Hon P.G. Pandal: The stench is unbearable; stinking, rotten Government.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Liberal Party is arguing that we should have an inquiry of the Fitzgerald type; an inquiry with all the powers of a Royal Commission, but in addition it should have a power to overcome the problems of Crown privilege which Mr Fitzgerald came across in the early days of his inquiry. To give the Queensland Government its due, it passed a special Act to give Mr Fitzgerald additional powers which enabled him to inquire into the activities and dealings of Ministers. That is what we require.

Hon B.L. Jones interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: All I have heard from Hon Beryl Jones this year is the occasional snappy interjection, which is disrupting and annoying at times, but I have not heard her make a speech yet.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I hope she will get up some time during the Budget debate and justify to the House how she believes the Government was able to lose \$450 million.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: When I say \$450 million, I am being charitable by using the figures which the Minister used. I think the sum is more than that; but let us accept it is \$450 million. Let us hear Hon Beryl Jones making a speech to justify the Government's actions in that regard and I shall not interject at all.

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The argument we are advancing is the need for an inquiry of this type. It should have the powers to enable it to investigate the activities of Ministers; it should be able to summons Ministers and question them and it should have access to documents which will enable it to know what Ministers have been doing. These are the powers which the National Party Government of Queensland was prepared to give Mr Fitzgerald, even though it knew that at the end of the day it would probably be the loser. The Fitzgerald inquiry was set up in Queensland by the Government which had the most to lose.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Queensland Government suffered the ultimate penalty as a result of its action, but at least it had the guts to have the inquiry and to give it the powers it needed to get to the bottom of all the dealings. Here we do not have so much as an apology for the Government's having blown \$450 million of our money.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am not going to warn any member, but I shall take some action against the next member who interjects. I have been saying this all the week, but it seems that either some members have defective hearing, or they are deliberately setting out to defy the Chair. If members defy the Chair they will suffer the penalty. There are to be no interjections. If there are interjections I shall take some action. Members will not be able to point a finger at me; they have been warned.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The taxpayers of Western Australia have had not so much as one word of apology from this Government for the enormous amount of money it has already wasted - money which could have been spent on a whole range of things. Members should look at the capital works Budget and see what this money could have been spent on in Western Australia. We have had not one word of apology from this Government, let alone a suggestion that an inquiry should be held. Yesterday *The West Australian* carried a story of former Ministers in Queensland who have been charged and who have appeared before the courts. Those courts are full of people who are indignant about the waste of taxpayers' money. They want to see these Ministers get their just desserts. The total amount involved is \$119 000. The Press in the Eastern States cannot wait to report the details of these trials so that they can publish it in their newspapers and show how corrupt the Queensland Government was. That is in respect of only \$119 000! Yet in Western Australia \$450 million was lost without so much as an acknowledgment by the Government or its backbench members that they might have made a mistake. This State deserves, and should have immediately, an inquiry which will enable the people to find out the reasons why all that money has gone.

The National Party moved yesterday, with our support, for the Select Committee on Rothwells, Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd and WA Government Holdings Ltd, headed by Hon Bob Pike, to continue as an Honorary Royal Commission in the event that the Parliament was prorogued. Since that decision was made I have examined the powers of Honorary Royal Commissions to ascertain whether the comments I made in that debate were correct. I discovered that I made a mistake, and that in fact an Honorary Royal Commission has greater powers in relation to certain matters than does a Select Committee. My suggestion was that Hon Bob Pike's committee, if it became an Honorary Royal Commission, would not be able to summons Ministers; but my reading of the powers of an Honorary Royal Commission indicates that it has the power to do that although, as I

suggested a moment ago, the Ministers would probably claim Crown privilege in any event and not turn up. When I looked at those powers it became patently obvious to me that there is no way there will be an Honorary Royal Commission in Western Australia from Hon Bob Pike's committee because there is no way that Hon Joe Berinson or anybody else in this Government would give Hon Bob Pike the powers of an Honorary Royal Commissioner.

Hon R.G. Pike: I would love to have them!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am sure the member would, and I would like him to have those powers too. However, Mr President, I can assure you that there is no way this Government would give those powers to Hon Bob Pike. That is why I now believe there is no intention by the Government to prorogue the Parliament. There is no intention of making the Select Committee into an Honorary Royal Commission, and Hon Bob Pike's committee will continue, as it has done in the past, to meet and deliberate upon matters affecting State Government investments. However, as we all know, that committee is hamstrung by its inability to question Ministers and to obtain files and documents relating to Cabinet decisions. That is why we need an inquiry with greater powers than has the inquiry headed by Hon Bob Pike: We need an Honorary Royal Commission of the Fitzgerald type, as I said before.

It is not just the Liberal Party that is calling for a Royal Commission of the Fitzgerald type; 40 000 signatures appeared on a petition presented here yesterday asking for the same thing, and research done by the Liberal Party indicates that about 60 per cent of the population supports the setting up of a Royal Commission. That research also shows that 93 per cent support the full disclosure of future business dealings - and I am pleased to hear that the Government has at last acknowledged that perhaps in future it will not do what it has done in the past. Interestingly, 55 per cent of the people surveyed said there should be a fresh election; of further interest was the fact that only 25 per cent said the Labor Party should be encouraged to sack Premier Dowding and appoint a new leader. That is quite obviously because, when they looked around to see who would take over the leadership, they came to the conclusion that whoever it was would not be any better.

However, the vast majority of people believe that what the Government has done should be the subject of an in-depth inquiry. That inquiry should consider a whole range of things, in my view, and I will mention these because I do not consider such an inquiry should be constrained merely to examining Rothwells and Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd. I mentioned a series of other issues in my first reading speech but I will mention them again very quickly. I will begin with the question of the Teachers Credit Society and the \$150 million or so which went down the tube. Why did the Government let that society get into the position it did; why did it let that happen? A similar question could be asked about the Swan Building Society, and the millions of dollars lost there which resulted in its being supported by taxpayers' money. How did the Government let that happen? There is also the question of cost overruns for the casino, and I still do not believe we have been told all the answers to the questions that have been raised in regard to that issue.

Hon Mark Nevill: Do you think there should be more regulation of business?

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: What do you think?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Doug Wenn): Order! Members have been given a warning.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am not arguing about the regulation of business, I want answers from the Government. I am interested in what the Government and its Ministers have been up to and what actions it has taken which have resulted in the loss of \$450 million of taxpayers' money - on the Government's own admission. As well, I do not believe that the issue of the Midland Abattoirs has been totally and completely explained.

Hon T.G. Butler: Goodness me!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Hon Tom Butler can put that issue away in the back of his mind, as he did with the Fremantle Gas and Coke Co Ltd and the Swan Brewery, in the hope they would go away, but they will not go away. The Government will get caught one of these days - the sooner the better, but it will. All these sorts of issues will be raised and eventually we will find out the evidence.

The Leader of the Opposition today has given notice that he will move that a Royal Commission inquire into the Police Force - a suggestion virtually made by the Ombudsman. That is another area we should examine: Is there corruption in the Western Australia Police Force, and does it relate to all these other matters? Does the corruption alluded to by Mr Freeman have anything to do with the Government's business dealings? Is there that sort of corruption in the Police Force? We should know that, too.

Hon T.G. Butler: What about grandstanding in the Liberal Party - can you include that?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: What a pathetic statement!

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: The member should cast his mind back to last night, and what Hon Phil Lockyer said about him.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest that Hon Tom Butler sit back and study his speech.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Which we are looking forward to hearing, Mr Deputy President.

The question at the bottom line of all these issues is: Has there been corruption in the way the Government has performed in the last six years?

A Government member: No.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The member does not know that, any more than I do, but there is enough evidence around the place to suggest that what we have in Western Australia will make the Queensland situation pale into insignificance by comparison, yet the Queensland Government had the guts to have a proper inquiry. We need the same in Western Australia, and we will keep seeking to adjourn this debate and adjourn a decision on the Budget until such time as the Government is prepared to do as the Queensland Government did; that is, to set up a proper inquiry to find out just what has been going on in Western Australia.

I want to mention two other matters of considerable concern to me, particularly in one respect, relating to my electorate. In Laverton there is an Aboriginal group called Wongatha Wonganarra. It was operating when I was teaching there 12 or 13 years ago and was set up by the Aboriginal community in Laverton to manage its affairs on a community basis. The people involved in that organisation are very fine citizens - people who set up an organisation that did an extremely good job in Laverton. It did an excellent job in improving relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people but at the same time it was involved in enterprises and activities which were of benefit to the Aboriginal people themselves.

One family was very heavily involved in this; that is, the Murray family who are an Aboriginal family of very fine people in Laverton. Mr Tom Murray, who was brought up at Mt Margaret Mission, has for a number of years been in charge of the Mt Margaret Mission. His daughter Judy has been the manager of Wongatha Wonganarra. Judy Murray is a rather unusual person in that she adopts a very tough approach in areas where many Aboriginal people will not adopt that approach. She organised a situation in Laverton whereby pension and salary cheques and so on were paid directly into Wongatha Wonganarra and all accounts were paid before money was paid to the recipient. I might add that this was done by agreement with the recipient.

This overcomes the problems fringe dwellers have of receiving their money and spending it all before they have paid for food, clothing, rent and things of that nature. Judy Murray was prepared to take the sort of risks associated with that, and in Laverton most of the people, by using the scheme associated with Wongatha Wonganarra, were at least well fed, housed and clothed before they spent their money on anything else. Judy Murray was very tough in respect of the way in which she carried out these activities. She ran Wongatha Wonganarra in a tough way as well; she made sure it balanced its books, did not spend money when it did not have any to spend, and ran efficiently. She purchased computers and learnt how to use them; she ran an efficient and competent organisation. As a result, Wongatha Wonganarra developed a very good name in the Laverton community and Judy Murray is very highly regarded by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Regrettably a month or two ago some people decided the time had come to put an end to that; they decided that having the cheques paid into Wongatha Wonganarra instead of directly to the recipients was not satisfactory and should end. A move was made to sack Judy Murray and unfortunately the numbers were organised in such a way that Judy was sacked. This caused an enormous amount of concern in the community. I took the trouble to ring a few people I thought might be able to help, but nothing has happened to reverse the decision.

I accept that the committee which runs Wongatha Wonganarra is entitled to choose its own manager, but on this occasion the committee has made the wrong decision. Judy Murray's sister, Ruth, wrote a letter to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* in which she said as follows -

I would like to give my views on the issue of Wongatha Wonganarra Incorporated Laverton.

My sister is Judy, former manager of WWI.

The five directors wanted to sack Judy for no valid reason. They gave Judy these small, nit picking reasons and Judy answered each one and no further questions were asked.

The letter goes on to explain what happened; then Ruth writes -

Well Wongatha Wonganarra RIP. It was good while it lasted.

To the people of WA please don't blame us or the full blooded Aboriginal people when taxpayers' money is not spent properly or accounted for; blame the troublemakers and Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

To anyone seeking employment with an Aboriginal organisation, I urge you to consider the task before you do as you may be sorry later. They will use you, then abuse you and DAA will not support you.

On behalf of Judy and the Murray family I thank our supporters and friends for all their support and help in trying to see that justice is done.

That was signed by Ruth Murray of Laverton. That letter summarises in a very succinct way the feelings of people up there. It is regrettable that this was allowed to happen. I am worried that the motivation of those who took over this organisation is not strictly honourable. It was announced recently that a sum of over \$1 million was to be made available to Wongatha Wonganarra to set up a caravan park in Laverton. It is not beyond the realms of likelihood that the reason these new people took over Wongatha Wonganarra was to get their hands on the spending of some of that money. I hope the decision to proceed with the project will not go ahead until Wongatha Wonganarra sorts out its management problems because it has sacked the person who was managerially competent and efficient, and who could do the job properly. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the decision to give the money for the caravan park was made on the basis that Judy Murray was to be the manager.

I want to take this opportunity to say a few words about the airline dispute. As a member representing Mining and Pastoral Region, the airline dispute has been particularly annoying to me. It has meant a number of cancelled trips and has meant that a number of flights I expected would be operating were cancelled. At the outset I wish to make it clear that I do not support for one minute the pilots being given a pay rise of 30 per cent. I do not think the pilots should get a pay rise of 30 per cent, but I do not suggest for one minute they do not have the right to ask for it. I remember clearly in my early days in the Pilbara looking at some of the ambit claims put forward by different unions. There were things like 52 weeks' sick leave a year and \$4 000 a week pay; things of that nature were quite extraordinary and when I read them I could not quite believe them. It was explained to me that the unions go for the whole world in the hope that they might get one-tenth of it; in those days in the Pilbara the unions always got about one-half of it. That is half the reason we still have problems in the Pilbara. However, ambit claims were invented by the unions to set parameters for argument before tribunals. When the pilots asked for 30 per cent, I assumed it was an ambit claim, but they were entitled to make the claim. I do not think the pilots expected to get it any more than I thought they deserved to get it.

Hon T.G. Butler interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: When were they ever given a chance to find out? The most extraordinary set of double standards this country had ever seen came into play. Here we get the Government of the workers - the unions' Government - coming out and taking on the pilots in a way of which Maggie Thatcher would have been proud.

Hon T.G. Butler: You are distorting the facts a little.

Hon N.F. MOORE: When Maggie Thatcher took on the coal unions in Britain members opposite all screamed about what a dreadful use of Executive and Government power it was. However, if members opposite look at what happened in the United Kingdom in respect of the coal miners and at what happened to the pilots in Australia, they will find some close parallels.

Hon T.G. Butler: Did you agree with what happened to the coal miners in the UK?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am not arguing about what the Government is doing. I think it is fine that the Government has at last decided to take some strong action in respect of industrial disputes.

Hon George Cash: But everyone has to be in the same boat.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Exactly. If the same standards were used against the waterside workers or against the iron ore workers in the Pilbara as were used against the pilots, I would be delighted. The Prime Minister of this country was elected to office as the great conciliator, the great arbitrator, the great solver of disputes; he came up through the union movement and became something of a legend in his own time, and became the Prime Minister of Australia arguing about consensus. We all remember back to the great days of consensus when we had taxation summits and summits for everything so people could get together and give their points of view and then they could have a big almighty compromise, and consensus would take over.

Hon B.L. Jones: It certainly helped to pull the country out of the trouble it was in.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Obviously Hon Beryl Jones' knowledge of what is really happening in this country is minimal. When one group of workers - albeit people members opposite might not regard as workers; I am talking about the pilots - decided to go for a pay rise, the Government decided to hop into it. The Government jettisoned all of its principles and exhibited the most extraordinary double standards ever seen in this country. The fact that the pilots were not part of the accord was their decision; the pilots did not want to be part of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and did not believe they were bound by any of the accords negotiated by the ACTU. The pilots believed they were perfectly entitled, as is anybody in this community, to go outside the decisions made by these peak organisations to make a claim, and why should they not? Members opposite live in a world of tripartism, where one says, "The Government, the peak council representing the employers, and the ACTU should all get together and make decisions for every living being in the community." We will talk about that later when we get to the State Employment and Skills Development Authority, where the same sort of thinking comes through - that if one is not part of the peak organisations, or the Government, one does not get a say. Not only do people not get a say but also they are bound to abide by those decisions. So the ACTU and the Government have an accord and every worker in Australia is expected to abide by it. The pilots would not. I do not blame them for that, but they must accept the disadvantages that might occur by not being part of it. That is a double-edged sword effect and they know it. What did the Government do when the pilots said they wanted a 30 per cent pay rise?

In respect of their claim, the pilots decided to impose work bans. They decided to work from nine to five; they did not go on strike. How often do we find other unions in Australia operating work bans of various sorts? Every time we look at a newspaper some work ban somewhere is being applied by some union to get something or other for its membership. It is not an unusual industrial practice; it happens all the time. But we do not find the Prime Minister jumping up and down about that; we do not hear anything at all from the Prime Minister. However, with the pilots' dispute, the Government decided to take very severe action, firstly by cancelling the award; that is, to take away any protection in respect of wages and conditions; and secondly, it supported the suing of employees and the union. Therefore, a court has made an order of millions of dollars against the pilots and the Government suggests the pilots should pay. Initially the Prime Minister was gung ho about

that; he said, "Sue them as quickly as you can." Now that the political flak is starting to fly he is starting to mutter that perhaps the pilots should not pay. An article in this morning's newspaper states that the pilots are likely to have to pay. Which other unions has the Prime Minister allowed this to happen to? Which other unions has he encouraged employers to sue?

Hon T.G. Butler: When did he do that?

Hon N.F. MOORE: At the beginning of the whole debate, if Mr Butler cares to think back. Mr Butler is falling for the same old three card trick; that is, because the Prime Minister has changed his mind he expects everyone will forget what he said in the beginning. The pilots will not forget and nor will I.

Then the Government brought in the military - shades of 1947 when Mr Chifley brought the troops in to the coal mines. At that time the union movement screamed its head off because it was totally against the principles and fundamental beliefs of the union movement. But Bob Hawke brought in the RAAF to fly passengers backward and forward. Then the argument was made that the management should be brought in, so we had management pilots flying aircraft. What happens normally when a union goes on strike and the management starts doing the work? Mr Butler knows as well as I do that we get mayhem. Yet the Federal Government supported the use of management pilots in the airlines' dispute.

Hon T.G. Butler: That is being simplistic.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is. It is the greatest example of double standards I have ever seen. Then the Government decided to fast-track immigration procedures to enable overseas pilots to come in - what Mr Butler would call scabs in relation to construction workers. So the immigration procedures were fast-tracked to bring in overseas pilots to fly aircraft around the country. Only the other night a French pilot was flying an aircraft on which I was travelling from Port Hedland to Perth.

Hon T.G. Butler: Didn't the pilots resign?

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is right. They did that to preserve some financial security after their award had been cancelled. They had no rights left whatsoever so they resigned to preserve their superannuation. Mr Butler knows as well as I do that this is an industrial dispute regardless of what sort of complexion he puts on it.

We have the scab - to use Labor Party terminology - pilots flying aircraft in Australia. That is a situation Mr Butler would not tolerate if any other union were involved. Then the Government decided to compensate the employers. It gave money to the employers to ensure that the downstream effects of the strike would not have secondary effects. In other words, money was paid to the airlines to continue to employ people who had nothing to do as they could not be employed because the aircraft were not flying. That was another extraordinary example of double standards. When has Mr Butler ever supported the abolition of secondary boycotts and supported assistance to people affected by strikes? Mr Butler knows very well that the one reason strikes are effective is that they affect other people who lose their jobs and incomes - the people who agitate to get the strike resolved on the union's terms in the first place. Here we have another abrogation of a basic union principle by the Government's pouring out millions of dollars to its mates in the airlines business - Sir Peter Abeles and Australian Airlines.

Hon T.G. Butler: What do you know about union principles?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I know nothing now about union principles. I thought I knew once but now I find the ACTU sitting on its backside, and all the other unions sitting on their collective backsides watching the dispute go by as if nothing were happening.

Hon P.G. Pendal: Gutless wonders!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Doug Wenn): Order! I ask the honourable member to direct his questions to me and to stop asking Mr Butler questions; he will then not have interjections.

Hon N.F. MOORE: With respect, I was not asking questions. I made the point to Mr Butler because he is important to the union movement. I hope he will understand in the end that we have the most extraordinary double standards ever being applied in this country.

According to union principles I thought workers were entitled to have an award, and to take industrial action. It is a right, according to the union movement, to strike; it is a right to have restrictive work practices, to go slow, and to work certain hours. I thought that was so, until the pilots decided to exercise those rights. I thought the union movement was opposed to using civil law against unions. I thought the union movement was against suing unions and workers individually, yet that is what is happening at this time. I thought the union movement was against bringing in the military, but it was brought in. I thought one union principle was that management did not do the workers' jobs, yet that has happened. I did not think the union movement supported the use of scab labour, yet that is happening. I did not know that the union movement supported compensation for employers in the event that the strikes did not affect other workers, but that is happening.

Hon P.G. Pandal: They have sold everything.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Finally they refused to negotiate with the airline pilots; all the Pilots Federation wanted to do was negotiate outside the accord, and because of that it did not fit in with the cosy tripartite arrangement. So we now have a broken down airline system in Western Australia - indeed, a breakdown throughout Australia - which hardly works at all. It will take decades to recover from this situation.

Hon Mark Nevill: We have a broken down Opposition.

Hon T.G. Butler: The union did not have its members working for the airlines.

Hon N.F. MOORE: They have not, to my knowledge. We have in Australia a situation where the airline system has virtually ground to a halt. It is being run in an unacceptable way; a person can book a ticket and be told 24 hours before the plane leaves that the flight is cancelled due to lack of passengers. We all know the reason the plane is not going is that it has no pilot. On any aircraft these days when the pilot makes an announcement we know that it is a French, a Rhodesian or a New Zealand pilot - not an Australian pilot. I spoke to a flight attendant the other day who said it was his fourth passenger flight since August, so obviously flight attendants have nothing to do.

Hon M.S. Montgomery: They are not being paid.

Hon N.F. MOORE: They are paid a minimal rate. Pilots are exhausted trying to keep up a reasonable schedule, and people say they are worried about the safety aspects of what is happening in the airlines. That is what we have; for some reason or other the Prime Minister of Australia decided it was war when one group of workers had the temerity to ask for a pay rise. The Prime Minister declared war, and it has been war. Both sides will miss out badly.

Hon T.G. Butler: You would have them in gaol.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The member should not be so stupid.

Hon P.G. Pandal: He cannot help that.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is interesting that Hon Tom Butler said that we would have them in gaol, for that is the only union principle that has not been broken yet. A new set of rules has been established for industrial relations in Australia. The rules were determined by the Prime Minister in conjunction with Sir Peter Abeles, and these rules will have to apply to every other dispute in Australia. The unions in the Pilbara yesterday decided not to go on strike just at the moment although they are unhappy with Robe River; they will put it off for a while. We will not see many disputes before the Federal election because the employers in those circumstances will demand from the Government the same support that Sir Peter Abeles demanded for the airlines. If the Government takes on the iron ore workers in the Pilbara using the tactics used in the airline dispute, the country will grind to a halt with a nationwide strike. The Australian Council of Trade Unions will not put up with having those conditions applied to its own members.

My main concern is with the state of the airline system. I fear for the people in it; that is, the pilots and their families, the flight attendants and their families and especially the people involved with Ansett WA. People who have worked for Ansett WA for many years may find themselves without a job and with nowhere to go. Members who fly with Ansett WA would know that it is like a very large family with the same pilots, flight attendants and people attending the counters for many years. I know them well, having flown a great deal; and they are part of the Ansett WA community. I fear that as a result of this dispute this

community will break down. As one attendant said to me the other day, "It will never be the same again." That is a sad comment from a person who has been with Ansett WA for 24 years. I felt sorry for her, as I feel sorry for the company.

I conclude my comments on the Budget by returning to the point at which I started: The Liberal Party believes that this debate should continue to be adjourned until such time as the Government establishes an inquiry of the Fitzgerald-type to inquire into its activities. On the Government's own admission ample evidence exists to justify an inquiry. The people want it; public opinion polls overwhelmingly support that view. It is incumbent upon us in this House to force the Government to do so - unless this House does so, nobody else will do it. The only power that we have, and the only power that the people of Western Australia have, is to establish an inquiry by this House deferring the Budget.

Hon Reg Davies: Hear, hear!

Hon N.F. MOORE: There is no other way in which we could do so. We could move motions in this House until they ran out of our ears, and we could move to extend the life of the Select Committee, but at the end of the day it will not achieve the objective; the Government is not bound to do what this House resolves. The only way in which the Government will budge and give in to this demand is to have its Budget deferred. That is why I strongly ask the National Party to give serious consideration to taking that course of action. I have no doubt that if the National Party were to join us and move to defer the Budget, the Government would establish the inquiry we are seeking as soon as it could get the words on the paper. Once we have that inquiry in place we will once and for all, through an independent assessment, know what this Government has been up to. Usually members finish their remarks on the Budget by saying, "I support the Bill", but I regret that on this occasion I do not.

Adjournment of Debate

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan) [3.35 pm]: I move -

That the debate be adjourned to the next sitting of the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (14)

Hon George Cash	Hon Barry House	Hon P.G. Pandal	Hon D.J. Wordsworth
Hon Reg Davies	Hon P.H. Lockyer	Hon R.G. Pike	Hon Margaret McAleer
Hon Max Evans	Hon N.F. Moore	Hon W.N. Stretch	(Teller)
Hon Peter Foss	Hon Muriel Patterson	Hon Derrick Tomlinson	

Noes (17)

Hon J.M. Berinson	Hon Graham Edwards	Hon Garry Kelly	Hon Bob Thomas
Hon J.M. Brown	Hon John Halden	Hon M.S. Montgomery	Hon Fred McKenzie
Hon T.G. Butler	Hon Kay Hallahan	Hon Mark Nevill	(Teller)
Hon J.N. Caldwell	Hon Tom Helm	Hon Sam Piantadosi	
Hon Cheryl Davenport	Hon B.L. Jones	Hon Tom Stephens	

Pairs

Hon E.J. Charlton

Hon Doug Wenn

Question thus negatived.

Debate Resumed

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan) [3.40 pm]: I had not intended to speak during the second reading debate because I had already spoken at length during the first reading debate. However, I was prompted to do so by Hon Tom Butler's question to Hon Norman Moore asking him who had benefited from the \$450 million loss to which the Government has somewhat belatedly confessed. His knowledge of what action it is proper for a Government to take which has lost \$450 million on a number of quite small transactions is fairly minor if he does not realise that that incompetence alone is grounds for a Government to resign, without needing it to be shown that anybody has benefited from the money. The Government's incompetence alone should cause it to go to the people.

Hon John Halden: The people elected the Government.

Hon PETER FOSS: When this Government went to the people it denied that it had lost that amount of money. Only now, without the slightest apology or explanation, has it confessed that it lost \$450 million on this set of transactions alone, let alone many other transactions such as the Teachers Credit Society debts. Who benefited from the PICL project? That is a very important question to which the answer has not been properly highlighted, either in this Parliament or outside. When the Government acquired its interest in the PICL project PICL was valued at \$400 million, although not all that money was paid by the Western Australian Government. The fact that it has subsequently had to pay that amount of money is neither here nor there, but at that time the Government was putting up only \$175 million by way of acquisition of equity and putting up other money by way of short-term financing. However, the important thing is that the project was valued at \$400 million. Was it worth \$400 million? In the National Companies and Securities Commission report which was tabled in this Parliament after the election it was said, and I quote -

The most valuable asset possessed by PICL was the Government mandate.

If it was worth anything at all it was because of the Government mandate - the fact that the PICL plant could actually be constructed. If that mandate was worth \$400 million - I do not for one moment think it was worth \$400 million - it had been given to Messrs Connell and Dempster mere months before for nothing. Therefore, it was either worth \$400 million and there had been the most outrageous disposal of \$400 million worth of mandate a few months before without any payment whatsoever, or it was not worth \$400 million. If the Government had given Messrs Connell and Dempster the mandate for nothing, it should have been sacked for that alone, but I do not think even the Government would say now that that mandate is worth \$400 million. The NCSC went on to say that it was unable to understand how a value of \$400 million could have been put on PICL in July 1988. It said that the price appears remarkable. Everybody now accepts that it is a remarkable price and that it was not worth \$400 million. Since that time, the Government's partner in that deal, Bond Corporation, has said that PICL had no value whatsoever; the only thing that made it worthwhile, according to Press statements by Mr Beckwith, was the Government's support of it. That view is supported by paper No 344B which was tabled in this House by the Minister for Budget Management slightly ahead of a motion requiring him to table it and in anticipation that he would have to table it.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

Hon PETER FOSS: In paper No 344B, it was said that the value of Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd was dependent on securing finance, which was dependent on the Government giving its support to that finance. Three different sources, the National Companies and Securities Commission, the Bond Corporation and the First Boston Bank clearly showed there was no value to speak of apart from the guarantee by the Western Australian Government. If the Western Australian Government was the one buying PICL, it would not be paying any money for its own guarantee; if anything, the Government should be receiving money. Why on earth would the Government value PICL at \$400 million and spend \$175 million in buying something that had no value?

Maybe I have already lost the members opposite. They may not accept my argument that PICL was worth nothing. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, members opposite may still believe that PICL is worth something. If the members opposite are honest they will accept that PICL is worth nothing. I contend that, at this point, PICL was worth nothing apart from the matters mentioned in the First Boston valuation. If one wants to encourage a petrochemical plant in Western Australia, the best way one would do it would be for a Government to put some money into the plant. However, the \$400 million paid did not go into the petrochemical plant and this point has been missed by too many people.

I will give members an example: I might have a shack at the seaside worth about \$10 000. If I spent \$100 000 it would probably be a worthwhile, marvellous, palatial beach side residence worth \$110 000.

Hon J.M. Brown: Or \$200 000.

Hon PETER FOSS: As Hon Jim Brown pointed out, for the expenditure of \$100 000 I might end up with something worth \$200 000. The Government's equivalent of this action would

be to spend \$100 000 on the shack and then spend \$10 000 doing it up. The person who previously owned the \$10 000 shack would not believe his luck as he would have an extra \$90 000 on top of the \$10 000 it was worth; the person who bought the shack would end up with nothing because the \$10 000 paid for the shack to be demolished. That is what the Government did in this case: It demolished PICL and it has nothing except the land at Kwinana. The Government spent a lot of money and designed a petrochemical plant - and bought black sheets and pillowcases -

Hon B.L. Jones: That is kinky.

Hon PETER FOSS: It is very kinky and I am not sure why the Government did it, but that is the sort of thing it has been doing. The Government did not put \$175 million into the petrochemical plant; it gave that amount to Connell and to Dallas Dempster who had the \$10 000 shack. This point has been missed by most people in Western Australia. The Government did not put any money into the project; it gave \$175 million to two people in this State who have done very nicely out of this Government up to this time. The situation was worse than that.

I will give Hon Tom Butler another example that might be more comprehensible than talking about the multi million dollars concerned with PICL. Someone who decided to buy a corner deli would look at it to earn him a profit of, say, \$70 000 a year. He decides to buy it. He may pay \$20 000 for that deli and would calculate that he could work in the business for a year and have a profit of \$70 000 at the end of the year. That sounds a fairly good deal. He paid the person \$20 000, he works all year, pays the interest on the \$20 000 out of the \$70 000 profit and ends up at the end of the year with \$65 000 - not a bad sort of a deal. It is worth paying \$20 000 to buy into that sort of business.

Hon J.M. Brown: You forgot the legal fees.

Hon PETER FOSS: True. I know Hon Jim Brown has a complex about lawyers because I have only to make a slight movement and he goes berserk. However, he is right; legal fees are a further overhead.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth interjected.

Hon PETER FOSS: He must have had a nasty experience as a small boy.

Let us take the same example of a corner deli from which the buyer will earn \$70 000. However, this time the person selling it wants \$100 000 for the business. That is a different sort of a proposition because we know, with the terrible interest rates that Mr Paul Keating has brought to this benighted country, that the interest payments alone will be worth about \$22 000 out of the \$70 000. The purchaser will probably have to pay money back to the bank - say, another \$10 000 - which leaves \$32 000 to be taken out of the \$70 000. He is not doing very well at this stage. His chances of success in this business have been very much reduced. By putting a \$400 million overload on the price of this project, the Government has converted a total project which would have cost \$600 million into a project that cost \$1 billion - it ended up at \$1.2 billion as costs have gone up. That is rather like buying that deli for half a million dollars because the result is that we are paying over \$100 000 a year in interest and yet we know that the profit is only \$70 000. We can work all year and end up owing the bank approximately \$30 000 to \$40 000. That is the problem we have when we pay too much for something in the first instance. That is what the Government did and it is the reason it could not get anyone with any brains to buy the project or to participate in it. Anyone with any brains would question the reason for paying \$400 million for blue sky. The Government and Bond were not prepared to sell the project for less than the amount of money they had put into it.

Let us assume that Rothwells did not exist: It was sheer financial incompetence on the part of this Government to have become involved, even if its motives were clear, which they were not. It should be sacked for that reason alone. By becoming involved the Government killed the petrochemical project. It represented to the public that what it was doing would assist the project. Anyone with any financial sense would have been aware that what it was doing was making it impossible for the project to go ahead. The Government's transaction was equivalent to a person buying a deli for \$500 000 when it was worth only \$40 000. It lost an opportunity for this State to have a worthwhile industrial project, and that is the crying shame of it all. The Government spent the taxpayers' money killing the project. What it did was

outrageous in financial terms and it was quite wrong; yet, it has never admitted to the State that that is what it did. It told the public the reason it was putting taxpayers' money into the project was to encourage it. Only a financial idiot would have said that. In fact, it did the reverse; it killed off the project!

It would have been bad enough if the Government's sheer incompetence had resulted from its desire to assist the State. Even then, it should have resigned because of what it did. The reason it spent \$400 million on the petrochemical project was because it wanted to bail out Rothwells, which makes the situation even worse. I will explain to members how that came about. The other day I mentioned it was within a fortnight of the Government's virtually taking over the running of Rothwells that the directors of the company were advised nearly two-thirds of its assets - the principal assets being the loans of Rothwells; that is, over \$500 million - were worthless. Not only was there no possibility of the capital being repaid, but also there was absolutely no possibility of the people who borrowed the money repaying the accruing interest, or the interest on interest. That is how pathetic the situation was. Nearly two-thirds of Rothwells' assets were lost.

Who do members think borrowed \$350 million of the \$500 million, which is an awful lot of money? To put it in perspective, \$350 million represents one-third of a house in every street in Perth. For instance, the person who borrowed the \$350 million could have bought one house in every single street of my electorate, East Metropolitan Region. Do members realise that people are crying out for housing? People cannot afford to buy housing and many of them are being driven to the wall because of high interest rates and the taxes imposed by this Government and the Federal Government. Yet, this one person borrowed enough money to buy one house in every street in my electorate or, alternatively, one house in every street in North Metropolitan Region or one house in every street in South Metropolitan Region. The members who represent those regions - half the members in this House - should cast their mind on their regions and consider that in every street they drive down the person who borrowed \$350 million could have owned one house, free of mortgage, even with the price of housing as it is now.

Who was this man? It was Laurie Connell - \$350 million of the loans which did not perform belonged to him. He borrowed that money through one device or another and loaned it to companies associated with him. He blew every single dollar of it. The problem was that it became quite clear that if Rothwells had another balance date where \$350 million worth of bad loans showed up, it would be quite clear to everybody that it was a dud. It was quite clear to the directors within 14 days - I am sure it was clear to some people before that - of the first Government rescue. It would have been quite clear to this Government because its man was there and I am referring to Tony Lloyd, a trusted crony of the then Premier. He is the man who was given some wonderful jobs to which he was so suited - Under Treasurer and a position on the Superannuation Board. I am sure he was admirably qualified for those positions with his agricultural science degree and the time he had spent writing a racing tip sheet for the then Premier - they appreciated that form of gambling. The money was gambled away and those loans had to be got rid of. Members have already heard what happened with the cheques. The net result was that Mr Laurie Connell received from this Government and from Bond, through the assistance of this Government, \$350 million for the equivalent of a \$10 000 beach shack.

Hon T.G. Butler: Or one house in every street in Perth.

Hon PETER FOSS: He received one house in every street in my region in return for one beach shack. I hope Hon Tom Butler is listening to me because he wanted to know who benefited from this deal.

What did Mr Laurie Connell do with \$350 million? He used it to buy \$350 million worth of dud loans. The money was used by Rothwells to satisfy a number of its creditors. After paying some of that money to the State Government, to Bond and to others, Rothwells ended up with only \$17 million. However, it had the effect of turning \$350 million worth of dud loans into \$350 million worth of paid off loans. When Rothwells went bust, as it did shortly afterwards, a liquidator was appointed to the company and he started calling back the money that had been paid out. I ask members to think what the situation would have been for Mr Laurie Connell if the \$350 million of dud loans had not been paid out. It would have meant that companies associated with Mr Connell would have been found owing

\$350 million to Rothwells and Mr Connell and his company would have been called on to pay that amount. It may seem a nice way of putting \$350 million into Rothwells. Had the Government wanted to put \$350 million into Rothwells it could have done so and it would not have run the risk of being asked to put the same amount in again. I will deal with that later in my speech.

The Government not only put \$175 million into Rothwells in a hazardous way, but it had to put in more money because of the money it took out which had been recovered from creditors. Worse than that - the liquidation has no effect on this whatsoever - is Mr Laurie Connell, or the companies associated with him, has been discharged from debts amounting to \$350 million. Hon Tom Butler asked who benefited from this; Mr Laurie Connell has benefited to the tune of \$350 million. He no longer owes \$350 million, his company no longer owes \$350 million and he can say when dealing with the liquidator that the money was paid back in October. What a wonderful gift. How many people in Western Australia would like \$350 million? Hon Phillip Pender for one would like \$350 million; it could be shared rather nicely among members in this Chamber, who would each receive \$10 million - they are a far worthier group of recipients than Mr Laurie Connell! In order to cover up the fact that it had lost \$150 million, this Government decided to do this deal. It was always doing these wonderful, sneaky, clever dick, smart alec deals. It seemed to the Government to be a clever idea at the time and a good way of preventing the people of Western Australia from learning of that loss. The Government succeeded in keeping that information quiet and as a result it won the election. It used \$350 million of taxpayers' money to ensure that it was elected to Government again. Government members may think that is the best value it has received for money spent. Members of the Government want to know who benefited; the Labor Party benefited and the Opposition paid. If Government members do not listen to this message, it is because they do not want to hear. It is the two-monkey trick; they do not want to hear the bad things and they do not want to see the bad things. If they do not understand, it is because they do not want to understand. My comments are absolutely and completely true.

Hon T.G. Butler: If that is the best you can do, you should round it off now. You are absolutely hysterical.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am interested in that reaction from the member because it confirms a point I raised in my earlier speech about the way in which Government members are burying their heads in the sand and refusing to face the facts. I do not think any of the comments I have made have been controverted. In fact, I am surprised not to hear the usual plaintive cry from members opposite that this is old news and they have heard it before. Admittedly, the Opposition has been making those statements for some time, but they have been denied by the Government and by Government members opposite. The Government is now admitting to the truth of those statements, slowly but surely. The Government does not like the Opposition putting these facts together and it does not want to face the truth. Once in a while it should face the truth and it should test this matter by going to the people. If the people were asked whether they believed the Government's statements in this matter, that would be the real test. The Opposition will drag out more of the facts. The facts mentioned today arise from statements given by the Government's investigators, the National Companies and Securities Commission and Bond Corporation, and from the documents tabled in this House. I have not heard anybody deny the facts I have raised, and members opposite know every single one of those facts is true and that, as a result of all its shenanigans, Laurie Connell is \$350 million richer. He is richer by that amount because the Government of Western Australia wished to conceal from the people that it had lost \$150 million in Rothwells and spent it on a company worth nothing. The Government had been told by the Opposition that the company was worth nothing. The Government was wrong and the Opposition was right. The Government wanted to conceal the facts until after the election and it was successful in doing so. The facts are now emerging and the Government had better start facing them. If Hon Tom Butler does not accept the comments I have made about Laurie Connell, he must be blind to the truth.

The other person who benefited from the sale of the beach shack is Dallas Dempster. He had different reasons for becoming involved, and he received \$50 million, with which he was content. I do not know whether many people were concerned that Dallas Dempster received only \$50 million and Laurie Connell received \$350 million. They are both substantial

amounts and I certainly would not mind receiving a consolation prize of \$50 million. The reason for the wide diversity in amounts is that the figures did not matter - they were the amounts needed by those individuals at the time. Laurie Connell needed \$350 million and Dallas Dempster needed \$50 million. The transaction was a blind and the important part was the amount they received finally. It was just a paper transaction; it was not real money, but the taxpayers had to pay ultimately. At the time the Government must have believed there were fairies at the bottom of the garden. It got rid of its worthwhile advisers and surrounded itself with sycophants and incompetents, whose main qualification was some connection with gambling through the then Premier, Brian Burke. The bunch left are hardly much better, and they certainly give no cause for any faith in the economic capacity of this Government. Why was the Government so keen to cover up its loss of \$150 million in Rothwells?

That leads me to an earlier happening involving Teachers Credit Society. Shortly after this Government came to power it amended the Credit Unions Act.

Hon Tom Helm: Is that the first, second or third time?

Hon PETER FOSS: The first time. One credit union was keen to get into the big-time. One of the ways in which the high-fliers and the people who took advantage of this Government in Western Australia succeeded was through the big-time phenomenon. The Premier, Brian Burke, had the vision of turning Western Australia into a financial capital. I concede that he was quite correct in recognising that most of the decisions relating to Western Australia were made in either the Eastern States or overseas, and the financial competence and ability to dictate where money was lent came from a series of decisions made outside this State. Brian Burke's identification of that problem was correct, but his means of carrying his idea into effect were wrong. He established a series of bodies, such as the Western Australian Development Corporation, whereby it was intended financial decisions would be brought back to Western Australia. However, it is necessary to achieve the financial competence before the financial decisions are made. He decided to bring in the financial decisions first, hoping that the competence would come with it. Unfortunately, it did not. Government Ministers got involved with this high-flying; they believed they were big businessmen who could deal with big dollars. They liked to talk of hundreds of millions of dollars with Bond, Holmes a Court and all the other high-fliers around the place, and were deceived by the glamour and glitter of seeming to be big financiers and getting into all sorts of deals.

Hon P.G. Pendal: Champagne socialists.

Hon PETER FOSS: That is right. I illustrated during my speech at the first reading stage that once some people are involved everybody wants to get involved. Teachers Credit Society wanted to get involved and amendments were made to the Credit Unions Act to allow it to enter into commercial loans. Almost immediately after TCS got involved in commercial loans the word went around the business community that the people in charge were mad, and that investors should withdraw their money because, as a result of the way in which TCS was lending funds and to whom, it could not last. It should not have lasted as long as it did, and it did so only because this Government propped it up and did not institute the proper measures to bring TCS into line. We have heard about the Kevin Edwards sequel in this place and in another place with regard to the arrangement he made for further money and credit to be extended to TCS. I think we have all heard of that disgraceful event. Of course, Kevin Edwards had a particular interest in the Teachers Credit Society due to his association with it.

Hon Garry Kelly: When were those amendments made to the Credit Unions Act to undertake commercial loans?

Hon PETER FOSS: I think in 1984.

Hon T.G. Butler: Would you be prepared to make those comments about Kevin Edwards outside the House?

Hon PETER FOSS: No, and Hon Tom Butler knows perfectly well why members are entitled to say these things in Parliament and why it is important that they be said. Freedom of the Parliament is freedom to speak the truth and not be faced with actions brought in order to silence the speaker. Hon Tom Butler knows full well that is the reason behind this right and why this has existed since the glorious revolution, and I hope continues to exist.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Start telling the truth then.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am telling the truth. The member who interjected knows perfectly well that Kevin Edwards was responsible for the extension of credit to Teachers Credit Society, as that has been admitted in this Parliament. The Government therefore had a responsibility for the subsequent crash. It was not just a matter of members of this Government being good fellows and rescuing a number of little people who had lent their money, but a matter of the Government recognising the fact that it was responsible, that it was its failure to police the credit society that caused the problem. That policing was most important because, having allowed that change in lending policy, the Government should have policed that policy more rigorously than before. Banks which become involved in commercial lending are subject to considerable supervision by the Reserve Bank. However, there was no great supervision of Teachers Credit Society; if anything supervision became slacker and slacker, so the Government knew perfectly well that not only was it responsible for that loss occurring due to its failure to supervise but also that many of the people who had invested in the society were teachers, people the Government saw as being good supporters; so there was an even greater incentive on the Government's part to put money into TCS. Having put the money in directly on that occasion the Government did not want to be seen as again putting in money directly, so when the Rothwells rescue came up the Government thought up a new device of giving a guarantee; the Government did not put in money directly but gave a guarantee instead.

Several members interjected.

Hon PETER FOSS: My speech has obviously made an impact on the honourable member, who does not wish to hear the truth. That is why this Government was not willing to be seen as putting money into Teachers Credit Society directly. It sought to avoid the calumny that descended on it over the TCS of putting in money directly and when it came to Rothwells it adopted a new system. That device failed. The Government entered into that deal with full confidence it should not have had because it was clear to anybody who made proper inquiries or had the slightest financial sense that it was not a worthwhile guarantee to give.

Mr Parker, having announced that it was the best thing that he had ever done and that the guarantee would never be called upon, had egg on his face when a fortnight later it became clear that the guarantee was to be called on. The Government tried to cause the guarantee not to be honoured without it appearing that it had actually put any money in. That is where we come to this next step in the whole ghastly cycle, the spending of \$175 million in order to avoid admitting it had lost \$150 million by way of the guarantee. One can see the progression. I have said again and again that it is a tangled web. The Government started by putting money into the TCS directly; it then decided to put up a guarantee so it would not look like the Government was putting in the money directly; to prevent that being seen it entered into this enormous net of money deals that were represented by the PICL purchase. One sees there the way this Government worked. The more it struggled the more it tied itself up in the web of its own tangled dealings. That is why this Government will have to go to the people; because it will never get clear of that web. The only way to clear that web is the way it was done in Queensland in the recent election; throw out the people who have so entangled themselves that they cannot be trusted ever again about what they are doing. They have to be thrown out; that is the only way to ever get matters straight.

I hope it is understood by Hon Tom Butler why I say it is clear that the principal beneficiary of the PICL deal was Mr Connell closely followed by Mr Dempster. In the case of Mr Connell it involved the discharge of debts to the amount of \$350 million. I repeat that that would buy one house in every street in my electorate. This was done so that the Government would not have to admit to the people of Western Australia that it had blown their money; it cost the people an extra \$25 million to do that; there was \$175 million paid and not \$150 million for the guarantee, plus the cost of bridging finance. It then cost the State the PICL project plus the money that had to be paid back to the liquidator because of the preferential payment. In all we have lost \$440 million in order for this Government to avoid admitting to the people of Western Australia that it had lost \$150 million. That is the disgrace we have before us. That is the way this Government has thrown our money around. The Government gave Mr Connell this wonderful gift of \$350 million just so it did not have to admit it had lost our money.

Members do not have to look far in the Estimates of Expenditure to see the sorts of things that this amount could have paid for. I will take this \$440 million expenditure and see how

many of the Estimates of Expenditure exceed that sum. The Parliament gets only \$7 million. The Premier, and Minister for Public Sector Management get \$76 million, which is slightly more than Mr Dempster got. The Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Resources Development, and the Arts - who is trying to close the opera company - gets \$73 million. What could he have done with \$440 million? The Attorney General, Minister for Budget Management, and Corrective Services comes close with \$416 million. However, we should check that estimate because we would find that most of that is what we are paying for PICL, anyway. The Minister for Local Government, Lands, the Family, and the Aged gets \$54 million. If any member of this House has been to any local government office recently they know how much local government needs money. It is one of the things about which they plague members for, extra money, and members must say that we do not have any money. The Minister for Local Government gets that \$54 million, which is a smidgin more than Mr Dempster got but considerably less than Mr Connell got.

Hon T.G. Butler: Mr Foss, you know that I did not goad you into this speech; you were going to make it, anyway.

Hon PETER FOSS: No, I had decided not to make this speech, but having been asked to make it I could not resist doing so. The Minister for Housing and Planning gets \$36 million, far less than a Dempster. We have had Hon Derrick Tomlinson moving for a Select Committee, the principal cause for which is the lamentable state of planning in this State. Why is it lamentable? Not because of the people in the State Planning Commission; it is not their fault as they do not have enough staff because they do not have any money. They get a miserable \$36 million for planning and housing and yet housing is one of the areas in the most dire need; but housing gets less than a Dempster.

Hon Bob Thomas: A 20 per cent increase in the Budget this year.

Hon PETER FOSS: It still get less than a Dempster; just \$36 million for housing and planning. Dallas Dempster got more than that. The Minister for Agriculture, and Water Resources gets \$113 million. I am sure the members sitting immediately in front of me would like to see more money spent on these two areas. That \$113 million is two Dempsters or one-third of a Connell. That is not bad going. The Minister for Mines and the Mid-West gets \$44 million. We all know how much the nation depends on our mineral resources, yet that \$44 million is less than a Dempster. The Minister for Racing and Gaming, Sport and Recreation and Youth gets \$15 million so the Youth, our future, and the health of our people gets a miserable \$15 million. That is not even one-third of a Dempster.

Hon Graham Edwards: It is \$15 million more than you lot spent on it.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Are you proud of Dempster?

Hon Graham Edwards: I am proud of our record in sport and recreation. You ought to be ashamed of this nonsense.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! There is one person on his feet.

Hon PETER FOSS: The Minister for Economic Development and Trade, and Tourism - all very important things - gets \$57 million. That is a shade more than a Dempster. The Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Works and Services, is allocated \$181 million or half of a Connell. The Minister for Regional Development, Fisheries, and Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs has \$17 million; a third of a Dempster. The Minister for Education, and Aboriginal Affairs, \$1.071 billion; at long last we get three Connells out of this. I am glad to see that somebody gets more than Mr Connell. The Minister for Transport, the Environment, and Parliamentary and Electoral Reform has \$372 million; a Connell. The Minister for Community Services, Justice, and the South West, \$121 million; a third of a Connell. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, \$349.433 million; almost exactly a Connell. We have heard Hon Reg Davies complain about what is happening in the North Metropolitan Region, where there are not enough police; every region is experiencing this problem. One of the reasons is there is not enough money to pay for additional police. If we had not spent that money on Mr Connell, we could have done a tremendous amount for our police. Even one Dempster would have been enough; one Connell would have killed it. The Minister for Labour, and Employment and Training, \$41.735 million; less than a Dempster. The Minister for Health got \$1 171.405 million; again more than Mr Connell, I am pleased to say

Members will now have an idea of the costs that have been incurred by our community

because members opposite wanted to win the last election. That is what this is all about. It is not about wanting to help Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd; in fact, the Government killed PICL, as I have pointed out previously. Members opposite did not want the people to know what was really happening. They did it very well, and were very clever. Why not spend money like that when one wants to win an election? After all, only part of it is the money of members opposite.

Hon Bob Thomas: Tell us how much Bond gave us - \$3.5 million.

Hon PETER FOSS: I would like Mr Thomas to tell us how much the banks gave us, because his party was very free in talking about the huge donations that were given to us by the banks; although I did not see any verification to prove that, but perhaps members opposite have double standards, as has been pointed out by Hon Norman Moore when referring to the world's greatest hypocrite.

Hon P.G. Pandal: They got one-seventeenth of a Dempster from Bond!

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes. I noticed that Hon Julian Grill was asked to make the denial on behalf of the Labor Party. They got him to make a Grillian statement about it, using very carefully chosen words. I would very much like to see the figures as to how much was in cash and how much was in kind, and what the worth of it all was. I would like to see a statement from someone other than Mr Grill; for instance, Mr Berinson. I would like to hear his statement as to whether he would phrase the words quite as clearly as did Mr Grill.

This Government has wasted the money of the people of Western Australia. We now have an admission, in the answers given in this House to Hon Eric Charlton, that the Government has lost \$500 million on absolutely nothing. The Government has nothing to show for it. In fact, it has killed off any chance of there ever being a PICL project. That would in itself be disgraceful, and ground for resignation. If members opposite had any decency, they would resign. That was an enormous amount of money to lose. However, the real reason for the Government's doing this - and this is what makes it so infuriating - was to deceive the people of Western Australia prior to the last election. Members opposite were the principal beneficiaries of that largesse. They were the principal people who benefited from this great splurge of money. Members opposite just spent the money to get back the power, and they could then cover it up and refuse to give out the facts.

Members opposite do not want a Royal Commission because they do not want these facts to come out. They do not want to have to face the people because they now know that the people of Western Australia will realise that a deception has been brought on them by members opposite. Members opposite have been completely deceptive in the way that they have gone ahead. Hon Tom Butler asked who benefited from it. For a start, Mr Dempster got \$50 million, and Mr Connell got \$350 million, but the real beneficiary of that expenditure of money was the Labor Party of Australia, because it enabled it to deceive the people for long enough to get re-elected. That is the answer.

HON D.J. WORDSWORTH (Agricultural) [4.45 pm]: It is usual in the debate on the Budget Bill for members of the Legislative Council to take the Chamber around their electorates, and give them a grand Cook's tour. Fortunately, some members have been able to do that; some have even been able to express a bit of humour in their efforts. Unfortunately, I do not have the stomach for it; in light of the important decision which this House has to make I will not take a long time to go on a Cook's tour.

Hon Tom Stephens: Wasn't it you who used to complain about the introduction of politics to this place? Surely you are not going to introduce politics.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps we finally have to get down to having a bit of politics in this Chamber. I do not think it is any secret that there is really very little this Chamber can do in respect of this Bill, other than to not pass it. We cannot amend the Bill, as we would like to, and we are not able to put riders on it. The only thing left for the Chamber to do is block Supply. In the 20-odd years that I have been in this Chamber, that has been considered only once - and I do not think it is any secret - where during the last year of the Tonkin Government, in the coalition party room, and Sir Charles Court, asked the Liberal and National Party members of this Chamber to block Supply. However, the members of that Chamber did not accept the arguments put up at that time. At this time, not only have 8 000 people marched to Parliament House -

Several members interjected.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: There may be an argument about the number of people who marched, but there can be no argument about how many people signed the petition, because our worthy Clerk had the duty of certifying the number of signatures, and I am sure that he counted them.

Hon Bob Thomas: Do you know that half of the people who marched up here were actually protesting against Mr Foss, not the Government?

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I cannot believe it. The reason those people marched, and signed the petition, was the incompetent financial management shown by this Government. The members of this Chamber have to take note of that public expression. One has to take note of what has been said in this Chamber and elsewhere, but one must also take note of the public's feelings and attitudes at this stage.

The public, of course, never like paying taxes, and they object very strongly to seeing their tax money wasted. If there is a smell of corruption the public will call for an election, and they expect the Cabinet Ministers who were or could have been involved to resign until an inquiry can be held. That has been the standard practice. I could enumerate various Labor Ministers in the Whitlam Government who resigned until their names were cleared. At least three, if I remember correctly, held important Cabinet positions. However, it appears that this Government will not hold an election as requested. Those Ministers who have been involved in this financial incompetence have refused to resign when, under the Westminster system, they should have done so. The Government has bravely endeavoured to ride out the charges of poor and incompetent financial management and involvement in shady deals with Ministers' friends.

Labor members opposite claim that there is no reason for concern. If that is so, what do they have to fear from a Royal Commission? If they have nothing to fear, why should they act in this manner? It seems they protest too much.

Hon Fred McKenzie: It is no good wasting money; a Royal Commission would cost millions of dollars.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: The member belongs to a party which is expert in wasting money - \$450 million of it!

Hon P.G. Pendal: He walked right into that with his big chin!

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Slowly the losses from the various business transactions have been revealed. It has been hard to find them, but this Bill accounts for \$150 million of them. The Government has already admitted to \$440 million-odd, and the story is that the final figure will be well above \$500 million.

I suppose every member must judge corruption by his own standards, and that is the responsibility of every one of us here. Members must look at the facts which have been presented and judge them on the standards that they themselves keep and have been brought up with. I have no doubt where I stand. I will not repeat the evidence, the arguments and the statistics. I need no further proof; it is written in *Hansard*, in the money Bills and tabled documents. It will soon be written in the law courts now that the partners have fallen out. It is written into investment portfolios and Government investment trusts. Even the *The West Australian*, partly owned by the Government, is becoming bolder in its presentations. Historians will have no difficulty with their research. It is now time for action, not for more words. Ministers with accusations hanging over their heads have not resigned, as they should have done under the Westminster system. Calls for a Royal Commission seem to have fallen on dead ears - deaf ears.

Hon P.G. Pendal: That as well; dead wood over there!

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: As members will realise, this debate has gone on for longer than should have been necessary, mainly because Opposition members have tried to give the Government as much opportunity as possible to announce the appointment of a Royal Commission. That has not been forthcoming, so we are now in the position where, as a House of Review, we must use the only power available to us and vote against this Budget Bill. I for one will be doing just that. I owe it to my conscience, to my electors and to the country.

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Metropolitan - Minister for Budget Management) [4.55 pm]: Budget debates are of unlimited scope and subject matter, and that makes a detailed reply impractical.

Hon Max Evans: But very necessary.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: That is the case with many issues which have been raised in this debate, and in accordance with the usual practice I shall ensure that these points are conveyed to the relevant Ministers for their attention.

One central issue, however, must be addressed, and that is the effort by the Liberal Opposition to oppose the passage of the Budget Bill altogether. In this debate the first approach of the Opposition was to argue that the Budget should not be passed until the Government agreed to call an election.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: More recently the argument has been that the Budget should not be passed until the Government agrees to establish a Royal Commission.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Other imaginative conditions have also been put forward by the Opposition to justify the deferral of the Budget process. The Opposition's tactics in this debate have clearly been designed for the same purpose. The long and the short of it is that the real aim of the Opposition has been to find any excuse to reject the Budget without saying that explicitly. Indeed it was fascinating to observe that only Hon David Wordsworth, in the dying minutes of this debate, was prepared to come out and say clearly what the Opposition has all along attempted to do.

At first glance this seems to be a case of 1974-75 revisited. The similarities are impressive. In the first place we have an Opposition party unwilling to accept the result of an election held less than a year ago -

Hon Kay Hallahan: That's right!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: - and champing at the bit to overturn the results of that election.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: In pursuit of that objective we have an Opposition party prepared if necessary to put the services of the State into chaos and discard every principle and convention of our parliamentary system.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: If that were not enough, there is another similarity with 1975, namely that of an Opposition without the nerve to come straight out and call for a vote against the Budget. Instead the Opposition has taken the easy and "subtle" way out, arguing neither to accept nor reject the Budget, but simply looking to defer it in the hope that someone else, perhaps even the Government, will do its work for it.

Those are the similarities with 1974-75, but there are also important differences. In the first place we know that the relative calm which followed the 1974 double dissolution was because the Government voluntarily went to an election which it subsequently won. On the other hand we also know, by marked contrast, of the immense harm done to the Australian community when the Whitlam Federal Government, as it was properly entitled to do, resisted the indefinite deferral of the Budget in the Senate in 1975. A few days ago I referred to a recent statement by John Howard. He said, as was the fact, that the Fraser Government lacked legitimacy.

Hon N.F. Moore: We do not agree with that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Equally significant was his comment -

Hon P.G. Pandal: Tell us about Murphy.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: This matter is not something for Mr Moore to disagree with; this is the experience of a member of that Government. Equally significant was Mr Howard's comment that the Government was conscious of the fact that it lacked legitimacy, and that goes a long way towards explaining the ineffectiveness of the Fraser Government which Liberal supporters acknowledge.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Absolute rubbish!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: There is another important difference between our present position and the Senate obstruction of 1975: At least in 1975 the whole Senate went out at the same time as it forced the lower House to an election. That would not and could not happen here because of our different constitutional positions.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Because you chose not to change the Constitution last year.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the Minister for Budget Management to come to order, for two reasons. Firstly, it is five o'clock and we will now have questions without notice; secondly, and more importantly, I want to remind all members of the comment I made earlier. Some people here seem to be determined, for some agenda of their own - which will be put to the test the next time they interject - to persistently and wilfully disregard the authority of this Chair. I will not say it again, but that private agenda, of one member in particular, will be put to the test very shortly - the next time he interjects.

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Before questions were taken I was indicating the difference between 1975 and this situation in the fact that the whole Senate went out at the same time to force the lower House to an election in 1985. The problem created in our circumstance is that that cannot be done. This was recognised by the National Party, which at least has taken the initiative to move for a double dissolution provision. Members will be aware that the Government supported that. Significantly the Liberal Party did not take that initiative, although it is dragging along reluctantly and is linking its support to a provision to further limit the restrictions of the Bill which provide the trigger for a double dissolution.

In summary, the Liberal Party members of this Chamber are doing everything they can to send other people to an election from the refuge of their safe four-year term. The basic question involved - as I have put to the House before - is whether it is the role of the upper House of this nature to make or break a Government? The answer clearly is no. In our parliamentary system a Government stands or falls on its ability to retain the confidence of the lower House - that is undeniable. While I will not go into the detailed history, I refer again to the enormous disruption in the Australian community with the bitterness and divisiveness which followed the rejection of that view by the Senate in 1975 and by the action of the Governor General at that time.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am prepared to assert that such action as that taken by the Governor General in that year will never be repeated, and neither should it be.

After posing that more general question I now refer to more specific matters to which I undertook to provide responses. Firstly, I refer to the substantial list of questions submitted in advance by Hon Eric Charlton. Members will be aware that a detailed reply to them occupied five pages of last Wednesday's *Hansard*. I turn next to Mr Caldwell's questions: Firstly, he asked the following questions -

Since the Government paid a total of \$33.5 million to the liquidator of Rothwells and only \$22.5 million is accounted for in the Budget papers, what arrangement does the Government have with the liquidator or the National Australia Bank, to get back the remaining \$10.5 million? . . . When exactly does the Government expect to recoup that \$10.5 million? Is there a possibility that that \$10.5 million will not be recovered?

The answer to that question is that under the provisions of a deed between the National Australia Bank and the State of Western Australia, the NAB was to pay the State

\$10.5 million on the various legal provisions being satisfied. All necessary court approvals have now been obtained, and I am advised by Treasury that the \$10.5 million recoup was received from the National Australia Bank last Friday, 8 December 1989. Mr Caldwell then raised another matter when he asked -

The failure to include that \$10.5 million in the Budget papers raises wider questions of the Government's budgeting procedures. Is it the Government's normal practice to show only that revenue it has spent in the Budget papers that it knows it will not recoup and to exclude the money it has spent but expects to recoup in the future? If the answer is yes, how many times has the Government budgeted in this manner and will the Minister provide the full details of all the other items budgeted for in the same manner as it has done with Rothwells?"

In response to those questions, it is not the general practice to include within the Consolidated Revenue Fund or General Loan and Capital Works Fund Budgets payments which are made by way of recoupable advances for various purposes and for the purchase of stores pending issues. Rather, these are dealt with as advances under the Treasurer's Advance Authorization Act. This practice has been followed for many years and prevents the results of the CRF and the General Loan and Capital Works Fund being distorted by receipts and payments in the nature of advances rather than receipts and payments which are of the nature of revenue and expenditure. The amounts outstanding against the Treasurer's Advance Account at the end of each quarter and at year end - being unrecouped advances, stores and temporary overdraft facilities extended to trust fund accounts - are reported in the Treasurer's quarterly statements and the Treasurer's annual statement respectively. The balances as at 30 June in each year since 1981 have been as follows -

	\$ million
1981	28.0
1982	30.9
1983	33.7
1984	27.3
1985	30.9
1986	24.1
1987	49.1
1988	46.4
1989	42.7

I refer interested members to the Treasurer's quarterly statements in the *Government Gazette* for the 12 months ended 30 June 1989, and draw their attention particularly to statement No 11 and note 1 to statement No 10.

Hon John Caldwell also asked a number of questions relating to the debentures and the timetable for their repayment. In response, while the debentures mature in 1997, the State would be looking to pay off the debt as quickly as possible. It is not possible at this stage to set a firm timetable, and the matter will need to be addressed having regard for the Government's budgetary position each year. The honourable member also asked questions as to the details of the debentures by which these moneys were raised. The answer is that WAGH raised \$175 million by issuing seven series A debentures in 1988 at \$25 million each, which are due for payment by 3 October 1997.

In response to the question asking whether the terms of the interest will change on the debentures with the financial year, the answer is no. The further question was asked "If yes, what will the new terms be?" The answer to the "If so" part is, "not applicable", and the full answer is that there will be no change to the interest rates initially agreed upon; these are 13.9 per cent per annum in years one to three, and thereafter the interest periods are to be determined by the holder from time to time in multiples of the year with the interest rate being a margin of 0.25 per cent above the interest rate quoted by Western Australian Treasury Corporation for deposit of a life term.

Another question by the honourable member was in these terms, and I quote -

With regard to the \$4.725 million per annum consultancy fees, to whom was that money paid and why, and for what service was this money paid, and over what period of time?

The answer is as follows -

The \$4.725 million was an estimate of the consulting fees which it was expected would have been necessary in 1989-90. The amount was principally for promoting the involvement of a petrochemical major into the project but also for advice on project financing, technical and commercial advice, legal advice and the reimbursement of fees. With the development that has since occurred, there is likely to be a significant reduction in the amount to be spent on consultancies.

I believe I am correct in saying that the other detailed matters that were raised by Mr Caldwell have since been responded to in questions on notice. If there are any gaps between the two, I would be happy to elaborate further on them. I turn next to additional questions raised on 7 December by Hon Murray Montgomery. He asked -

Referring to question 875, will the Minister give an indication of how long the negotiations currently being undertaken with the contractors will continue? Are the negotiations with those contractors cordial?

The answer is that it is anticipated that negotiations will be completed within a month. Yes, the negotiations with the contractors are addressing the contractual responsibilities and obligations and are cordial. The member also raised questions about payments from the Treasurer's Advance Account and completed that part of his comments by asking whether the Government was prepared to keep the Parliament informed of these sorts of payments from the Treasurer's Advance Account. The answer is yes. Hon Murray Montgomery also discussed the question of ordinary annual services of the Government and asked for some sort of definition of the approach taken on that matter. The answer is as follows -

The Solicitor General indicated in his opinion that the words "ordinary annual service" are borne out of English parliamentary practice. It is pointed out that the most instructive legal considerations of the words is to be found in the opinions of the Commonwealth Solicitor General, Sir Kenneth Bailey, QC, in 1951 and 1961. In these opinions, Sir Kenneth took a very wide meaning of the ambit of the phrase "ordinary annual services of the Government" which he described as, "Those services provided or maintained within any year which the Government may in the light of its powers and authority, reasonably be expected to provide or maintain as the occasion requires through the department of the Public Service and other Commonwealth agencies or instrumentalities." and further, "Virtually any service which the Government is competent to provide pursuant to its powers and authority."

From this it appears that the term "ordinary" is not constrained or conditioned in any way by the amount of the expenditures but by the nature of that expenditure. The Government's recent undertaking will result in some changes to the appropriation process. The Legislative Assembly having, by message, conveyed the Government's unqualified undertaking that -

- (a) no future equity participation by the State in any commercial venture will proceed without prior parliamentary approval;
- (b) appropriations for such future activity will be sought in a separate Appropriations Bill so as to allow each such appropriation to be considered separately and on its own merits and without reference to general budgetary requirements.

In addition, the Legislative Assembly has suggested that the Council join with it in establishing a joint Select Committee on constitutional matters. This could possibly result in some changes to the meaning of "ordinary annual services" of the Government were a definitional approach to be added to the Constitution Act as a result of that review.

Hon N.F. Moore: You are not really sure of the advice you are giving.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Why not?

Hon N.F. Moore: Because you are doing the exact opposite to what you did before. You are now suggesting you will do it quite differently.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It is in accordance with the undertaking of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon N.F. Moore: The undertaking was given, but you are not sure that what you did was right. There is considerable doubt about that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: No, I am not doubting it at all. If we were to engage in a comprehensive constitutional review we might include -

Hon N.F. Moore: You might find you are wrong.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: No, we would not find that we were wrong; we could, if we wished to do so, change the effect of the phrase "ordinary annual services of the Government" by specifying a definition to that effect in the Constitution Act. That is quite a different matter from suggesting there is any doubt about the present effect -

Hon N.F. Moore: There is considerable doubt about possible effects and you know it.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: - and nobody has challenged the view of the Solicitor General in that respect. Given his authority in this area, no-one is in a position to do so. Hon Murray Montgomery raised a much more specific matter related to research, particularly the position with the proposed regional centre of the Department of Agriculture in Albany. The advice I have received on this is as follows -

Hon M.S. Montgomery raised the importance of research to assist the agricultural centre which is of such fundamental importance to the Western Australian economy. In noting that \$245 000 had been allocated in the capital works program for planning fees for the Albany regional centre of the Department of Agriculture, Mr Montgomery was concerned that the lack of facilities might jeopardise a proposed \$6 million or \$7 million research program.

This matter has been raised with the Department of Agriculture and even though the facilities at Albany are in need of improvement no industry research funding will be allowed to slip on this account. Incidentally, the \$6 million to \$7 million referred to by Mr Montgomery relates to a major submission by the Albany regional office of the Department of Agriculture to the Australian Meat and Livestock Research and Development Corporation. Approval has not yet been received from the corporation.

Hon M.S. Montgomery: It would have been received last week.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Perhaps it came after this advice was prepared for me. I turn next to some matters raised by Hon Max Evans. In discussing guarantees, he made the two points, and I quote -

A Bill was then introduced into the House to pick up these guarantees; in other words getting a new way of guaranteeing these debts because the petrochemical people were not prepared to accept that WA Government Holdings Ltd, in its right under the Northern Mining Corporation (Acquisition) Act could give those guarantees.

The second point was, and I quote -

The Burt Commission doubted the credibility of the opinion given by the Solicitor General . . .

The comment on that quote is as follows -

The guarantee provision in the Northern Mining Corporation Acquisition Act is a provision whereby the Treasurer may guarantee the financial obligations of the company. The provision does not extend to WA Government Holdings Ltd being able to give a guarantee under the Act. The Burt Commission did not doubt the credibility of the opinion given by the Solicitor General; the Burt Commission did three things -

- (i) Identified that conflicting legal opinions had been expressed;
- (ii) Stated that the definition itself is not competent to express its own opinion; and
- (iii) Stated that in its view, the Treasurer was quite proper in acting on advice from the Crown Solicitor and the Solicitor General.

A number of questions raised by Hon Max Evans related to the non-availability at the time of the Treasurer's Annual Accounts. I took some measures to expedite the printing of that document; however, it was already well under way but no doubt the State Printing Division,

as soon as it knew of Mr Evans' interest, did the work much more quickly than would otherwise have happened.

Hon Max Evans: You flatter me.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I turn next to the response to Mr Pental's comments and his request for various papers.

In responding to Mr Pental's request for the tabling of a variety of papers relating to a deposit by the State Superannuation Board in Rothwells in January/February 1988. I point out firstly that he based that request on an incorrect premise. He asserted that there were three payments from the Treasury to the Superannuation Board at this time and that is not the case. There was a single payment of \$50 million which reflected a normal flow of funds from Treasury to the board relating to a recoup of employer liability for lump sum benefit payments.

As stated in the answer to question 639 asked by Mr Pental on 17 October, the payment met the State's accrued liability for lump sum superannuation benefits under the Government Employees Superannuation Act and was made in the normal course of business. The liability of the State as at 31 January 1988 was \$50.62 million.

The board then used these funds for a variety of purposes. Some went to operating costs, some went to repaying an overdraft of about \$16 million owed to the Treasury Department, and the balance was deposited in Rothwells. In fact, of the \$50 million the board eventually deposited in Rothwells at this time, approximately \$20 million had already been deposited before the Treasury deposit was received. I am advised that that \$20 million was available to the board for investment as a result of a payment to the board by the State Government Insurance Commission - a payment that reflected the resolution of property transactions in which both organisations were involved at that time. These related to the Central Park Development and the Perth Technical College site and have received wide publicity previously.

I should also draw the House's attention to the fact that, while there was some delay in the repayment of the investment, it was repaid in full and earned the board interest of \$2.925 million.

So, in summary, there were not three payments to the board by Treasury; there was one payment only which reflected a normal transaction. There was no immediate on-lending of those three payments to Rothwells; in fact, the first \$20 million had already been deposited.

I turn now to the specific requests listed 1 to 7 -

1. I will make available the relevant documents. In doing so, I draw attention to a small clerical error in the initial dating of the form 5. This was a simple error corrected by the certifying officer at the time. I am advised by the board also that the cash payment voucher relating to the deposit of \$11.987 million incorrectly describes that deposit as reflecting an SGIC payment when, in fact, it followed the receipt of payment from the Treasury. I will make available a letter from the acting general manager of the board to that effect.
2. I am advised that these payments are made from the Consolidated Revenue Fund as special Act expenditures.
- 3-4. The relevant warrants will be made available.
5. I am advised that the relevant minutes have been searched by officers of the board who report that the only reference to this transaction is contained in item 391 of the minutes of the board meeting of 8 February 1988. The secretary of the board has confirmed that in a note which I will make available and which sets out the relevant reference in full. The complete minutes for the whole period are not tabled for two reasons: Firstly, to do so could place the board at a significant commercial disadvantage given that the minutes contain information which would be of advantage to others in the commercial arena; and, secondly, the minutes deal with personal details of hundreds of individuals relating to superannuation which the people concerned have every right to expect would remain confidential. For example, the minutes deal at length with applications for superannuation; reviews of invalidity benefits; requests for disability benefits; applications for changes in contribution rates

because of medical problems; and discussion of individuals' personal circumstances on loss of employment.

6. I am advised the deposits were secured by commercial bills. The bills were exchanged on maturity until withdrawal.

7. I am advised the decision to invest was taken by the board.

As well as tabling the documents referred to, I refer to the deed of settlement between the National Australia Bank and the State Government. This was previously requested but the tabling of that document was delayed pending the ability to discuss that with the NAB. I will table that subsequently.

In conclusion, the Opposition has said throughout the debate that the Government has not acknowledged the large losses from the transactions they complain about and, when it does acknowledge them, it does not take them seriously. That is absolutely wrong on both scores. Of course the losses are serious. We are making every effort to minimise their impact on Western Australians' living standards. We are also implementing and changing procedures from top to bottom to ensure that this past experience can never be repeated. Therefore, the experiences are acknowledged and we have never done other than acknowledge the seriousness of them.

Hon N.F. Moore: Rubbish!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: The Opposition will not acknowledge that, in spite of these setbacks directly linked to State Government initiatives, Western Australia remains the best State in which to live and has the best State economy in which to invest. This is not the time to talk down the State as the Liberal Opposition delights in doing; there is no justification for doing that. Unfortunately, what has been obscured in this debate is the positive contribution of the Budget to the welfare and living standards of Western Australians.

In spite of the acknowledged difficulties and entirely contrary to past practice in the immediate post-election year, taxes and charges this year have been held down and election commitments have been implemented immediately.

That is the true basis on which this Budget should be judged and it is a basis on which it should be supported. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (17)

Hon J.M. Berinson	Hon Graham Edwards	Hon Garry Kelly	Hon Bob Thomas
Hon J.M. Brown	Hon John Halden	Hon M.S. Montgomery	Hon Doug Wenn
Hon T.G. Butler	Hon Kay Hallahan	Hon Mark Nevill	(Teller)
Hon J.N. Caldwell	Hon Tom Helm	Hon Sam Piantadosi	
Hon Cheryl Davenport	Hon B.L. Jones	Hon Tom Stephens	

Noes (14)

Hon George Cash	Hon Barry House	Hon P.G. Pendal	Hon D.J. Wordsworth
Hon Reg Davies	Hon P.H. Lockyer	Hon R.G. Pike	Hon Margaret McAleer
Hon Max Evans	Hon N.F. Moore	Hon W.N. Stretch	(Teller)
Hon Peter Foss	Hon Muriel Patterson	Hon Derrick Tomlinson	

Pair

Hon Fred McKenzie

Hon E.J. Charlton

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Hon J.M. Brown) in the Chair; Hon J.M. Berinson (Minister for Budget Management) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short Title -

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Unfortunately I am not yet in a position to receive the answers to my queries.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It had been my intention at the completion of my reply to the second reading debate to seek leave to table the documents which I referred to in that reply. I wish to table one batch of documents related to questions provided by Mr Pendal and a further document - the deed of settlement between the National Australia Bank and the State of Western Australia - which goes back to questions which, I believe, were originally asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

[See papers Nos 803 and 804.]

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I want to spend a few minutes on a matter which touches on the tabling of the documents by the Minister for Budget Management in the last few seconds and the document which was tabled by him prior to the dinner adjournment.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I did not table it.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It was a document read by the Minister into the *Hansard* record.

On reading the first document I am reminded of a radio serial I used to listen to as a child. It was called "When A Girl Marries".

Hon George Cash: Was it on the crystal set?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Yes, it was on the crystal set.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It was for those who are in love and those who can remember.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: No, I am sad to say the Minister has even got that wrong. The words were, "For those who are in love and to all those who can remember."

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: No, it was, "For all of those who are in love."

Several members interjected.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It depends on which crystal set one listened to! Perhaps it is because the Minister for Budget Management is a little older than I, that he was more directly concerned about those matters than I would have been.

The point I make is that this matter is a little like the episodes that ran into thousands of, "When A Girl Marries", because we are no nearer to the truth of this matter than Harry Davis was all those years ago in overcoming his marital problems.

At the centre of the complaints made to me with reference to the \$50 million was this: Stripped of all the verbiage and all the side issues, some of which were very important, the central issue was the fact that money was made available out of the Treasury by, we are told, a normal procedure and transferred to the Superannuation Board and then, within a short period, was made available for deposit in Rothwells. The double lot of transactions occurred in the late days of January and the early days of February 1988 - the money leaving the Treasury and then being paid in three amounts by the Superannuation Board into Rothwells. The centre of the whole issue is that the Superannuation Board funds were paid into Rothwells at a time when people knew Rothwells was going down the gurgler. It is very important to remember that because it is at the heart of the issues Opposition members have raised today, and it was very much central to the remarks made by Hon Peter Foss when he argued with Hon Tom Butler about the significance of this.

Members should examine the Minister for Budget Management's statement which we have had for a little over one and a half hours. I refer members to page three of his statement because it contains the central complaint which I maintain creates a position where negligence, and possible criminal negligence, is involved on the part of a Minister or Ministers, and one of those Ministers really had nothing to do, in an official sense, with the Superannuation Board. At the top of page three the Minister said -

I am advised that the relevant minutes -

He is referring to the minutes of the Superannuation Board. He continued -

- have been searched by officers of the board who report that the only reference to

this transaction is contained in item 3.91 of the minutes of the board meeting of 8 February 1988.

Therein is the most damning statement that is possible to be made in these circumstances. The reason is that we are told that a group of deposits totalling \$50.62 million was made with such cursory and casual flavour by the Superannuation Board that it should have the temerity only to have one brief reference; that is, in item 391 of the minutes - that is bad enough in an amount of more than \$50 million - but also that it should be recorded in the minutes well over a week after the deposit was made.

There is the scenario, in all its simplicity: We have a Government which sanctioned that action - I suggest the Government initiated the deposits of \$50 million - and it was not because of the actions of professional officers. I do not think there is a professional officer in the Treasury or the Superannuation Board who would have had the ineptitude to be putting money into Rothwells at that crucial time when it was known that Rothwells was going to the wall.

A Minister was involved in some way and that Minister was Hon David Parker. He was a Minister who had no connection with any of this. Members must bear in mind that he was not the Treasurer at the time and that he did not assume that office until a year later. When I asked, by way of question on notice 642 why Hon David Parker became involved in it the answer to the third part of my question was, "Board members of the Superannuation Fund wished to raise the matter with me." I ask the Minister for Budget Management why the board members would wish to raise the matter with a Minister who had nothing to do with the Superannuation Board. It was a politically motivated action by Mr Parker to put \$50 million of Superannuation Board funds into Rothwells when it was known that Rothwells was going to the wall. The action of the Superannuation Board in this matter is not beyond the realms of negligence either. Are we asked to believe that a transaction of \$50 million, which by now was in the ownership and control of the Superannuation Board, involved only one reference in the board's minutes? We have been told by the Minister for Budget Management that the reference was made on 8 February. I want to pursue that further but I realise my time is running out in this segment. I assure members of the Committee that I will not remain seated until I get some answers as to why Mr Parker was involved and why, for example, a \$50 million Superannuation Board deposit was made when it was known that Rothwells was close to insolvency. At that stage the money was not owned by the State Government. On the Government's admission the money belonged to the State Government's superannuants. However, a decision was made by the board - but I suggest it was politically inspired by Mr Parker - to deposit that money in Rothwells. I would like to know the role of the then Treasurer, Brian Burke. At the other end of the equation is the one board meeting on 8 February when this matter was discussed.

Hon MAX EVANS: I seek to help Hon Phillip Pendal, who was at a disadvantage in that these documents came into our possession some seconds after he rose to speak. I will quote from these documents which should have been given to Hon Phillip Pendal before dinner so that he could peruse them during that break. Hon Joe Berinson discussed them earlier. He was referring to the extract from minutes of meeting No 15 of the Government Employees Superannuation Board held on 8 February 1988 which states -

391. Rothwells Ltd

The Board agreed to seek the Hon. Treasurer's approval for amendment to its approved investment budget, in line with its decision to ratify the following short-term investments in Rothwells Ltd by the purchase of commercial bills:

It continues by detailing the following figures: 29 January 1988, gross amount of \$20 million; 1 February 1988, gross amount of \$18 million; and 2 February 1988, gross amount of \$12 million, providing a total of \$50 million. That refers to seeking an amendment to the approved investment budget to take up commercial bills from a company such as Rothwells. One might ask which company the commercial bills came from, because at a later date many commercial bills lacked credibility; they were handed around like confetti at a wedding and had no value. The board took commercial bills as security for amounts up to \$50 million and it sought approval for an amendment to the investment budget. The board knew it was out of line, and it was retrospectively seeking that approval. This is another example of the business dealings of this Government leaving a lot to be desired. If the same actions were taken in the private sector some heads would roll.

On 15 March 1988 Mr S.V. Tindale wrote, once again retrospectively, to the Treasurer-

On January 29th the Board received payment from Treasury of some \$50 million, being the discharge of a liability from the past services credit of CRF employees who had transferred from the Pension Fund to the new lump sum scheme and had subsequently retired and been paid their lump sums.

It continues -

The Board unanimously agreed to invest these funds in short term commercial bills available in the market at that time. The facility will be fully retired by the end of March. The then Treasurer was absent from Perth at this time and due to an oversight his formal approval was not obtained on his return.

In accordance with Section 13 of the Government Employees Superannuation Act 1987, your formal approval to the above transaction is hereby sought.

That letter was sent at the board's direction requesting a late approval on 15 March of a deed involving \$50 million carried out on 28 January which was recorded in the minutes of the board of 8 February. It must be borne in mind that at this stage Rothwells was in the hands of Tony Lloyd, following his appointment as managing director of Rothwells on 31 December. The Opposition has been led to believe that he was acting on behalf of the Government, and no man would have known better where and how money could be obtained from the Government. He was desperately short of funds at that time as the Government had requested an audit of Rothwells on 31 January 1988 because it thought such an audit would vindicate its decision on the weekend of 24-25 October to rescue Rothwells with a \$150 million guarantee. The comments in that audit report of 31 January leave a lot to be desired.

Although clear answers were not provided earlier, the Government has now admitted that the money came from the Superannuation Board. That is an unlikely body to be involved in these types of investments, particularly when it was necessary for the board to seek approval for an amendment to its approved investment budget. The request was made on 15 March and it was eventually approved. These facts emerged recently when the Press ran an article dealing with issues the Opposition had raised many times in the House last year. The retrospective approval was not given on 8 February - that was the date on which the board discussed the matter. The Treasurer did not approve the investment until 18 March 1988.

The vouchers relating to the drawing of these funds are for different amounts on different dates, the cheque numbers are slightly different but there is a remarkable similarity in the writing on each voucher. If I were a member of the fraud squad I would say the similarity is too great to be coincidental. Identical wording is used on the vouchers and the writing style is similar to the extent that the abbreviated name "SGIC" is used, even though it is recognised as incorrect. I wonder when those vouchers were made out? Was it at the same time that the cheques were drawn? I am within my rights to query these matters and someone may be able to prove me wrong later.

A journal transfer form, dated 1 February 1988, for \$50 million went through the Superannuation Board. That is most amazing and I am sure the man opposite can answer all these queries. The Governor's warrant of approval for the transfer of the \$50 million was received on 1 February, but \$20 million was drawn on 29 January. I wonder what the bank account of the Superannuation Board looked like on 30 January when \$20 million was drawn, bearing in mind that the \$50 million was not approved on the journal transfer form until 1 February. There is another signature from the incurring officer dated 1 May 1988 - I hope that relates to an internal auditor checking the figures on that date.

Hon Phillip Pandal spent a long time on the subject, and I believe it is one of the most important subjects for the Parliament to deal with; that is, the handling of taxpayers' money and its being laundered through the State Superannuation Board into Rothwells. The directors of Rothwells had made a board minute to the effect that the company was in a bad financial position and in November 1988 Tony Lloyd had read the directors' report, yet he was prepared to go the Superannuation Board, which he knew would be receiving funds from Treasury at that time, seeking to deposit \$50 million in Rothwells. It was stated that the facility would be fully retired by the end of March. There is not much chance of that happening. In other words, they requested approval on 15 March and got it on 18 March - at

about the time it was due to come back. It did not come back until June when we know Alan Bond put some money into circulation so it was possible for that to happen. Fortunately for the Superannuation Board and taxpayers the money was not late in coming back like the \$10.5 million from the National Australia Bank which was to have come back in mid-June last year but came back last Friday. The Government got out of its problem with outside help. We must have a complete look at that. The State was at risk for a large sum of money. We know that now from the facts that the Minister tabled and we thank him for that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It is always difficult to have a proper debate on a Bill such as the Appropriation Bill because its subject matter is unlimited and it is impossible to jump from one subject to another in response to requests for highly detailed information from members expecting it to be available during the course of the debate.

Hon P.G. Pental: We have been asking for it for six months, you know.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: No, Hon Phillip Pental has been asking for it for one day, as I will indicate in a moment. In a sense, what we have heard by way of debate in relation to the short title of the Bill was a rerun of the second reading debate. In the course of that debate Hon Phillip Pental raised a number of concerns and made a number of assumptions. Whenever Mr Pental makes an assumption he expresses it with great certainty; he is very definite about it and there is a certain air of authority about what he says. Simply on the basis of that air of authority, he continues thereafter on the basis that his assumption is correct and then draws conclusions from it. We had an experience of that in respect of the Superannuation Board's transactions and there are at least two respects in which the information I was able to provide to the House earlier today indicates that Hon Phillip Pental's information and assumptions were clearly wrong.

One related to his statement that the transfer of funds from Treasury to the Superannuation Board was done in three cheques and not one. He stressed that with a view to underlining his doubts as to whether previous indications that that transfer was in the ordinary course of business were correct. In the event, as I was able to indicate and as the papers indicate, there were not three deposits making up the sum but a single deposit and the transaction was done in the ordinary course of business.

The other matter to which Hon Phillip Pental referred with this air of certainty was that \$50 million went from Treasury to the Superannuation Board and then straight to Rothwells, and that the only reason Treasury transferred it was, in effect, to get it into Rothwells. Information provided to me indicates it did not happen like that at all. In fact, \$20 million had been deposited in Rothwells before there was any transfer from Treasury. Having corrected that, Hon Phillip Pental -

Hon Max Evans: Two days before.

Hon P.G. Pental: Having corrected what?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Having corrected the statement that the \$50 million went from Treasury for the purpose of going to Rothwells with an indication that in fact \$20 million had gone -

Hon Max Evans: In three days.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It does not matter when. Hon Max Evans is looking at these matters microscopically.

Hon P.G. Pental: That is the only way to deal with you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: If Hon Phillip Pental wants his dealings with the information to be treated globally he cannot have it both ways. He asked a series of detailed questions during the course of the second reading debate. I have provided detailed answers. In response to that, Hon Phillip Pental raised matters on the basis that they emerged from the response. Now he has a whole list of new questions which did not emerge in that way at all. In fact, almost all of his original comments are summarised in question 922 currently on the Notice Paper. I take advantage of this occasion to point out that although question 922 is listed on the basis of notice given on 7 December 1989 that must be an error. I know there is some acknowledgment of that. It appeared for the first time on Tuesday, 12 December, and only

reached the department late yesterday or this morning. There are 11 detailed questions in question 922 which are being attended to as speedily as possible. They require consultation with a number of people and when those answers come forward Hon Phillip Pandal will find that his later assumptions were incorrect in the same way as his earlier assumptions have been shown to be in error by the responses we have been able to supply.

Hon P.G. Pandal: They have not been shown to be that at all.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: We have spent an unprecedented time on the first reading and second reading debates. The very matters now being dealt with were dealt with at length during those debates and I would have thought that in 20 to 25 hours of debate we would have exhausted those general complaints or at least come to a point where Hon Phillip Pandal and others, while retaining an interest in them and being prepared to pursue them, would appreciate that they have to be pursued in other ways and cannot be pursued by generalised debate on an Appropriation Bill. There are many such opportunities and question 922 is one example of those opportunities. Mr Pike's committee is another example. I am not suggesting that these matters which concern Hon Phillip Pandal should not be pursued further by him; I am saying that it is not practical, having already spent the better part of that 20 to 25 hours on those and related questions, to again go through that process in a series of 10 minute bursts. We have an Appropriation Bill to deal with here and I believe that the sorts of questions upon questions with which we are now faced ought to be dealt with in a different context than the Committee stage of an Appropriation Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the next speaker, I point out that I allowed the discourse on the short title for the simple reason that the Attorney General had handed over some papers to members in the Chamber and I believed I was quite right in allowing that further discussion. I ask members to be well aware of Standing Order No 90. The facts have been canvassed in the first and second reading stages of the Bill and they should now confine themselves to the Bill before the Chamber.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am prepared to concede, as you have properly pointed out, Mr Chairman, that the matter has been canvassed on many occasions. The difficulty is not that the matter has been canvassed but that no answers have been forthcoming. A very clever trick invariably adopted by the Minister for Budget Management is to say that there is a better place to do these things at some other time. True to form, he has just told us that.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why list question 922?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not want to canvass this other ground; nor do I want a debate on what is right and what is wrong. I want a debate relating to the Bill and I ask members to observe the Chair's direction.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I will certainly do that. The difficulty of accepting the word of the Minister for Budget Management that these things can be adequately dealt with elsewhere is that since 26 May 1988 we have been attempting to establish why that investment was made, but we have received no answers. It has to be some sort of record, because on 26 May 1988, in another place, the Leader of the Opposition asked the then Treasurer, Mr Dowding, about the nature of this \$50 million investment, and we were assured at that time that there was nothing unusual about it. The Treasurer had the opportunity on 26 May 1988 to make comments about this, but he declined to make any observations. From that time until now - a period of about 19 months - the central question has not been answered: Why was a \$50 million investment permitted to be made by the Superannuation Board in Rothwells at a time when Rothwells was known to be approaching insolvency?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Known by whom?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Known by anyone in the financial or business world who made due inquiries, and who had even the most casual knowledge of the market at that stage.

Hon Mark Nevill: Wise after the fact.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Not wise after the fact; it has already been pointed out that within 17 days of the original rescue, Rothwells could not be saved.

Hon N.F. Moore: A disaster waiting to happen.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Yes; if I remember correctly, they were the words used by the National

Companies and Securities Commission. So not only did we begin on 26 May 1988 to get to the bottom of the question of why the investment was made in a merchant bank that was going down the tube, but also we continued those inquiries throughout that year and this year. However, we have still not been told by the Minister for Budget Management - who, I remind members, is no ordinary Minister in the scheme of things; he happens to have a very close association with and responsibility to Treasury - why that investment was made when the Minister knew Rothwells was going to the wall. The second question is what was Mr Parker doing in there? He was not the Minister responsible for Treasury, nor for the Superannuation Board. I ask Mr Berinson whether it does not strike him as passing strange that Mr Parker was in there, when he had no ministerial role or responsibility.

The third question is why did the then Treasurer, Mr Dowding, wait until 15 or 18 March to give his approval? I might say that by that stage, the \$50 million did not look like coming back. That is the best information that is circulating about that investment. Members opposite were fearful that the \$50 million was going to be lost to the Superannuation Board. My evidence for saying that comes out of the mouths of the trustees of the Superannuation Board, who had to admit, in part (4) of the answer to my question 645, that some concern was expressed. This is not just something extraneous to the Budget debate. It is not something we have cooked up because there is nothing worse to dredge up out of the Budget. It is central to the way the Government was acting with money that did not belong to it. Why did the board members wish to raise with Mr Parker the matter of the \$50 million investment? Mr Parker has already admitted to us, in his response to the Parliament, that the board members of the Superannuation Board wished to raise the matter with him. Why did they wish to raise the matter with a Minister who had nothing to do with it? Why did they not ask, for example, Mrs Hallahan, Mr Edwards, or another member of the Cabinet? What was the magic about Mr Parker?

Hon John Halden: This is a fishing expedition.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is not. It is to do with \$50 million that was owned by the public servants of this State. Members opposite were in the process of investing that money in a manner that jeopardised any chance of getting it back.

The next question I raise is which members of the board are we talking about? Did they get on the telephone and say, "Well, David, old mate, we are running short of funds to bolster up Rothwells"? Was the request made by way of formal letters? Can we believe that a \$50 million investment was actually made with so little information that all it could warrant in the board's minutes was one reference, item 391, a week after it had been in Rothwells? Which members of the board got in touch with Mr Parker and said to him, "David, we need some money to put into the ailing merchant bank of our friend, Mr Connell?"

I ask a further question of Mr Berinson: Was that recorded in the minutes? The fact is that it could not have been recorded in the minutes if the statement read out to the Chamber tonight by the Minister is accurate and honest, because he tells us again at page 3, item 5 of his statement that the only reference to this transaction is contained in item 391 of the minutes of the board meeting of 8 February 1988.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am sorry to interrupt the flow, but I wish to raise a totally different matter. I have been asking a series of questions relating to the potential liability of the State to Bond Corporation. On two occasions the answers to some of those questions were refused. They relate to the undertakings given by the State - by the Premier and the Deputy Premier - in letters written to Bond Corporation by which they secured the settlement on Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd. Those letters have been tabled in the Chamber and in another place. They give an undertaking to ensure that guarantees were given by the State. As we now all know, those guarantees were not given; as a result PICL was put into liquidation because it did not have the finances that would have come from those guarantees having been given.

The question I asked of both the Premier and the Deputy Premier some time ago, and which I now ask is whether they would now be prepared to reconsider answering, in view of the fact that the appropriation Bill is before this Chamber, whether they intended to carry out those undertakings at the time that they gave them; whether they did in fact carry them out; and if they did intend to carry them out, why they did not carry them out?

I have also had placed on the Notice Paper a question relating to the potential liability of this State if it is found liable for damages with respect to actions of which Bond Corporation has given notice. The reason I raise this question is that, on the face of it at the very least, it would appear that if Bond Corporation's allegations in the documents which have been tabled are in any way substantiated, Bond Corporation would probably be entitled to get its money back. It is a fairly large amount of money, and it should have been provided for in this Bill, but I do not see any sign of it. Obviously some conclusion has been drawn as to whether the State thinks it is liable, or when it will be liable, and it is important that members should have some idea of the potential liability, even if the Government attitude is that it will not ultimately be held liable. I imagine a responsible Government would at least have taken advice on its chances of success, and on its potential exposure in the event of failure.

I have not asked the Government to tell us how it estimates its chances, though company directors have to state the degree of their potential liability when considering contingent liabilities in their accounts. I would like some idea of the Government's potential liability if it were held liable under those actions, and some idea of the facts which must be known to Bond Corporation. The only people to whom these details are not known are the people of Western Australia. We should be put in a position where we can make our own judgments on whether the State will be liable. From reading the letters tabled in this Chamber, it seems to me that the Government is in a lot of muck. A prudent manager should make some provision for paying something to Bond Corporation. I do not know what the Government's attitude is - perhaps it has not even thought about it, and does not want to think about it - but I am very concerned about the potential for an extremely large exposure to Bond Corporation arising out of those two letters which have been tabled, and possibly other letters of which we do not have any knowledge.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I do not want to be accused of being obstructive on the one hand or of trying to curtail discussion on the other. I very much fear, however, that we might well spend another 20 hours on the short title if we continue in this way.

In questions without notice, it is accepted that Ministers cannot provide detail which is not personally available to them. We have a similar position here.

Hon Peter Foss interjected.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: The member always asks me not to anticipate his later comments; he should not anticipate mine. We could have a limitless number of questions canvassing the same issues which have been canvassed over the last weeks and indeed months, and as a result we will be incapable of reaching a satisfactory conclusion on the basis of Committee procedures. Let me indicate the sort of position we now face. Mr Pental tried to make it sound as though he had been asking the same questions for months.

Hon P.G. Pental: I have too.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Let us consider that proposition. The first question Mr Pental asked was, why was the decision to deposit \$50 million in Rothwells made in January/February 1988 when it was known that the company was in trouble?

Hon P.G. Pental: Right.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: That is part (1) of question 922 which was tabled yesterday.

Hon P.G. Pental: Yes.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I have already indicated that this question is being attended to, but I cannot provide the answers now. I can make some comment on the question; I can say that, in making the statement that it was known the company was in trouble, Mr Pental is engaging in one of his other assumptions, because he is referring to a deposit in January/February, and he knows as well as I do that Rothwells had a special audit conducted which I believe went to the period ending 31 January.

Hon P.G. Pental: That is correct.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It is a matter of record that that audit showed the company to be in a sound position. I shall not comment further on that audit -

Hon P.G. Pental: I bet you won't!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: - other than to say that it was an official audit by a major auditing firm.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: My memory is that the result of the audit was available in March. In any event, can it really be said by Mr Pental that he knew Rothwells was in trouble in January when the auditors obviously did not know? I offer that not in an effort to provide a reply to this question, because I am not in a position to reply to it, but to indicate to the Chamber Mr Pental's tendency to throw in accusations and assumptions which do not stand further consideration. That was the first question Mr Pental asked, and it is part (1) of question 922 which was tabled yesterday.

Mr Pental's second question was, almost in these exact words, "Given that Mr Parker was not the Treasurer, why was he involved?" That is part (6) of question 922.

Hon P.G. Pental: Are you saying I have not asked that question before? Have a look at -

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am saying that these questions were tabled yesterday, the answers are being worked on expeditiously, and they will be provided in the same detailed way as questions have been answered all this session. I cannot give a definitive answer to why Mr Parker was involved when he was not the Treasurer, but I do note that in the papers tabled today, in a memo by the General Manager of the State Superannuation Board dated 15 March 1988, a comment is made that the board unanimously agreed to invest these funds in short term commercial bills available in the market at the time. The facility will be fully retired by the end of March. This is all referring to the deposit in Rothwells over the January/February period. The memo further indicates that "the then Treasurer was absent from Perth at this time, and due to an oversight his formal approval was not obtained on his return."

One reason why Mr Parker might have been involved is that the then Treasurer, Mr Burke, was absent. I will not be bound to it, it is subject to checking, but my memory is that Mr Dowding, as the Premier elect, was absent from Perth at the same time. That seems to offer a hint of why Mr Parker might have been approached, but that must await Mr Parker's advice or the advice of the board members who approached him.

Mr Pental's third question was -

Why, when such deposits/investments are made with the Treasurer's approval, was approval given in March 1988, six weeks after the event?

That is part (4) of the very same question 922 to which I have already referred, and since I have also referred to the general manager's letter of March 1988 which indicates that the Treasurer's formal approval was not obtained on his return due to an oversight, again I say, without committing myself to matters of which I am not personally aware, that that seems to give a decent hint as to the direction in which the eventual reply might go.

The fourth question Mr Pental asked was -

Why did members of the Superannuation Board raise with Mr Parker the matter of depositing funds with Rothwells when he had no apparent connection with the board?

That was part (7) of question 922.

Hon P.G. Pental: Are you saying that I asked those questions only yesterday?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Well, Hon Phillip Pental did.

Hon P.G. Pental: I asked them on 17 October, man, and you did not answer them then.

The CHAIRMAN: Order please!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Hon Phillip Pental could not have asked me then because I would not have known any more than I know now. I am saying I am aware of his question dated 7 December in error but in fact tabled 12 December - that is, yesterday - and I am aware that intensive work is under way to ensure that every one of these questions - and, I might say, this was one of 65 questions tabled yesterday - will receive a proper and detailed response.

Hon Peter Foss: What about mine?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Oh, we must not neglect Mr Foss, and I am sorry that I nearly sat down without referring to what he had to say. Hon Peter Foss has referred to his previous questions as to the potential liability to Bond Corporation in respect of litigation that is currently under way. We have not previously responded to that in terms of estimated liability, for two reasons: The first is that our firm advice is that there will be no liability; the second is that, precisely for the reason that this litigation is on foot, we are certainly not going to be in the business of going into detail or anticipating arguments which might follow in that respect. Our position is that there is not a need to make provision for liability in respect of those actions. That was the reason for our earlier replies and I have to give the same reply now since nothing has changed.

Mr Chairman, I put it to the Committee, seriously, that there are limits to the use to which the Committee stage of any Bill can be put, and that applies to an Appropriation Bill equally, and perhaps especially, given the huge range of separate issues which are theoretically open for discussion. Our duty at this stage is to consider the grant of appropriation to the Government and I would urge members to accept that we should proceed in an orderly way to deal with this Bill itself and not to carry further the generalised sort of discussion which has characterised the first two stages of the Bill - and, indeed, the whole proceedings of the Parliament for the whole of this session. At some point we must move on and make a decision about the appropriation of funds. That is what we are here for and I urge the Committee to accept that, as has been done in recent weeks, detailed questions will receive detailed responses but that must come through a proper course of consideration and not through the debate in which we are now engaged.

Hon PETER FOSS: I must reply to the Minister for Budget Management's statement as to why it is my question asked in September has not been answered. It is a specific question and one which I think should be answered. If the advice to the Government is that it has no liability, that must be dependent upon that still being the case even when these questions are answered, because if these questions are answered and that then exposes the Government to liability, it would be an inappropriate assessment of the Government's situation to say it believes that these questions are not going to be asked in court and the answers will not come out. So if these questions are such that the answering of them does not expose the State to any liability I can see no reason why they cannot be answered.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I have told you what our advice is.

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes, the Minister has told us what his advice is, but for some reason the Premier and the Treasurer will not answer plain, straightforward questions about the dealings that they had with Bond Corporation. If in fact the Government's advice is that it has no exposure I cannot see what the problem is in answering the question.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Would you advise one of your clients in a private action to publish his statement of facts in the Press?

Hon PETER FOSS: If I were a shareholder in a company and I were being asked to approve a very substantial allocation of money by some managers who had not been doing a very good job in the previous year, and I believed that part of that very poor job they did would result in an exposure of at least another \$200 million, I would be saying before I gave it the next dollop of money -

Hon J.M. Berinson: Do you believe that?

Hon PETER FOSS: My belief, on the limited facts available -

Hon J.M. Berinson: That's it! And I will not discuss the State's case, in public, in advance.

Hon PETER FOSS: My problem is that we are being asked to approve a very substantial appropriation. The most concerning part of this entire appropriation, not just for my party but also for the National Party, has been these lumps of money we are being asked to put up for the failure of the Government to conduct its affairs properly in the Rothwells matter. We are being asked to give large dollops of money in respect of liabilities that were incurred without the approval of this Parliament. My concern is that this Government has incurred other liabilities which we will be asked to approve in retrospect. I admit that I have only limited information, but from what I have read it looks as though the Government has

exposed itself to a considerable liability. It may very well be that there are facts I do not know, but I want to know some of those facts.

The Minister must realise that the Government is publicly accountable. It is not just a matter of the State's money or the Government's money, it is the money of the people of Western Australia. Part of the process of getting money out of us is that the Government must account for the money it has already had, and for the money it is getting this time. Part of the money the Government is asking for is to pay liabilities the Government has incurred without the approval of this Parliament. I am concerned, and I think validly, that the Government has at least \$175 million exposed to Bond Corporation. Frankly, I must say the lawyer who advises the Government that it does not have any liability at all to exposure is either extremely brave or foolish because I have never heard a lawyer say, "You have no exposure whatsoever", although he might say the Government has a good case. I do not think even the most optimistic lawyer would think that. Firstly, I do not believe that; secondly, if it is the case that the Government has nothing to fear, why not share with the people of Western Australia and the members of this Parliament the facts which give the Government that assurance that it will not have to pay any money? My concern is that the sparse facts we do have, in particular those two letters which were tabled in the Parliament, are enough to give cause for considerable concern - those two letters alone, and the way in which the Premier has refused to answer them. They are fairly simple questions.

This question was in respect of a letter written by the Premier and read as follows -

- (1) When did the Premier -
 - (a) write; and
 - (b) deliver the letter?

That is a sneaky question to have to answer; it is the sort of question which I would have thought an honest man would have no trouble answering. The question continues -

- (2) Did the Premier make the recommendation referred to in the last sentence of the letter?

Did he do something? He said he was going to make a recommendation; all I asked was whether he had actually made it, but, "Ah no, we're not going to answer a tricky question like that one." The third part of the question read as follows -

- (3) If the Premier made the recommendation, was it acted upon by His Excellency and what, if anything, has occurred as a result thereof?

Again that does not seem to be a tricky or difficult question. I would have thought that such questions could have been asked by Bond Corporation in any litigation, so Bond Corporation will probably find out well in advance of members of this House finding out. The fourth part of the question reads as follows -

- (4) If the Premier did not make the recommendation -

The Premier said he was going to make it; my question was, "If the Premier did not make the recommendation . . ." The question continues as follows -

- (a) did the Premier at the time he signed the letter and at the time he delivered the letter have the intention of making the recommendation referred to -

I will admit that is probably a difficult question to answer if the Premier never intended to make the recommendation. If the Premier did not intend to make the recommendation and had signed a letter to the Bond Corporation saying he was going to make it, I suspect he would not like to answer that question because he would be guilty of fraud. Under those circumstances I can understand the Premier would not wish to answer the question, if that was the case. One hopes that is not the case. The final part of the question reads as follows -

- (b) if so -

That is, if he intended to make the recommendation, and one would sincerely hope that was the case -

- for what reason did he not make the recommendation and on or about what date did he form the intention not to make the recommendation?

Again I would have thought that was a perfectly simple and sensible question. The only part of that question which could cause anyone any difficulty was (4)(a) because if the Premier answers no he would be guilty of fraud. One sincerely hopes that the Premier could answer yes to that question; if he does so, and we will assume for the time being that yes will be the answer, I would have thought that all those answers would be perfectly innocuous but would put me, at least, in a better position to understand the possibility of whether the Government is liable for a large amount of damages. Those questions seem to me to be perfectly reasonable.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What was the answer?

Hon PETER FOSS: The answer was as follows -

(1)-(4)

... On or about 14 October 1988. The balance of this question relates to matters potentially in dispute with Bond Corporation and I do not propose to risk disadvantaging the State in that litigation.

I for one cannot see how he could possibly say that because those questions could be asked of him by Bond Corporation on interrogatory, and apart from (4)(a) - he could still be asked that on interrogatory - I would have thought they would be questions the Premier would be pleased to answer on behalf of the State, not to disadvantage the State but perhaps to give the State some comfort that he had not been guilty of fraud. My main concern is that if the answer to (4)(a) is no, the State would have been guilty of fraud.

My other question - and there were many more questions apart from question 433 - was to the Deputy Premier, and read in part as follows -

(1) Who is the person addressed in the letter as "Dear Peter"?

The answer to that question was as follows -

These matters are the subject of litigation and I do not propose to answer.

There is an honest answer.

Hon J.M. Berinson: At least it is accurate.

Hon PETER FOSS: The question continues -

(2) In what capacity was the letter -

(a) addressed by the Deputy Premier; and

(b) addressed to the addressee?

The answer was as follows -

These matters are the subject of litigation and I do not propose to answer.

The question continues as follows -

(3) What is meant by the term "the 'credit enhancement'" referred to in the first paragraph?

All of these questions clearly related to a letter written by the Deputy Premier - "Dear Peter", dated 17 October 1988 - and all seemed perfectly reasonable questions to ask. I cannot see why the Deputy Premier will not answer them. They are important to me in order to help me make up my mind; I asked that question in September and I asked it again on 12 December, but I received an answer saying in effect, "No, we will not give you any more of an answer." I have since placed a more detailed question on the Notice Paper, which asks for an assessment of the likely damages. At this stage I would not expect to receive an answer to that question, although I hope to have it fairly soon. To me, to say that this is not the time to ask a question is illogical because I asked the questions in a timely fashion in September and here I am in December still lacking a reasonable answer. The very crux of what we are being asked to do - what we object to doing - is the failure to answer such questions.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Firstly, anyone who produces a letter addressed to 197 St George's Terrace, Perth, to "Dear Joe" who asks who Joe might be will be told at once that it is I, Hon J.M. Berinson. I do not think that will help anyone in respect of problems as serious as the ones with which members are dealing. I want to encourage the Chamber to stay with the

issues it faces when it comes to an Appropriation Bill. I know I will be repetitious about that, but at the end of the day members have to decide whether the services of Government will be funded, and this is the way in which they will be funded.

Let me say firstly in response to Hon Peter Foss that of course he is right in saying that no legal advice would be totally unequivocal. Nonetheless, the position with the Government's advice is as I have indicated, and in any event it does not require provision to be made or for appropriations to be made on the basis of guesswork. The Government has firm advice which is favourable to the State - I do not think I put it beyond that - but of a nature which does not lead it to believe that provision should be made at all but certainly not in this Budget. Hon Peter Foss has expressed some anxiety that the Chamber should know what the real commitment in the present Budget is. The real commitment is as appears in the Budget and that is a figure of about \$63 million. That figure has been broken down into its various components on a number of occasions and I do not think I need to go into that again. That represents all known facts and liabilities that will be required to be met this year. Even on Hon Peter Foss' most pessimistic view of the State's position in relation to litigation, there is absolutely no prospect in practical terms of the State being called on for any further liability in this financial year. I think at least Hon Peter Foss will accept that; it is really so obvious -

Hon Peter Foss: You might have to settle.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I will take a punt on it and say -

Hon P.G. Pendal: You have been taking a punt for five years.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I will take a punt on it and say that I do not believe that is a likely course of events in this financial year at all. As for the later matters in Hon Peter Foss' questions, his questions were not tricky. I would not for a moment suggest that his questions were tricky, but the answer was not tricky either. The answer was direct. It was that the Government is engaged in litigation on this question and does not intend to detail its position by way of general public discussion in the Parliament and through the Parliament to the Press, talkback programs and so on. This is indeed a serious issue, as Hon Peter Foss keeps stressing, and that is not the way to deal with it seriously. The Government is not in the position, as a company might be, of having to look at the worst possible prospect and making provision for it. It is quite clear there is no need to make a provision in this year's Budget, and it is this year's Budget with which the Chamber is dealing. At least I wish the Chamber would deal with it; members have now spent over an hour on the short title of the Bill and it appears to me that we have not come down to the question of appropriation.

Just to state the obvious: The Appropriations are not presented to Parliament in order to cover some potential, some possible, some future pessimistic prospect of having to pay out on litigation in which the State is involved. The Appropriations represent a call on the Parliament to provide the funds in by far the majority of the amount involved for the day to day services of the State. The Appropriation Bill will allow the conduct of education, health and law and order services; that is what we come to Parliament to approve.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chamber has gone far enough in this debate on the short title, as has already been pointed out by the Minister when he mentioned about half an hour ago his concern that he was not in a position to answer these questions. It is up to members of the Committee to consider their positions in this matter. If members are not satisfied they can vote accordingly but unfair advantage has been taken on both sides of the Chamber, with me in the Chair, in not getting down to what this place is all about. If members are not satisfied they should vote accordingly. I ask the Minister to wind up his comments.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I will conclude on that point.

Hon GEORGE CASH: In accordance with Standing Orders all members are entitled to speak on clause 1, as the Chairman set out earlier. It seems to me that the Minister is suggesting that we accept the answers he has given to date, jump the various obstacles put in front of him - obstacles in the form of a variety of questions on the Government's spending - and proceed to much smoother waters further into the Bill where the Minister no doubt will feel more comfortable.

I am happy to stay here for as long as it takes to receive the right answers - that is, the true answers to the reasonable questions that are being put. If the Minister is suggesting that he does not believe he has a duty to answer the questions I am sure he will advise this place in

due course. But until such time as the Minister refuses to answer the questions members are entitled to continue to pursue those points.

Clearly the Committee has an alternative available to it; that is, if it is not satisfied with the Minister's answers, if it is not satisfied that he has at easy reach reasonable information that would enable him to give reasonable answers, the Chamber could of course invite the Minister to report progress. It would seem to me that reporting progress would be a more realistic step at this stage of the game than to vote against the Bill because if we decided to vote against the whole Bill it would be thrown out. If that is the wish of the Minister he could also state that position.

Hon Doug Wenn: That shows how confused you are.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Members are entitled to use this Parliament to seek answers from Ministers of the Crown. We have seen in recent days the Minister stand in this place and tell us how much he intended to observe the various recommendations of the Burt report. The Minister has acknowledged that the Parliament is the right place in which to question members of the Executive and as such the Ministers of the Crown. Until such time as the Minister is prepared to give those answers I cannot see our leaving this clause.

I invite the Minister to consider the proposition: If he is looking for more time to seek information to address the questions that have been put to him he has only to mention that to the Chamber and we will accommodate him by requiring that progress be reported.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I can set your mind at rest, Mr Cash. I am not looking for more time.

Hon GEORGE CASH: To skate around and not wish to answer the questions will only drag this process out longer than I anticipated.

Hon T.G. Butler: Don't talk rot; of course you anticipated it.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I doubt whether Mr Butler knows what Bill we are on. That shows his understanding of what is going on in this place.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon GEORGE CASH: The Appropriation Bill seeks an amount of about \$4.2 billion to fund the services of the Government. Members are required to make a decision on whether those funds should be approved by this Parliament. To answer yes, requires as many questions as indeed to answer no; there is as much obligation on members to question the Government that way - even though they might have already decided to support the Bill - as for those who are of a mind to refuse the Government services. The Minister has a duty to this Parliament and we expect him to observe that duty.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I will return to one past matter and then move to a number of new matters. In his last response the Minister made out a case to suggest that it was only yesterday that the nine questions were posed to him.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Eleven questions, in my capacity as representative of the Treasurer.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Thank you. The Minister has helped me tremendously.

Hon Doug Wenn: You need it.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: This matter has been going on for months and months. If the Minister wants evidence of that I refer him to the whole range of questions which I put on the Notice Paper on 17 October this year; that was not the first occasion on which questions were posed and on which he failed to give answers. On 17 October I asked, among other things, why Mr Parker was involved at all. It has taken three full months for the Minister to tell us tonight that Mr Dowding might have been away. Are we seriously being asked to believe that that is the way a major corporation is run, one whose budget is in the realm of \$5 billion?

Hon J.M. Berinson: The member will get a specific reply to question 922.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I have no confidence that we will ever get the answer because we have been trying since May 1988, and in particular since we gave the Government major and detailed questions on 17 October.

Hon N.F. Moore: This is the only way to get the Budget passed.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Once the Budget is gone the pressure is off the Government and it does not need to tolerate in a begrudging way the sort of scrutiny it is under tonight.

Hon George Cash: There will be a notice on the door.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I remind the Minister, lest he forgets, that I asked a question on 17 October that was not answered: Why was Mr Parker involved in the matter at all? We were then told, with words that raised more questions than they answered, "The board members of the Superannuation Fund wished to raise the matter with him." That is going over old ground but I repeat to you, Mr Chairman, we did not get any answers; that is central to what happened in those fateful days over January-February last year. The Minister tries to dismiss all this saying, "You are about right; near enough is good enough", although he said there were a few oversights.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I did not say that at all. I quoted the comment of the General Manager of the Superannuation Board.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I know you did. It is a remarkable display of oversights.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why do you try to put words into my mouth?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I will read to the Minister the words he has read to the Parliament tonight. "I will make available the relevant documents. In doing so, I draw attention to a small clerical error on the initial dating form." He also goes on to say in another part of that answer tonight that another correction is being made. I ask members to bear in mind that we are not talking about \$5 or \$50; we are talking about \$50 million. Therefore, it is a remarkable amalgamation of oversights, errors and corrections that the Minister for Budget Management has had to explain tonight. In the absence of answers I suggest that it is worse than a question of oversight, errors and omissions. I return to my earlier allegation and charge that we have not received the answers that explain this incident away. Something more serious is at stake than a mere question of clerical error, oversight or omission. As a result of the tabling of the documents tonight we can examine the letter sent by Mr Tindale on 15 March 1988 wherein he seeks from the then new Treasurer - Mr Dowding - approval for the \$50 million. That has been at the heart of this dispute and Mr Tindale expresses himself in three paragraphs.

The letter is not remarkable for what it says, Mr Berinson, it is remarkable for what it does not say. Bearing in mind that we are dealing with \$50 million, Mr Tindale asks the Treasurer for his approval in accordance with section 13 of the Government Employees Superannuation Act. Mr Dowding's signature appears under the date where he writes the word "approved". It strikes me as odd, given that the Government knew where this money had been all this time, that nothing in that document indicates that the money found its way into Rothwells. By March 1988, when Mr Dowding's approval was given, the scenario for Rothwells was gloomier than it had been when the deposits were made about six or seven weeks beforehand.

Hon J.M. Berinson: When is it that you are saying it was gloomier?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It was gloomier by 18 March when Mr Dowding gave his approval.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That must have been about the time when the audit was released showing the position.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The Minister is saying that the audit covered the period up to 31 January.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is right.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Is the Minister suggesting that no efforts were made to do something, notwithstanding the fact that it was known only to be a matter of months before Rothwells went under for the last time? The date is close to a time when blind Freddy knew that things were going down the tube. I find it remarkable that Mr Dowding did not approve the document subject to knowing where the money was to go. The truth of the matter is that Mr Dowding knew where the money had been for well over six weeks, and all he was doing was rubber stamping it. In reality the \$50 million had been in Rothwells on or about the first week in February. We are asked to accept that this was a procedure that observed all the proper channels and did not put at risk the \$50 million, and which - as of one week ago from

today - was the subject of papers that were filed on behalf of the State Government Insurance Commission. This is not a level of "pessimism" - to use Mr Berinson's word - about something that is far removed and something that has been settled, nor is it something that will not be revived or called upon, it is a matter that is as current as last week when those papers were filed before the court.

Hon PETER FOSS: I reply to some things said by the Minister for Budget Management. It is clear that he has spent his life in debate convincing himself of issues rather than having to convince somebody else.

Hon Tom Stephens: You insolent puppy!

Hon PETER FOSS: He says that we should not worry about this liability as it is a "mere possibility". I am worried that there should be an allowance made for this. In this year's Estimates for the Minister's own department we see an item which indicates the sort of thing that could happen to this Government in a short measure of time. First of all we see the Rothwells item and the \$22 million expenditure from last year. As recently as 4 February this year we were told not to worry and that no money would go to Rothwells. However, the Government has already spent \$22 million, with the \$33 million minus the \$10.5 million recoup. We are told that that will not be subject to litigation. However, my pessimism is very much justified. In the past the Government indicated that it would deny the writing upon the wall until it could not be denied any longer, yet in this case the Government has already paid out the money. An allocation of \$38 million is to WA Government Holdings Ltd and on 4 February we were told not to worry and that the money was in the bank. Another example in the Estimates is the WA Teachers Credit Society for which there was an allocation of \$25 million and the Government ended up paying \$110 399 000. To tell me that I am worrying needlessly and to trust the Government, and for the Minister to say that he has told us all we need to know and that he has responsibly answered my questions, is nonsense. The Burt Commission on Accountability report said that the Government had to be highly accountable.

Hon J.M. Berinson: With Teachers Credit Society, \$25 million was allowed for because it was understood that that would be the extent of the liability.

Hon PETER FOSS: It does not say much for the Minister's estimates does it?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why should we have allocated \$110 million when we thought it would be \$25 million?

Hon PETER FOSS: We told the Minister about the potential liability under his guarantee at the time and said that an estimate should be made for it. We told the Minister that he would do his money in Petrochemical Industries Co Ltd, and he said that we were wrong.

Hon Tom Stephens: You were not even here.

Hon PETER FOSS: We turned out to be right and the Minister turned out to be wrong.

Hon Tom Stephens: You were down on the Terrace at the time.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am rightly concerned about these letters. The Government will not get done only if it is lucky enough to have somebody take over the Bell Group who is friendly towards it, if Bond or Bell is to go down the tube. I am worried and the Government should not tell me that I am merely tilting at windmills. The Opposition has told this Government time and time again where it has gone wrong. However, the Government has taken the attitude that it knows better and uses excuses such as commercial confidentiality, and then asks whether it can have an extra \$22.5 million for Rothwells, an extra \$85 million for Teachers Credit Society and an extra \$38 million for WAGH - these are the admissions made by the Government. The Government must have had some inclination of the potential of these matters some time ago. The Government must realise that we do not trust it any more - we need to know the answers. The questions I have asked are perfectly simple ones. If the Minister believes that he does not have a liability, I do not why he does not answer the questions. If the questions are answered truthfully, the situation of the liability to Bond Corporation will not change for it can compel the Minister to answer them. The only reason that I can see for the Government not wanting to answer questions is that it does not want us to know the truth because it will reveal that the Minister's statement that the Government does not face a liability to Bond Corporation in the courts in the forthcoming year is

inaccurate. That is what really worries me. The Minister for Budget Management has a liability. It could very well come to a head in the next 12 months because he may suddenly see that that can be settled in the same way as -

Hon J.M. Berinson: Are you suggesting there should be an allocation for it?

Hon PETER FOSS: Firstly, I want to know the facts.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Are you suggesting an allocation?

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes, if I am correct in saying the Government will have to cough up to Bond Corporation in the next 12 months there should be an allocation. However, I do not know the facts. I have enough knowledge to believe that the Government will be liable to Bond Corporation, but I do not have enough facts to be certain about it and I am asking for those facts. The only reason the Minister will not reveal them is that the Government does not want the people of Western Australia to know the truth, not because it does not want Bond Corporation to know, because Bond Corporation either knows or will find out in the course of litigation. The Minister should know that is the way litigation works.

Hon J.M. Berinson: What are we going to find out in the course of interrogation?

Hon PETER FOSS: Questions that have been asked in this place can be asked of the Minister in interrogatories. If they were asked in interrogatories, he would have to answer them. The Government is not protecting the State, it is protecting itself. Every time it has raised the matter of confidentiality it has not been to protect anybody else but to protect the Government's backside.

Hon P.G. Pendal: Correct.

Hon PETER FOSS: Every time the matter of confidentiality has been raised, ultimately the reason the Government does not want information revealed is to protect itself. I do not accept that the answers given by the Premier and Deputy Premier are valid. I consider they are covering up to protect themselves.

Hon Doug Wenn: It would not matter what they said.

Hon PETER FOSS: They are not protecting the State, they are protecting their own backsides.

Regarding the recent settlement involving Exim Corporation and the tractors at Merredin, I notice that the newspapers reported that the terms of that settlement were to be kept confidential. Who in that little group suggested confidentiality as a term of the settlement? I would not be surprised to learn that it was the Government; the only party in that group which would want to protect its backside is the Government. That is one of the suspicions I have.

Hon John Halden: Suspicions of what?

Hon PETER FOSS: Whenever confidentiality is proposed, it is because the Government is protecting its own backside. Members must remember that since the fifteenth century Parliaments have insisted on having accountability. The Government should tell us what it spent the money on. The two items that we sought -

Hon Tom Stephens: Have you forgotten the North West Shelf project?

Hon PETER FOSS: The Government has said that it does not want us to prevent the continuation of the ordinary services of Government. We gave the Government the opportunity to divide this Bill into two parts. A Bill could have been introduced which dealt with all the non-controversial aspects - one which would not have presented any problem - and another one dealing with the controversial matters. The Government was given that opportunity. The reason for the Government's ordinary services being held up is that the Government has refused to divide the Bill into two parts, a procedure which would have enabled us to deal with these controversial matters. The main issues we are concerned about and which we have failed to receive answers on are WA Government Holdings Ltd and Rothwells. Every time these matters come up words such as confidentiality and litigation are expressed, which are lovely words to use but when they are stripped away it is revealed that the Government does not want to tell us anything because it would be extremely embarrassed. It is the Government's own fault that this Bill is in the form it is. It could have

agreed to divide the Bill. It really ought to face up to the fact that it has made its bed and has to lie in it.

Hon MAX EVANS: I thank the Under Treasurer for providing the report of the Treasurer's statements to the Opposition yesterday. In that report there is a heading of Contingent Liabilities. In 1987, contingent liabilities are shown for Swan Building Society, Rothwells and Teachers Credit Society with no amount of money beside them. Did the Government and the Under Treasurer decide to put in contingent liabilities advising that a claim be made against the Government by Bond Corporation which may have had a rider that we have legal advice that this will not be subject to any claim?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Nothing without quantifying it.

Hon MAX EVANS: Without quantifying it. In the normal private business sector, under the Australian Accounting Standards this would have to be done. A person must advise the analysts and the shareholders that he has legal writs served against him. It does not matter whether one wins, loses or draws; the amount of money does not have to be stated. The case can be set out in three or four lines. In the private sector that admission must be made. Was it decided to put that in as a contingent liability? If not why not? I will be asking the Auditor General why he did not. It should have been included. Under normal private sector accounting standards it would have to be done. People are entitled to know that claims have been made against the Government. If the Bond Corporation claim has been left out, how many more have been left out? The National Australia Bank or Clough Engineering or the Japanese Gas Corporation may have further claims against the Government? When I see that one claim has been left out I suspect there might be 20 or 30 left out. We do not know the facts and I would like to know what they are.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I will start with Mr Cash's comments and his demand that I should be prepared to answer questions.

Hon George Cash: My invitation.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Rather, Mr Cash's invitation to answer questions. I am prepared to accept his invitation, or comply with his demand; I am easy about the way it is expressed. However, questions need to be brought within some sort of realistic framework or limit. We are supposed to be talking about the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill here, but so far the discussion has ranged far beyond that and indeed has gone to the very same matters that have dominated discussions for the whole of this Parliament. I accept a duty to answer questions but, quite seriously, members of the Opposition must understand the limitations of that. That is perhaps demonstrated by Mr Cash's further invitation to report progress so that I can reply to the 15 or 20 questions that have been put in various forms and come back tomorrow. We know very well what would happen in that case and this is another invitation I really must decline. Based on the 15 answers tomorrow, we would have another 30 questions and a suggestion that we report progress. The last thing I want to do is to be argumentative or provocative. However, this invitation to report progress is on all fours with the tactic that the Opposition adopted throughout the first and second reading debates; that is, to have one speech and then adjourn; that kills one day, then come back the next day, have another speech and adjourn and that kills another day. In the end what is achieved by that? Nothing will be achieved by my responding to these invitations. Mr Cash knows this as well as I do because for every response I give he will think of another two questions and will make another suggestion that we should report progress.

Let me give members a good example of that. I have already referred to the duplication of the questions that Mr Pental has raised tonight over those that he has put on notice in question 922. Why did Mr Pental bother to put these 11 questions under 922 on notice? Why did he not ask me those as questions without notice?

Hon P.G. Pental: As I did in October.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Why did he not get up during questions without notice and ask me these 11 questions? We all know why. He understood quite well that those sorts of questions could be answered only on notice. Not only do they require the consideration of the Minister in many cases, but question 992, for example, requires reference to members of the Superannuation Board as well and a quite detailed study in some cases of documentary records as well as people's recollections. That is why he put such questions on notice. It is a

reasonable thing to do. I have told him that we will respond to them on that basis. It is for the same reason that the need for examination and inquiry would have made those questions impractical without notice. If it is impractical as a question without notice, it is impractical as a question without notice during the Committee stage. I am saying seriously that, as much as I am prepared to do my best to respond to realistic questions, there comes a point when I have to say these questions are not realistic and we have to make up our minds whether we are going to go through another version of the second reading debate with constant adjournments and limitless prospects of extension, or are we going to -

Hon Reg Davies: Just answer the question.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: - get on with the job. I would be delighted to give Mr Davies the answer to the question. The answer is I do not know.

Hon P.G. Pendal: You are dead right about that. Ignorance is bliss.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon J.M. BERINSON: The second part of the answer is I cannot be expected to know. The third part of the answer is - as Mr Pendal realises - I cannot be expected to know that and that is why he has put the question as a question on notice.

I am conscious of being repetitious and I am nearly as repetitious as members of the Opposition. However, we have to deal with the facts of life.

Questions have been raised by Mr Foss and also by Mr Evans about the listing of the potential liabilities. Mr Foss took us to task for the fact that the appropriation for the Teachers Credit Society was \$25 million and, in the end, the expenditure was about \$110 million from memory. It would have been impossible, when putting that Budget together, to have allowed \$110 million because, at that point, the liability was not known. It is not as though we were trying to avoid an unpalatable truth in a pre-election period because the full extent of the loss became known in the pre-election period. However, it was not known when the Budget was being collated. We have many other experiences in our ordinary expenditure. We put in an allowance for increased wages and salaries in a year - I pluck a figure from the air - of \$60 million. As it happens, in that year there are a series of unanticipated arbitration awards and movements that cost \$95 million. Are we then to be told in the next year that, instead of allowing \$70 million as the Treasury suggests, we should allow \$110 million because last year our estimates turned out to be understated? If they were understated last year, they have to be understated next year so we should not put in \$70 million, although that represents the best judgment of Treasury of the likely movement in wages and salaries, but we should put in \$110 million. A Budget can neither be structured on that basis, nor can it be structured on the basis of potential liabilities which cannot be quantified and where advice is that they should not arise.

Mr Evans asked whether consideration was given to including in contingent liabilities a statement on the Bond litigation. I am advised that, as best the Under Treasurer can recall, consideration was not given to the question at the time that the statement was being collated. However, there is some doubt in any event as to whether that litigation emerged in the period covered by the statement. Mr Evans might have a better idea. Does he know when it was?

Hon MAX EVANS: Events up to the balance date are right at the time of the Auditor General signing. I alerted the Auditor General to those and that is why they were put in. Maybe I should have alerted the Auditor General this time. It was an oversight on my part. I accept the Minister for Budget Management's answer is an honest one. However, are there any other litigations for claims and damages which we should also know about? I hope that this will be rectified in the future. The public is entitled to know. It should have been in there up to the date of the Auditor General signing it.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: In response to the last part of the question, none that I know of and none that the Under Treasurer knows of.

Hon MAX EVANS: Because of the problem that the Auditor General has as the auditor, we would now normally send a letter to the accountant asking whether there has been litigation. I thought he would write to the law firms and ask whether litigation is on the way. The Government should have written to Robinson Cox, its lawyers, and asked whether litigations were outstanding against the Government because very often we do not trust the senior

executives because they might not want the auditor or the shareholders to know. That is how it was normally overcome in the past.

I asked that question because the Under Treasurer is here and I accept his answer. Government accounting is fascinating. I know nothing about it, but I like asking questions because I will learn. I am worried about the fact that the Superannuation Board's receiving \$50 million on 1 February had no relationship to the money that was drawn on 29 January. The date 29 January was a Friday and 1 February was a Monday. The Treasury drew up the Government of Western Australia's journal transfer form, which is a typed document, on 1 February. Can we assume that that might have been drawn up in a rough-hand draft on Friday, 29 January and was typed on Monday or typed beforehand? It seems that 1 February has no relationship with the fact that the Superannuation Board drew \$20 million on the Friday.

I refer the Under Treasurer and the Minister to the vouchers drawn by the Superannuation Board in relation to Rothwells Ltd and the fact that the vouchers were all drawn up on the same day, which I hope was 29 January. All of the writing on the vouchers is exactly the same and it seems unlikely that they were drawn up on different days unless they were all drawn up some weeks later.

Hon J.M. Berinson: But they were all signed by the same person.

Hon MAX EVANS: I know. However, they were all drawn up on the same day and have different dates on them. The suggestion is that, on 29 January, it knew that it had \$50 million coming to it. The Minister for Budget Management tried to tell us that the \$20 million was deposited with no knowledge of the \$50 million - that it was a different transaction. I would like an honest answer to that question.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I am not sure what the question is.

Hon MAX EVANS: The Minister for Budget Management was trying to say before that the \$20 million paid in January was a deposit -

Hon J.M. Berinson: On 29 January.

Hon MAX EVANS: Yes, and it had no relationship to the \$50 million paid by the Government to the Superannuation Board on Monday, 1 February, by the journal transfer form. Is that a non-cash item? Is the Minister saying that the cheque dated 29 January bears no relationship to the moneys that came in on the following Monday?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am advised that so far as the Under Treasurer is aware, the answer is no.

Hon MAX EVANS: I am learning. Another item of concern to me is the Governor's warrant. I am sorry I cannot understand this, but I am not familiar with cash accounting. The Governor's warrant was drawn up on 25 March. An amount of \$50 million was paid out on 1 February.

I cannot understand how the Government operates its accounts. Why was this amount authorised at such a late date? The journal transfer form was dated 1 February and on 15 March - perhaps that is the answer, it was the Ides of March - a letter was sent by Stuart Tindale to the Treasurer requesting his approval. The Treasurer approved it on 18 March and he did not say that it was abnormal. However, the minutes of the Superannuation Board mentioned that it was abnormal. On 25 March the Under Treasurer's signature was put to the document requesting a Governor's warrant for \$50 million which was signed by Gordon Reid. Is that the procedure for a normal payment from Treasury?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am advised by the Under Treasurer that those procedures are in the ordinary course of events and the \$50 million would have been for general purposes and not for any particular payment.

Hon J.N. CALDWELL: I have listened with interest to the debate on the Committee stage of this Bill. We have spent almost two hours on it already. I am not against members asking questions because it is important that they do so in an attempt to ascertain what has been occurring. My role tonight is probably that of the bush lawyer's deputy which is way down the line. I admit that most of this debate is over my head and I am sure it is over the head of most members.

I point out to members that they do not have the right to ask repetitive questions and that has occurred on several occasions tonight. If the Minister for Budget Management does not know the answers to questions, I am sure, and I certainly hope, that he will provide the relevant answers at a later stage.

Christmas is coming and the Christmas spirit is descending on me - I certainly hope that we are not in this place on Christmas Day. Members have had a fair innings on this clause and if members wish to ask further questions they should be questions which have not already been asked.

Hon MAX EVANS: I ask the Minister whether the \$50 million was for a general requisition. If it was, why was it included in the papers in respect of the \$50 million that went to the Superannuation Board? We must assume that the document I have is a copy of the Governor's warrant in respect to that amount. The document states that further supplementation is required to authorise additional payments during the quarter. I wonder how many payments for \$50 million the Under Treasurer authorised during the quarter? This item has had a chequered history and we suddenly find that approval was not granted for it. I wonder whether the Minister wants to rephrase his answer to the previous question I asked.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am sorry, Mr Chairman, I appeared to have encouraged a breach of our requirements in respect of the movement of advisers. I apologise for it, but the Under Treasurer did want to take the opportunity to check with other officers who were more directly connected with the actual document. The Under Treasurer advises that the previous indication I gave was correct and it does not need any amendment. This warrant is one of a number of warrants which together provide the complete requirements for that quarter.

Hon MAX EVANS: Is the Minister saying that this warrant, together with other papers, was given to us by mistake and bears no relationship to the \$50 million of the Superannuation Board?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: There is still no change in the indication that has been given. The \$50 million must be read with the other warrant to arrive at the total provision for that agreement.

Hon MAX EVANS: The Minister will appreciate my position; I am looking ahead to the day when I will be Minister for Budget Management and could be caught, as he has been, not understanding the procedures of Government finance. I hoped to get a free lesson today from this side of the Chamber. I will request Hon Bob Pike's committee to look further at these accounts and payments, particularly the authorisation to the Superannuation Board.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: Earlier in the debate the Minister for Budget Management paid some attention to the questions placed on the Notice Paper only yesterday, as an indication of how late in the piece he had been provided with those questions. For the record, I repeat that he is conveniently ignoring the fact that many of those questions were posed on notice to the Treasurer in another place so that adequate notice was provided to answer the questions on 17 October. Those questions asked on 17 October, together with questions asked earlier and subsequent questions, have not yet been answered, and certainly the attempts by Mr Berinson to answer them have been unsatisfactory to say the least.

I draw the attention of the Committee to part of an answer given on 17 October to question 645, which answer provides part of the clue to the level of frustration that Hon John Caldwell will be interested in. The Opposition was told on 17 October in part (6) of the answer to question 645 that no documentation was available on this matter. Is it not remarkable that today, under sufferance, documentation has found its way into the Chamber? On 17 October I asked the Leader of the House, representing the Treasurer, to table any correspondence or documentation in relation to this matter. However, it has taken three months - and this is not dissimilar to the position Hon George Cash put to the Committee a couple of weeks ago - for that documentation to be provided, but then only after a threat was made that motions would be moved to ensure that disclosure occurred. In the absence of receiving answers, I intend to pursue the matter at a later stage of the Committee debate.

The second matter I raise by way of direct question is whether it is usual for the Superannuation Board to wait, in this case 35 full days, before seeking the approval of the Treasurer? I remind the Committee that on 8 February 1988 the Superannuation Board discussed the validity of something that had taken place a week before. It was then

transmitted by the board to the Treasurer on 15 March and, finally, on 18 March the Treasurer responded by approving an event which had taken place six weeks earlier. Is it usual for the Superannuation Board to wait for so long before seeking the approval of the Treasurer, as described in section 13 of the Act?

My third question is related to question 643 which I also asked on 17 October. The Minister, responding on behalf of the Premier, said that -

Initially the deposit was to be retired at the end of March 1988.

I ask members to consider that for a minute. The Treasurer in this State understands that the deposit will be retired or returned at the end of March, but that same Treasurer did not give his approval to the transaction until almost the end of March. At the time the amount was due to be returned the Premier in his role as Treasurer was about to give his approval. That sounds very much like locking the stable door after the horse has bolted. Is it usual for the Treasurer's advice, in accordance with section 13 of the Act, to be withheld until the initial deposit is about to be returned?

My fourth question relates to the statement made by the Minister for Budget Management at about 5.45 this afternoon that -

In fact, of the \$50 million the board eventually deposited in Rothwells at this time, approximately \$20 million had already been deposited before the Treasury deposit was received.

Why was that amount of \$20 million deposited and how long before all this occurred? That seems to me to be a reasonable question, given that we have already been told in the NCSC report that at least by December Rothwells was known to be a particularly bad investment risk.

Hon J.M. Berinson: December of what year?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: December 1987. When the NCSC released its report that was the first admission on its part that all was not well and that recovery might not occur. It now becomes relevant when the \$20 million - which I did not know about until tonight when the Minister referred to it in his statement - was invested in Rothwells by the Superannuation Board. I did not know about that \$20 million until the Minister referred to it in his statement and I want to know at what point and how long before this January-February deposit that \$20 million was invested in Rothwells by the Superannuation Board.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I will deal with the questions in turn. The first related to question 645 where a reply to part (6) was, "No documentation available." Hon Phillip Pendal raised this question previously and it concerned me at that time. I consulted Mr Parker on it. He advised me that he queried that response from the Superannuation Board at the time but was given to understand that the reply was correct.

Hon P.G. Pendal: To part (6), do you mean?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Yes. The reply was prefaced by the words -

The Superannuation Board advises me as follows -

...

(6) No documentation available.

I can only relate the position as I have been able to follow it through. I followed it through with Mr Parker after it was raised, I think last week, by Mr Pendal. Mr Parker indicated that he had queried the matter and had been told that that was the position. I cannot say what led the board to provide that advice, but it may well be that it had in mind documentation other than the basic material which was, in fact, involved.

There are a number of pages of the material tabled today in my hand, but there are, in fact, only four pages which were originally with the Superannuation Board. Three of the four documents constitute vouchers or invoices relating to short term deposits and setting out the amounts and dates involved. The only other page is the memo of 15 March from Mr Tindale, the general manager, to the Treasurer seeking what I think can fairly be described as retrospective approval. That is the fact of the matter. This is an issue which caught my attention previously from Mr Pendal's comments. I followed it through and that is all I can say about it.

I believe that Mr Pental's questions (2) and (4) are really the same. He asked whether it was usual for the board to wait 35 days before seeking approval from the Treasurer for a deposit of this nature. That 35 days was between 8 February and 15 March. Again, I cannot speak from personal knowledge of the affairs of the board, but I think at least one is entitled to say that one would certainly hope that was not usual and that it was completely unusual. There is support for that in the board memo of 15 March. I have referred to this before. The general manager, when setting out the background of this matter, said that the then Treasurer was absent from Perth at the time and due to an oversight his formal approval was not obtained on his return. This appears to indicate that the board, having made the decision, left it until the Treasurer's return to seek his approval rather than seeking it from someone acting in his capacity.

Hon Max Evans: Do you believe that?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Mr Evans asks whether I believe Mr Tindale. I have no reason to disbelieve him. I do not know on what basis Mr Evans disbelieves him. We have here a statement going back to 15 March and all I can do is extract from it what appears to be a clear indication of what happened; that is, that the deposit was made in January, the board approved it in February, the then Treasurer was absent from Perth at the time and the board or the manager left it until the Treasurer's return to obtain his signature but failed to do so due to an oversight. I am quoting him, and cannot do any more than that. In the event, it did not reach the then Treasurer until 15 March. I repeat that I certainly hope that is not usual. I hope that was unique, especially when dealing with amounts of this order because one would expect the most meticulous attention to detailed requirements.

I think I said that questions (2) and (4) were the same but I really meant that questions (2) and (3) were the same because question (3) was based on the fact that the deposit was advanced initially on the basis that it should be returned at the end of March. Mr Pental asked whether it was usual to wait until almost the date for repayment before seeking the Treasurer's approval for the original deposit. With due respect, that is another way of asking whether it is usual to wait six weeks and I think the answer to question 3 is therefore no, the same as it ought to be the answer to question (2).

Mr Pental asked a fourth question which picked up my earlier statement to the effect that by the time the transfer from Treasury was made some \$20 million had already been deposited. The question is when it was deposited and according to these documents it was on 29 January.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: My final comment on the matter before it is raised again later in the debate is that all of this has been a question asked over many months while we have been seeking information and either having that information denied to us or suppressed. Tonight is the first time in this matter that I have listened to the Minister for Budget Management giving some sort of grudging concession that even these matters were not conducted in a way he found satisfactory.

Hon J.M. Berinson: This is the first time I have been aware of the detail. I could not have commented on Mr Tindale's memo of 15 March until I had seen it; I saw it today.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I accept that, but between 17 October, when those questions were asked, and today, someone has been misleading Ministers - either deliberately, or maybe unwittingly; and I am not prepared to accept that. Those Ministers subsequently misled the Parliament. My question was, "Will the Minister detail any correspondence or documentation in relation to this matter?" The Minister replied - using those words carefully, in the light of other debates we have had in this place -

The Superannuation Board advises me as follows -

...

(6) No documentation available.

Today we have a letter dated 15 March from the General Manager of the State Superannuation Board to the Treasurer, so there is a piece of documentation.

Hon Mark Nevill: We have been through all this.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The member can please himself; we can go through it some more,

unless he wants to stop interjecting. We have also the document that released \$20 million to Rothwells. The next document released \$18 million to Rothwells. The next document released \$12 million to Rothwells, on another date. The next document -

Hon J.M. Berinson: I do not think there are any more Superannuation Board documents. You are coming now to Treasury documents.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The next document has to do with the \$50 million. It has February 1988 written on it, and it looks as though it has to do with the Superannuation Board because it says at the top, "department or statutory authority", and it says "superannuation". It then says "credit, Superannuation Board". It is the recoup of the employer liability for lump sum fund benefit payments. The Minister may be saying that is not to do with the \$50 million that went into Rothwells. However, my point is -

Hon J.M. Berinson: That is a Treasury document, and is held in Treasury records, not Superannuation Board records.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It is not to do with the money that was deposited in Rothwells by the Superannuation Board?

Hon J.M. Berinson: No.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I accept that. We get then to the Governor's warrants, and finally to the document that Mr Evans has been discussing with the Minister, of which I have no knowledge. I presume the last document is to do with the \$50 million.

Hon J.M. Berinson: No; it is not to do with the Superannuation Board. I went through that several times.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: So at the very least we have four documents.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Yes.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I appreciate that. That has taken us 18 months.

Hon J.M. Berinson: It has not; it has taken you about two or three hours since I became aware of it.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: It has been worth it, and I hope that my good friend, Mr Caldwell, will now agree that we have got somewhere.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I told you that before dinner.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: We asked this in April.

Hon J.M. Berinson: I did not know in April.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: The Minister should resign, because that is what would happen if he were in the House of Commons. When a Minister misleads the Parliament, even if he has been misled by someone else, he has an obligation to step down.

Hon Garry Kelly: Read the Standing Orders Committee report.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I am not interested in the Standing Orders Committee. I am interested in what the Standing Orders say now.

It has taken all this time to discover that the information given to the Parliament on 17 October was inaccurate, to be charitable; or deliberately misleading, if one wants to take the least charitable interpretation. I suggest there is a requirement on the Minister to start making some checks on these things, because it starts then to do the full circle back to those periods in early 1988 when this sorry little mess commenced. I do not believe that the long standing permanent professional officers of either Treasury or the Superannuation Board are people who have enjoyed what has been going on. It does not take a genius to work out that these matters did not start with them in the first place. They started with people like Tony Lloyd, who, if I recall correctly, went from the Superannuation Board, and was put into Rothwells as the Government flunkey, to try to see what was going on there, while the thing was getting further and further into disrepute.

That shows the folly that has been practised by this Government, not once but a hundred times in the last five years. That is the folly that one experiences when one starts trusting people other than those who are career civil servants and who have been put there in the first

place to give advice of an independent kind. On every occasion that this Government has reached beyond those people, brushed them aside as though they were incompetents, and brought in outside people, it has got into the most diabolical trouble, which has brought us to the point in 1989 where we are actually seeking to defeat a Budget because of all the nonsense that has gone on. The two and a half hours of debate tonight has been about the Government's reliance on people who should never have been in those positions in the first place.

I suggest that the Government has still not learnt its lesson because there are still people in and around Government in senior positions who are giving advice and who should not have been there in the first place. I doubt that the lesson has been learnt because it has been pointed out by members tonight that there has been no remorse on the part of the Government; no suggestion of any need for a serious inquiry to determine how we got into this mess; who were the Ministers who got us there, and whether the Ministers in this Chamber were part of it. At the end of all that, we have now determined that information given to the Parliament was false. That should never have been allowed to occur. If the Minister in this Chamber had been more vigilant, it would not have occurred. He said to us a few minutes ago, when he originally saw those remarks, that there was no documentation.

Hon J.M. Berinson: No, not when I saw them; when you drew attention to them about a week ago.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: That shows the weakness in a system where the Minister for Budget Management in this House is giving information in October but he can claim that today -

Hon J.M. Berinson: You know it is the Treasurer who gave that.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I know that, but the Minister for Budget Management is responsible for the information that comes into this Chamber. Mr Kelly interjected and said "Read the new Standing Orders".

Hon J.M. Berinson: They are not new Standing Orders. They are the existing Standing Orders.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: In that case it absolutely ensures that the Minister in this Chamber is responsible for what he tells the Chamber; therefore, he has been a party to the information given on 17 October, as misleading as it was. I regret that.

Hon GEORGE CASH: The comments made by Hon Phil Pendal indicate that, for the time being, he is prepared to not speak any more on this clause. I should not expect that he was indicating in any way that he believed that all the answers had been given to the questions that were asked tonight. The point I want to make - and I am hopeful we will be able to move on to other Divisions of the Budget so that at least we can be said to have made some progress - is that tonight a number of questions have been posed to the Minister for Budget Management which he has not answered. He has claimed he has not had the information available, or he has at times attempted to hide behind the veil of litigation, or the need to retain some secrecy. Without question tonight's discussion - I do not like to call it a debate, it is more a question and answer series - is a classic example of why we need an Estimates committee in this Parliament. If we take tonight's discussion to its logical conclusion -

Hon J.M. Berinson: May I make an exception to the rule and agree with you here? Of all the committee proposals, the Estimates committee is the most realistic.

Hon GEORGE CASH: If every member wants a copy of the CRF accounts, and wants to ask questions to satisfy himself that the Government is entitled to the money it requests, this part of the Budget could take for ever. That is another reason why the Estimates committee would save this Chamber considerable time.

I do not want to detract from the Minister for Budget Management's knowledge of accounting matters, but another point which has become very obvious tonight is that if an Estimates committee were able to call before it senior officers of Treasury or the Minister's office, I am sure that it would be prepared to give greater credibility to those senior Government officers than to some of the political answers which are often given by Ministers. Some time would be saved as well, so I invite the Chamber to consider the establishment of that Estimates committee which will come up for debate when we have finished the Estimates and the Capital Works Budget.

I am sure members who have posed questions tonight would be happy for the Minister for Budget Management to have a copy of their greens so that he can go back through the papers and give answers to questions which have been asked tonight. It is possible the Minister for Budget Management might decline that offer, but if he declines to answer the questions, the crunch will come when the third reading vote on this Bill is taken, because the Minister will be inviting the Chamber to make a decision on whether to vote for the \$4.4 billion which he is requesting in this Bill, and he has an absolute obligation and duty to provide answers to the questions asked.

The opportunity now exists for the Budget to be defeated on the grounds that the Minister for Budget Management is not prepared to provide the Parliament with reasonable answers to reasonable questions. If that is where we are headed in respect of the handling of the Appropriation accounts, we will end up going down a very rocky road. My plea is for the Parliament in due course to give consideration to this Estimates committee, because that committee would save a lot of the pain we are seeing certain individuals go through tonight.

Hon PETER FOSS: There are a number of reasons why questions have to be asked continually. The Minister for Budget Management made a somewhat disparaging remark tonight directed at Hon Phil Pandal to the effect that as soon as he answered one question it would be followed immediately by a number of other questions. There are very good reasons for that, and I shall illustrate them by enumerating some of the things which happened tonight. Some of the questions to which we are seeking answers are quite complex, and until we have the answer to the first question we cannot ask the second.

Hon P.G. Pandal: Exactly!

Hon PETER FOSS: Some of the answers we have received have been so peculiar that they beg further questions. We had an example of that tonight, where the papers which have been tabled beg further questions. They answer one question but they pose many more. It is not unnatural that if we receive an unsatisfactory answer - or even if we receive a satisfactory answer - further questions may well arise.

The second reason why it is sometimes necessary to ask further questions is because of the tendency of this Government to bundle answers together. If we ask a question in four parts, all of which are related, the Government has a tendency to answer questions (1) to (4) together. The Government will answer the easy questions but ignore the difficult ones. I draw the attention of the Minister for Budget Management to the fact that I asked such a question myself and received one of these tricky answers relating to Mr Connell's assets. The answers were bundled together, but one of the questions was not answered. I asked a supplementary question, asking whether the failure to answer that question was inadvertent, or in breach of Standing Order No 140(c). I received another flippant or tricky answer from the Premier, and he again refused to answer that question.

We on this side of the Chamber have become a little hesitant about asking multiple questions because we know of this device which is used by this Government. The Minister should not deny it, because if he wants I shall get all the examples to show him. The Government uses this device to avoid answering questions.

Thirdly, the reason it is often necessary to ask further questions could not better be illustrated than by tonight's example. Hon Phil Pandal asked a question in October and received a false answer. Only because he has persisted have we at long last received an answer which is beginning to give us some of the truth. I do not know whose head should roll, but under the Westminster system the Minister's head should roll.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You have not looked at the Standing Orders Committee report at all.

Hon PETER FOSS: I have heard the President, sitting in his Chair -

Hon J.M. Berinson: Have you read the report?

Hon PETER FOSS: I have heard the President. The Minister for Budget Management appears to be casting aspersions on a ruling by the President.

Hon J.M. Berinson: The President is a member of the Standing Orders Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon PETER FOSS: The President has ruled in this Chamber, and I would hate to cast any aspersions on him.

Hon J.M. Berinson: Why are you casting aspersions on his report?

Hon PETER FOSS: I am not casting aspersions on his report; I am referring to an extant ruling of the President in this Chamber which says that the Minister is responsible.

Hon P.G. Pendal: Correct.

Hon PETER FOSS: I believe it is contrary to Standing Orders - not to the Standing Orders Committee report but contrary to Standing Orders - to reflect on a ruling of the President. The President has ruled that the Minister is responsible. I understand that under the Westminster system the appropriate responsibility -

Hon J.M. Berinson: You are not up to your usual standard. The Chamber referred that ruling to the Standing Orders Committee of which the President is a member.

Hon PETER FOSS: The Minister is fully aware that the ruling of the President is extant, and until such time as some alternative is adopted by this Chamber, that is the ruling. The Minister for Budget Management knows that.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You can do better, Mr Foss.

Hon PETER FOSS: I am very glad to hear that I can do better. I thought I was doing fairly well.

Hon J.M. Berinson: You are not up to scratch on this one.

Hon PETER FOSS: That is faint praise indeed. I can always tell when I am getting close when the Minister for Budget Management -

Hon P.G. Pendal: Keep it up.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member on his feet is speaking. I do not know what Standing Orders have to do with this.

Hon PETER FOSS: The Government is deceiving us. Somebody must take responsibility for it. I believe the appropriate person to take responsibility is the Minister for Budget Management, in his capacity as Leader of the House, because he is the person who gave us that answer, and I am relying on a ruling of the President. If it is not the Leader of the House, he would believe the appropriate person is the person who gave the answer, and I think it was the Premier. Is that correct?

Hon J.M. Berinson: Have you seen the answer? It was the Treasurer, who indicated that he was specifically relying on advice.

Hon PETER FOSS: That was also dealt with in the President's ruling. The fact that somebody else's advice is referred to does not excuse the Minister from responsibility for it. Finally, there should be somebody in the department, or in this case in the authority, who is responsible for it. Somebody is responsible for it. The important thing to remember is that the reason we must keep coming back and asking questions is, firstly, that it is often the natural course of events; secondly, the Government uses devices in order to avoid answering them; and thirdly, we get wrong answers - deceitful answers. They are very good reasons for our persisting. If Hon Phillip Pendal had not persisted with his questions we would still believe that no documentation is available on this matter.

Finally, the Minister for Budget Management has been suffering legislative deafness during the course of this matter. He does not seem to answer my questions. His legislative deafness, to which I frequently refer, is such that I have mentioned a question which I asked in September, which I have repeated this month, to which I have not had an answer. I can draw only one conclusion from that; namely, that the Government does not wish to answer that question because the answer is embarrassing to it in a political context. I cannot, do not, and will not accept that the reason is that which has been given by either the Premier or the Treasurer - that it is based on litigation - because, having read my question again and having looked at the possible answers, it cannot be justified on the ground that has been given. I know we have been given many times before the explanations of litigation and confidentiality, but the mere statement by the Premier and the Treasurer that that is the reason does not mean we accept it like ninnies, or that we are going to have it put over us. Because members of the Government have managed to do this to the people of Western

Australia - to say words and then believe them themselves - does not mean we will be as supine as that and just accept those words. Save for that one exception I made with regard to the fraud, I do not accept the justification that there is litigation pending. I expect an answer.

I will leave the matter now but I have indicated to the Minister for Budget Management in my question on notice that was the reason I wished to know; I indicate now that is the reason I wish to know. I want to know the answer to those questions because I consider it highly material to the current Estimates and to the possible future Estimates, if in fact there is a liability there. I believe those answers must be given and I do not accept for one minute that the reason given by the Premier and the Treasurer is acceptable. I await an answer later on in this debate. The Minister has ample time to answer my question and I am sure he knows the answer. I expect, prior to the completion of the handling of this matter in Committee, a reasonable answer to those two questions.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Appropriation of Supplies Schedules 1 and 2 -

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am interested in speaking to schedules 1 and 2. Are you prepared to deal with those now, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: I intend to deal with clause 4 and then schedules 1 and 2.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule 1 -

Hon GEORGE CASH: Before we commence dealing with the various parts of schedule 1, Mr Chairman, I seek your advice. In respect of the summary, under the item named Parliament with the amount of \$7.419 million listed against it, in our Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure Supplementary Budget Information book that amount is made up of Division 2 and Division 3. In dealing with the various parts contained in schedule 1, is it your intention to call the individual Divisions within the parts so that we are speaking to a specific Division? If that is the case, Sir, I wish to speak to Division 2.

The CHAIRMAN: I plan to put each section of the summary and each part of the schedule.

Parliament -

Hon GEORGE CASH: In respect of Division 2 within Parliament, which deals with the proposed allocation to Parliament, I will deal firstly with the Legislative Council. I want to pay tribute to the service which is provided by Mr Marquet, Mr Allnutt and the other staff members of the Legislative Council. We recognise that they work under tremendous pressure, and that pressure is often exerted by the workload imposed by the various members of this Legislative Council and certainly from outside. Only a few weeks ago the Second Clerk Assistant resigned from the Legislative Council and is now a member of the Legislative Assembly, and I assume that matters are in hand to have a replacement employed as soon as possible. I would invite the Minister to comment on that in a few minutes.

However, the major area of my concern is the limited number of staff members that are available to service the Legislative Council. Members will be aware that at the moment we have a considerable number of Select Committees that require the services of members of the staff of this Council. On top of that we have Standing Committees of this Legislative Council. There have been some staff changes, in particular in respect of the principal officers, on at least one of our Standing Committees, and the question of the money that is available to service those various committees needs to be addressed by the Government. If we are to have well qualified people available to the Standing Committees and Select Committees, clearly sufficient money must be put aside within the Parliamentary vote to enable the Clerk of the House, through the President and Deputy President no doubt, to see that proper employment opportunities exist.

I leave that with the Minister for Budget Management. I certainly seek his response, not forgetting the fact that it has been proposed by Mr Pike that the various committees that he intends to be established will, of course, need additional staff in due course. For those who suggest that I am trying to increase the bureaucracy around Parliament House let me hasten to add that unless we do provide assistance to the hardworking staff members of the Legislative Council that we have at the moment, we will create a situation where they are

being put under unnecessary stress, strain and pressure as a result of the workload that we are imposing on them. In that regard we all have an obligation to see the place is properly staffed.

In respect of the other committees I have talked about tonight, and in particular the Estimates committee, it is my view that if the Estimates committee and those other proposed committees are properly staffed and if they are approached in a bipartisan way by members of this Chamber the flow of work through this Chamber will be improved and members will be able to see the Legislative Council as a Chamber for what it is meant to be; that is, a House of Review. I invite the Minister's response.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Before the Minister for Budget Management responds I would like to support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. I have taken a deep interest in Legislative Council committee work since I became a member of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies about six years ago. Some time ago the Standing Committee on Government Agencies did some research into comparable committees in other States. A similar committee to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies operates in the Victorian Parliament and that committee has a budget of about \$250 000 a year, which is significantly more than this Parliament spends on all its committees. That money enables the Victorian committee to carry out wide ranging inquiries and to move around from place to place. I am not suggesting that should be the case here, but if we are to have a committee system which works then clearly we need resources of that type. The Standing Committee on Government Agencies has been well serviced up to now by the officers provided to it. Martin Forrest and Garry Newcombe were the officers who until recently carried out the role of principal adviser to the committee. Both those officers were extremely competent and efficient, but it was decided when Mr Newcombe retired to replace his position with two other people who are not as well qualified or as experienced as he was. I can understand the reason for that, but I do not believe the committee is as well serviced by its staff now as it was then. That is no reflection on the person who now has the job. She is a dedicated and hardworking person, but she just does not have the experience of the former advisers. In due course she will have that capacity, and I look forward to the day. However, because of the decision to have additional committees the resources available to the committees are being stretched to the limit and that is affecting the capacity of the committees to get on with their jobs.

I am a little concerned about the future of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies in the sense that it does not have the support it used to have. That support in the past was excellent and enabled the committee to produce some good reports. The committee has some hard decisions to make in the future about where it is to go and it needs the support and advice that only people of considerable experience can provide. I make the point as strongly as I can to the Minister for Budget Management that this Chamber, if it is to perform the sort of functions for which it is set up, requires more resources. If we are not to have a committee system, I will cease my argument now, but I believe this Chamber will have a committee system of some magnitude. I think that is the destiny of this Chamber; I hope the Minister for Budget Management will agree to that course of action and at the same time make available the funds necessary for the committee system to work properly. There would be nothing worse than setting up a committee system which did not work because it did not have the support it needed. That would be a detrimental step in the history of this Chamber. I argue strongly that support and funding be made available for parliamentary committees. When I look at the comparison between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, I feel that the other place seems to be doing better than this Chamber. I wonder whether the Minister for Budget Management might bear that in mind when he works out how much money each Chamber of Parliament is to get.

Hon P.G. PENDAL: I would briefly like to add one extra dimension to the comments made by the two previous speakers. It is a matter I have raised on a number of occasions directly with the Minister for Budget Management, but obviously to no avail. I guess one thing about being in Parliament is that one is taught to have some patience, because if Rome was not built in a day certainly things around the Legislative Council take something of an equivalent time to build. The two previous speakers talked about the need to beef up the resources in respect of committee work. The matter about which I want to impress the Minister for Budget Management is the need for a full time Parliamentary Counsel to be made available in the Parliament, on tap as it were.

Hon J.M. Berinson: On what?

Hon P.G. PENDAL: On tap. That is an old drinking term which I appreciate the Minister for Budget Management is not up with.

The matter is a serious one for this reason: The private members - and that means all of the Opposition - currently have access to one parliamentary draftsman - that is, unless we seek the advice of the Clerks of the Chamber. Of course, they have plenty of other things on their plates. That one draftsman in this case is Katie Ashforth, who I think is called upon to bear a load that no-one should be asked to bear. Katie Ashforth is also required to be on stand-by for such things as the Equal Opportunity Commission and one or two other Government agencies around town. It is often the case that when a member wants access to Ms Ashforth, with the best will in the world she finds herself doing work in other agencies around town. I had occasion this year to introduce a major Bill on behalf of the Opposition - the Heritage Enhancement and Preservation Bill - and it was very difficult at times to get quick and easy access to Katie Ashforth. That was not because of any lack of interest or commitment on her part, but because she had other calls on her day. I think the time has arrived where Katie Ashforth, or someone like her, should be stationed in Parliament House because there is more than a full time job to be had here. When I attended the Constitutional Convention in Adelaide in 1983, it was brought to my attention that in the South Australian Parliament a private members' parliamentary draftsman occupied a physical place in the parliamentary building. That was indicative of his role; however, to come back to Western Australia and to again rely on this part time, ad hoc system when one is dealing with major pieces of legislation is simply an inadequate way of dealing with the whole thing. It is not, I suggest, beyond the wit of a Government which can find money for all sorts of other purposes to find the money, modest as it would be in the Government's terms, to equip a person to be on the premises of Parliament House, at all times available to members of the Opposition, who are often asked to respond in quick time and often inadequately because that facility is denied to them. I hope the Minister for Budget Management takes note of my remarks.

Hon PETER FOSS: I would like to add to the comments made by previous speakers and also to ask a question of the Minister for Budget Management. It may be that I have not understood the procedure, but I understand that recently in the Federal Parliament a dispute occurred between the Minister for Finance and the Senate whereby the Senate said it should decide its appropriation. I believe Senator Walsh, the Minister for Finance, disagreed with the appropriation the Senate said it should have. The result was in favour of the Senate, and consequently the Senate was entitled to decide its appropriation. The Federal Government would accept that appropriation in any event. Is that the attitude taken by this Government to appropriations for this Chamber?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I refer to the Leader of the Opposition's inquiry about the position of Clerk Assistant. I am advised that interviews for that position are expected to take place next week. An appointment should not be far away. In any event there are no budgetary implications for that because the Budget accommodates it. In that context, the provision for the Legislative Council this year has increased from about \$730 000 to \$882 000, an increase of \$154 000; that is, over 20 per cent and far above the percentage increase applying across Government. That is easily absorbed -

Hon N.F. Moore: It is coming from a low base.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It is a big percentage but not a helluva lot of money given the costs these days, especially of qualified staff.

The question of servicing committees is a serious one. We have been very fortunate in the staff in the Council and their preparedness not only to do the ordinary work associated with the Chamber but also to assist in a wholehearted way in committee work as well. This goes from the Clerk to all the other officers and it has again been to our great advantage that these officers have a range of qualifications, experience and talent that has led to our being able to maximise the value of their services. I have to say that we have to continue to make maximum use of those services the same, in this context, as we seek to do in all other areas of Government; that is our starting point. Having said that and considering the number of committees that have been established this Parliament, let alone the question of a more general committee system which Mr Pike raises, we must obviously come to an end of our capacity to absorb more work within our existing staff resources.

One of the factors that we have to consider when we are looking at Mr Pike's proposals is a realistic structure that will not demand excessive resources. I will not go into discussion on those committees because I suspect we will have full discussion when the matter is listed as we agreed today. I have indicated in advance I have some considerable reservations about a number of the details of the proposals which have been advanced, but in principle if the Council is to apply itself to the details of the Budget and Supply Bills I would regard the first essential as a system of Estimates committees. That is one of the differences I have perhaps with other members who discussed this question informally.

Most of us will know the background which explains the absence of Estimates committees, namely that in all the years I have been here I cannot recall a serious debate in Committee; I think the all time record when I was in Opposition -

Hon George Cash: The Minister would agree we have made a good start, and it is something he is beginning to like.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It is enjoyable but I do not like to pander to myself, Mr Cash.

The all time record is held by myself as spokesman for the Opposition when the Appropriation Bill passed through the first reading, the second reading, the Committee stage and the third reading all within three and a half minutes.

Hon P.G. Pandal: When you were in Opposition? I hope you are not proud of that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Yes, I am; I have no regrets. I explained at the time why I regarded -

Hon P.G. Pandal: It was an honest Budget; you were prepared to accept it.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It was not a good Budget. Following that Budget the Government was defeated so it could not have been all that good.

I explained my position on the clear basis - which makes my more recent comments consistent - that in my view it is not the place of the upper House to seek to do other than to pass the Budget; by all means to consider it carefully and to obtain information if members wish, but it is not the place of an upper House to make or break Governments - and that is what is made possible if members are to deal with this question on the basis that they can pass or not pass Budgets or Supply. I will not get into the history of the subject other than to say that was a consistent pattern and has always been a consistent pattern, at least for the nine years I have been here, and from what I am told for many years before that; substantial debate was held on the motion to note the Budget papers but not on Appropriation Bills. By the time we reached that stage they were regarded as going through on the nod, so to speak, because substantial debate had previously occurred on the motion to note the Budget papers. The Committee stages and an attempt to look in an itemised way at the thousands of separate items was simply not regarded as practical; it is indeed impractical. That is why, expecting as I do that the House has reached the point where it intends to go into close examination of the Estimates, we have to get away from the ordinary Committee stage. It is doubly impractical to expect the Minister in this Chamber to be able to respond in the way that, say, the Legislative Assembly's 14 Ministers respond to itemised questions.

That leads to the point that if we are to go into that we will need new resources. It is certainly not the practice in this Parliament for the separate Houses to be able to make their own allocations to themselves. I do not believe there is any need to move in that direction. A Budget approach to the allocation of funds has always taken a realistic view of the needs of the Parliament - with the exception of Parliament buildings - and if this House proceeds to a committee system, which on the face of it requires additional staffing, that is a matter that would have to be acknowledged.

On the matter of private members' drafting it is fair to say that the past experience has been very uneven and that the recent flow of private members' Bills has been quite exceptional. It is dangerous in those circumstances to look at the provision of staff directed at what one might say is the peak load. But there is another consideration which in view of other matters does seem to me to support a full time Parliamentary Counsel; that has been pointed out to me by the Clerk as he indicates the expansion of our parliamentary system carries with it the need for more extensive provision of legal advice in various areas. To the extent the parliamentary draftsman is not occupied in the drafting of private members' Bills or

amendments, I would think we will certainly reach the stage shortly where any spare time would be reasonably made available and absorbed by the need for legal advice by these various committees.

Hon MAX EVANS: Coming to the last point raised by the Minister first, I refer to the parliamentary draftspersons; currently we have Alton Jackson and Katie Ashforth helping in that regard, but I hope the Government will consider appointing a full-time person. We are fortunate in having a Clerk with a legal background to help us and I am not certain how he would have coped otherwise in the past few years. With due respect to the Minister, in the four years I have been here we have had a number of amendments - as has the Government - to legislation and it is very hard to make amendments on the run.

It is difficult to see the draftspeople as Katie Ashforth took leave to have a baby and Alton Jackson has another job and can be away for one or two days at a time. The full-time appointment will expedite the work of the Chamber because at the moment we have to go away to see a draftsman or make appointments, and this is far from satisfactory especially with the huge number of amendments we have made in the last couple of years. This is a House of Review and we should be making better legislation. We have raised this matter many times and I hope the Minister will give it consideration.

Referring to the Estimates, I am not certain about the Salaries and Contingencies item for I cannot reconcile the top of the page to the bottom of the page. A lot of computerisation took place in the Legislative Council when I first arrived. Is there any further expansion to be done in this area, because a need exists. I am not sure which item computerisation comes under, so I hope the Minister can help me.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I am not in a position to answer that in detail. Regarding computerisation, so many demands for new or upgraded computer facilities exist that the Government has had to adopt a position in which, apart from major items such as the one covering the whole titles system, the situation is dealt with by providing a global sum for the provision of computers and the upgrading of them.

Hon Max Evans: Does that apply to Parliament House?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: Yes. The priority is established through consultation with, and advice from, DOCIT.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Regarding additional funds for the committee system, I make the point that regardless of what happens with the additional array of committees, I hope the Minister will take on board the fact that the existing committees are short of resources. If they are expected to do their jobs properly, they should have more funding even if more committees are not established. The existing committees need further resources. Something unusual happened in respect of committees over the last few years: The Government sent two or three issues to Select Committees which it found too difficult to resolve itself. For example, Hon Beryl Jones chaired the Select Committee on Charitable Collections, an issue brought here by the Government. These issues placed additional strain on the resources for the committee system. More money should be allocated as we seem to have the "abominable no-man" when it comes to these matters.

Hon P.G. Pendal: It is better than a yes-man.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I hope the Minister will sit down with members of his Government who are members of committees and come to the realisation that if the committees are to work properly, they need more resources. The Legislative Council needs more resources to do the job it is required to do.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps the Minister quoted the wrong figures when he stated that \$882 000 was allocated to the Legislative Council. I believe that that figure is for the salaries of members of Parliament, and the figure the Minister should have quoted was the one above that involving the full-time equivalent staffing levels which has a figure of \$518 000.

Hon J.M. Berinson: That cannot be right for if one multiplies 34 by \$50 000, that gives a figure of nearly \$2 million.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Perhaps the Minister could help us in reading the Budget papers unaccustomed as we are to this sort of thing.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: We must have failed to provide for members' salaries! The payment of members' salaries, I understand, comes under a special Act which is not included in this item.

Hon MAX EVANS: I overlooked one point in my previous comments in that the Minister stated that we have not had a debate of this kind before. However, in 1987 and 1988 Hon Sandy Lewis and I were keen that we should have a closer look at the figures because this is a House of Review and should be better informed. From memory, in 1987 although we wanted to go through the items we could not because the Residential Tenancies Bill took up the last few days before Christmas Eve.

To say that we are trying to block Supply is fallacious as we would have liked to have had this debate in the last two years. In 1988 we wanted to go through these matters, but Select Committees were in place of which I was a member, and we went through and completed second and third readings of Bills in the last days of the Parliament. We would not have taken as long to reach the short title last year if we had received the kind of answers we are getting today. The Minister has answered many more questions in the second reading debate than in other years - we appreciate that fact.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: Since the last Budget we have seen the so-called electoral reforms in this Chamber by which some members are now representing areas four times the size of the ones they represented before. When we went into this new system, it was pointed out that every assistance would be given to those members who were serving bigger areas. In fact that has not occurred; we have not been given greater facilities than we had before. For example, Hon Norman Moore has not been given any different facilities to represent the whole of the Kimberleys, the Pilbara and the Murchison. The same is the case regarding the agricultural areas as there has been very little extra assistance for members to carry out the extra burdens of representation. This has yet to be addressed.

Item put and passed.

Premier, and Minister for Public Sector Management -

Hon GEORGE CASH: The Ministry of the Premier and State Administration has replaced the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Last year, the old department employed 229 persons. This year the new Ministry of the Premier and State Administration and the Ministry of Cabinet and Public Sector Management employ a total of 284 people doing what I believe at first glance is the same work. Why has there been such a substantial increase in staff? What efficiencies were achieved in splitting the Department of Premier and Cabinet into two new areas?

Hon N.F. MOORE: As I said in my speech in the second reading debate, the amount spent by the Ministry of the Premier and State Administration and the Ministry of Cabinet and Public Sector Management totalled \$19.5 million in 1988-89. The Budget for this year has allocated \$24.5 million or an increase of about 25 per cent. Earlier we referred to the increase for the Parliament. However, the Premier has taken a significant increase of \$5 million. Hon George Cash pointed out that that is to employ about 284 people.

I have taken an interest in this matter over the years. In the 1982-83 Estimates, the allocation for the Premier's Department totalled \$2.4 million. Eight years later that amount has increased to \$24.5 million, an increase of \$22 million. In 1982-83, that department employed 68 people. Since the Labor Party has been in office, that number has increased to 284 people. If we ever wanted to find a growth area in the Government, that is it.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I want to compliment the Government on one area in the allocations. There has been a very large increase in the allocation to Royal and other Commissions of inquiry from \$340 000 to \$512 000. That should allow the Government plenty of room to carry out the requests of the Council.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Hon J.M. Berinson (Minister for Budget Management).

House adjourned at 10.55 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ROTHWELLS LTD - COLLAPSE

Government Payments, Provisional Liquidator - National Australia Bank, Recoupment, "Legal Conditions"

866. Hon N.F. Moore to the Leader of the House representing the Treasurer:

I refer the Minister to -

- (a) question 974 in the Legislative Assembly of Tuesday, 26 September 1989, in which the Treasurer advised that the State would recoup \$10.5 million from the National Australia Bank "When certain legal conditions are satisfied"; and
- (b) question 849 in the Legislative Council on 28 November 1989 in which the Treasurer advises that the money has not yet been recouped; and ask -
 - (1) What were the "legal conditions" referred to by the Treasurer and have they been satisfied?
 - (2) What assurances does the Government have that the \$10.5 million will be recouped from the National Australia Bank?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1) The legal conditions were -

- (a) the Supreme Court of Queensland approving the scheme and authorising and approving the execution of the deed by the provisional liquidators and the company;
 - (b) Rothwells Ltd being ordered to be wound up by a court and a liquidator being appointed; and
 - (c) the Supreme Court of Queensland approving the arrangement between the parties to the deed as though it were made between a liquidator of the company and the creditor in respect of the various claims and empowering the liquidator -
 - (i) to covenant or acknowledge by a deed with or in favour of the creditor that the payment by the State of the fund in accordance with the provisions of the deed shall be accepted in full satisfaction and discharge of all such actions and claims and demands as the liquidator may make in respect of the alleged preference payment and that the liquidator absolutely releases the creditor from all claims, demands and obligations in respect of the alleged preference payment; and
 - (ii) to covenant or acknowledge by a deed with or in favour of the State that he will make the payment of \$10 490 000 to the State Government Insurance Commission and the Rural and Industries Bank;
- and the liquidator entering into those deeds;
- (d) the liquidator releasing the National Australia Bank from any further liability in respect of the repayment by Rothwells of the \$150 million.

(2) The State received the \$10.5 million from the National Australia Bank on 8 December 1989.

FLOODS - FARMERS

Relief Applications - Closure Date Extension

876. Hon MARGARET McALEER to the Minister for Budget Management:

Further to the answer to question 709 of 31 October 1989, what is the result of that consideration?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I understand that the shire has not responded to the invitation contained in the Minister's letter of 3 November to provide reasons for the extension of time being sought for applications. In the absence of such justification it is not proposed to extend the closing date.

RACING AND GAMING OFFICE - ANNUAL REPORT
Auditor General's Report - Computer Items, No Asset Register

887. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

With reference to the Auditor General's report contained in the recently tabled annual report of the Office of Racing and Gaming -

- (1) Why is an assets register not kept for the required items of computer hardware and software?
- (2) What steps has the Minister taken in regard to the above question in view of the Government's stated concerns for the integrity of computer software and data?
- (3) Why were existing registers not maintained in accordance with Treasurer's Instruction No 410?
- (4) What steps have been taken to rectify the lack of registers?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(4)

The Office of Racing and Gaming maintains a property register in accordance with the provisions of the Treasurer's Instructions. At the time of the audit the register was not current, however it has subsequently been brought up to date and procedures implemented to ensure its currency.

RACING AND GAMING OFFICE - ANNUAL REPORT
Auditor General's Report - Computer Items, Inadequate Purchasing Controls

888. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

With reference to the Auditor General's report contained in the recently tabled annual report of the Office of Racing and Gaming -

- (1) Why were essential controls in the purchasing cycle of computer hardware and software not adequately conducted during the review period?
- (2) Was only one officer assigned to carry out these functions?
- (3) Was the responsible senior officer in that section aware of the inadequacy of staff resources in that section and, if so, what steps were taken to increase the necessary resources to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of this section?
- (4) Has any breach of security occurred as a result of the department's information technology purchases?
- (5) How many officers are now employed in carrying out the required controls?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(5)

Essential controls in the purchasing cycle of computer hardware and software are conducted by the Office of Racing and Gaming. During the review period deficiencies were identified with these procedures and immediate remedial action was taken. At no time has any breach of security occurred as a result of the department's information technology purchases.

RACING AND GAMING OFFICE - ANNUAL REPORT
Auditor General's Report - Requirements Pursuance

889. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

With reference to the Auditor General's report contained in the recently tabled annual report of the Office of Racing and Gaming -

- (1) For what period have the provisions and requirements of section 53(f) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act been conscientiously pursued by the department?
- (2) Why had the department not met those requirements at the time of the Auditor General's report?
- (3) Have these requirements now been met?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(4)

Key aspects of the Office of Racing and Gaming's operations, such as the scrutiny of the Burswood Casino operations and other functions of the Gaming Commission, are subject to very stringent audit. The Auditor General has identified some areas of the office for further attention and this will be pursued.

PRISONS - AIDS

Treatment Programs - Corrective Services Department Surveys

892. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Corrective Services:

- (1) What surveys or studies have been conducted by the Department of Corrective Services into the perceptions of prison staff and prisoners on AIDS treatment programs and other AIDS preventive programs?
- (2) Has the survey on an AIDS study referred to in the department's annual report been completed and, if so, what recommendations have been proposed?
- (3) Have recommendations been made on -
 - (a) the compulsory testing of prisoners of HIV;
 - (b) availability of condoms to prisoners?
- (4) Have the survey's findings contributed to the development of a policy for educational or other training programs in this general area and, if so, will the Minister provide details?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) The department has conducted a survey of the perceptions of prison staff and prisoners of AIDS and AIDS prevention measures within the Western Australian prison system. Two hundred prisoners, 211 prison officers and 50 prison administrators/support staff have been interviewed.
- (2) The survey questionnaire for prison administrators/support staff, prison officers and prisoners was considerably more detailed than originally envisaged and this has resulted in a delay in the completion of the project. The project is now scheduled to be completed by January 1990.
- (3) No recommendations have been made or considered by the department or me at this time.
- (4) Not applicable.

ROTHWELLS LTD - INSOLVENCY
Government Advice

901. Hon PETER FOSS to the Minister for Budget Management:

- (1) Was the Government at any time advised that Rothwells was insolvent?

- (2) What was the earliest date it was advised?
- (3) Who advised it?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(3)

I refer the member to the Premier's statement on Rothwells to the Legislative Assembly on 8 November 1988 and his media statement of 3 November 1988.

I am advised by the Premier that the Government had been informed in the period leading up to the appointment of the provisional liquidator of a serious liquidity crisis at Rothwells. As stated in the two documents referred to earlier, this led the Government and the SGIC late in October 1988 to seek independent legal and financial advice through solicitors Robinson Cox. The work started on 28 October. On 30 October the Government was advised that unless Rothwells could secure an adequate funding package there was a prospect of the company not being able to meet its debts when they fell due and Rothwells would be insolvent.

ROTHWELLS LTD - INSOLVENCY

Government Advice - Government Payments

902. Hon PETER FOSS to the Minister for Budget Management:

- (1) Were any moneys paid to Rothwells by the Government directly or indirectly or by any Government agency directly or indirectly after the Government had been advised that Rothwells was insolvent?
- (2) What were -
 - (a) the amount;
 - (b) the date;
 - (c) the payer; and
 - (d) the payee of such payments?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

See answer to question 901 and the Premier's statement on Rothwells to the Legislative Assembly on 8 November 1988.

SPORT AND RECREATION - WORLD SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Economic Benefits Estimate

904. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Would the Minister provide me with a copy of the detailed analysis that enabled him to advise a constituent of mine that the economic benefit to Western Australia from hosting the World Swimming Championships in 1991 has been estimated to be in excess of \$19 million?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

On two previous occasions I have offered the member a briefing of all aspects of the event. I again extend that invitation.

SPORT AND RECREATION - SUPERDROME

Construction Intention - Premier Burke's First Announcement

905. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) When did Premier Burke first announce the Government's intention to construct the Superdrome?
- (2) What was the estimated annual operating deficit for the complex?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1) 31 October 1984.

(2) There were a number of assessments made of the likely annual operating deficit. As a result of these assessments the Government recognised that there

would be a deficit and was prepared to meet this deficit as part of its contribution to sport in Western Australia. It believed, and still does, that this is a very worthwhile and important way of supporting our elite athletes, together with providing a facility for community use. This view is vindicated by the fact that in 1988-89 a total of 524 687 users visited the Superdrome. The estimated cost of the Government's commitment to the Superdrome's deficit in 1989-90 is \$806 000.

PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LTD - GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

WA Government Holdings Ltd - State Government Insurance Commission. Loan Inclusion

906. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Budget Management:

- (1) Does the answer to question 874 of 1989 that the principal sums committed by the Government through WA Government Holdings Ltd to the Petrochemical Industries Ltd project estimated at \$277.5 million include the \$175 million loaned by the State Government Insurance Commission to WAGH?
- (2) If not, when will the \$175 million be repaid to the SGIC?
- (3) How will it be financed?
- (4) Will it require an Appropriation Bill?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) From the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- (4) It is intended to appropriate the Consolidated Revenue Fund in the normal way.

RACING AND TROTTING - BYFORD TROTTING COMPLEX

Official Race Meetings Proposal

908. Hon PETER FOSS to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Have there been any proposals to conduct official race meetings at the Byford trotting complex?
- (2) Is the Government aware that such meetings would meet a need of many owners in the metropolitan area?
- (3) Will the Government support the introduction of such meetings?
- (4) Can the Government do anything to assist the institutions of such meetings?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(4)

Following the Downing report and the Ellis review of that report, discussions are being held with trotting industry representatives to agree, if possible, on the form of management of the industry for the future. Once that matter is settled, and the managing body is established, it will no doubt consider questions such as the future location of trotting tracks.

BETTING CONTROL ACT AND REGULATIONS - AMENDMENT PROPOSALS

910. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Has the Minister submitted to Cabinet for its approval proposed amendments to the Betting Control Act and Regulations?
- (2) Is it still the intention of the Minister to introduce a Bill or Bills to amend that Act?
- (3) If so, given the late stage of the session, when will such Bill be introduced?
- (4) Will the Minister assure the House that proper and exhaustive consultation with the relevant industry has taken place in regard to any proposed amendments?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

Yes.

(3) 1990 autumn session of Parliament.

(4) The review of the Act has been undertaken by the Office of Racing and Gaming in conjunction with the Betting Control Board. All three racing codes are represented on the board, together with the WA Bookmakers Association.

BERTRAM, MR RON - FORMER MEMBER

Government Employment

935. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

(1) Does Mr Ron Bertram, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, hold any positions within the Government or Government agencies at the current time?

(2) If so, what payment does he receive for those positions?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

(1)-(2)

No.

STATE FINANCE - CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

Business Undertakings Estimates - Gold Corporation's Contribution

948. Hon MAX EVANS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

(1) What was the basis for the estimate of revenue from Business Undertakings - Gold Corporation \$29 million to be paid during 1989-90?

(2) Will it be recalculated based on the statutory calculation provisions in the annual report for 1988-89 of \$4.479 million?

(3) If not, why not?

(4) Is it correct that Gold Corporation can afford a contribution of \$29 million on shareholders' equity of \$52.494 million?

(5) What amount will be paid?

(6) When will it be paid?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Premier has provided the following reply -

(1) As outlined in Gold Corporation's annual report tabled in the Legislative Council last month, consequent upon the transfer to the R & I Bank of the corporation's gold banking business, the corporation is to repay to the Consolidated Revenue Fund the \$25 million subscribed in 1987-88 as capital for gold banking operations. The other \$4 million was the estimate of the statutory contribution to be made by the corporation for 1988-89.

(2) The corporation's annual report shows - page 2, page 4, schedule 1, schedule 4 - that the statutory contribution in respect of 1988-89 is \$4 128 000.

(3) Answered by (2).

(4) Answered by (1).

(5) Answered by (1) and (2).

(6) Section 20(1) of the Gold Banking Corporation Act requires the statutory contribution to be paid not later than 30 December. The repayment of capital will be made following Parliament's

consideration of enabling legislation to be introduced during the autumn sittings.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD - UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS

Turf Club Races - Trotting Association Races

963. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Will the Minister supply a percentage breakdown of unclaimed TAB dividends from:

(a) turf club races; and

(b) trotting association races?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

Information is not retained in this form. If the member indicates exactly what he is seeking I will endeavour to supply the information.

HOUSING - GERALDTON HOUSE

Maleslin Brooks, Mr Terrance - "Shared Equity Purchase" Application Delay

964. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:

Will the Minister investigate the reasons for an apparent delay in the processing of an application to purchase a "shared equity purchase" house in Geraldton by Mr Terrance Maleslin Brooks and in particular whether the processing of the application was impeded in any way by the Government courier service which received the application and approval papers from an officer of Homeswest, Geraldton on Monday, 4 December 1989?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Minister for Housing has provided the following response -

The papers relating to Mr Brooks' shared equity purchase were forwarded from the Geraldton office on 4 December 1989 by Mail West and received by the Mirrabooka office on 8 December 1989. A final interview with Mr and Mrs Brooks was held on 12 December 1989 and settlement will be finalised within the specified time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT - TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Public Bank Account Overdraw - Accountability Standards Compliance

626. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Attorney General and Minister for Budget Management:

I refer to the Auditor General's report on the Treasurer's Annual Statements and in particular to Auditor General Smith's comments in the second paragraph on page 2 of his report, and for the information of the Attorney General I will read that paragraph to the House -

Government of W.A. Bank Account - Section 22 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act provides that no officer shall cause the Public Bank Account in the name of the Government of Western Australia to be overdrawn, except with and subject to the prior approval of the Treasurer. The Government of W.A. Bank Account at the Reserve Bank of Australia was overdrawn by an amount of \$133 058 015.35 on June 7, 1989, exceeding the overdraft limit of \$20 000 000 approved by the Treasurer in January 1988 by \$113 058 015.35, and resulting in an interest charge of \$69 930.53 by the Reserve Bank.

I now ask the Attorney General and Minister for Budget Management -

- (1) Will the Government move to comply with its own stated standards of accountability and ensure that in future the Financial Administration and Audit Regulations 1986 will reflect the desirability of all contingent and direct liabilities of the State?
- (2) More than that, will he take the necessary action to consider whether there has been a breach by a particular officer which requires further action by him or, indeed, the Treasurer?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

Of course the Government will take all necessary steps to ensure full compliance with the standards, and I can assure the House that that will also be the determined approach of the Treasury itself.

In case all members are not aware, I should perhaps remind the House that at the same time as I tabled the Treasurer's Annual Statements together with the Auditor General's comment on those I tabled a comprehensive response by the Under Treasurer dealing in detail with each one of the comments of the Auditor General. Since one aspect of those comments has been referred to, I think it may help the House if I indicate the Under Treasurer's response to that item. This is in the following terms, and I quote -

On 7 June, confusion arose between Treasury's Accounts Branch and Treasury Corporation staff on the cashflow impact of the retirement of a \$133 million investment of moneys with Treasury Corporation sourced from the Public Bank Account. As a result, an over-investment was made, causing the Public Bank Account to be overdrawn by \$133 million.

The confusion related to the transition of the money market dealings from the Western Australian Development Corporation to Treasury.

The Auditor General refers to the \$133 million overdraft exceeding the limit of \$20 million approved by the Treasurer. The \$20 million was in fact approved by me as Under Treasurer under a section 57 delegation of the Act.

A considerably higher overdraft limit could have been approved which would have virtually eliminated the possibility of overdrawing the limit and therefore avoiding a qualified audit opinion. However, the \$20 million limit was approved on the basis of providing a discipline on the management of the Government of W.A. bank account so that whenever the limit was exceeded I would be advised, together with the circumstances that caused the overdraft; this occurred in relation to the \$133 million overdraft - see Attachment 3.

The Auditor General refers to an interest charge of \$69,930 made by the Reserve Bank but the net cost, after taking account of interest earnings on those moneys, amounted to \$5,380.

I can assure the House, not only on the basis of this written response but also on the basis of discussions with the Under Treasurer, that he has been most concerned with each of the reservations expressed by the Auditor General. He has addressed each one of them in detail and he shares the Government's own clear view that every possible measure should be taken to prevent any repetition of them.

PRISONERS - LEAVE ALLOWANCE

Minister for Corrective Services Powers - Misleading Answer

627. Hon R.G. PIKE to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Does the Minister admit that he misled this House yesterday when answering question without notice 612, asked by me, which read -

My understanding, of which I am not now certain, is that the Minister

for Corrective Services has power on a compassionate basis to allow a prisoner leave for two or three days. Is that correct?

The Minister's answer was, "It is incorrect." Because section 83(2)(c) of the Prisons Act provides that the Director of Prisons may, with the approval of the Minister, grant up to three days' permission for absence, does that, in the case of Mr Barrass, mean the Minister can now release Mr Barrass? The Minister is now looking at section 83(2)(c) of the Prisons Act because I have arranged for the Clerk to have that section placed in front of him. Will he now admit to the House that he misled the House?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

No, I did not mislead the House and certainly it is not my understanding of this provision that I have the power that I was asked to refer to yesterday. My understanding of this provision has always been that it is not open to the Minister to give this approval except on the initiative of the Director of Prisons. Those are the terms in which the section is expressed. It provides an initiative to the director, but subject to the Minister's approval. I have always taken that to be a quite different situation from one in which, as Minister, I could directly order the release of a prisoner, either for this period or for any other.

I might say, Mr President, that after that question was asked, and after question time, I did discuss this matter with the Executive Director of Corrective Services with a view to making a correction if necessary during the adjournment or at some other suitable time during yesterday's sitting. My main concern related not to a 72 hour absence under section 83 but to the capacity of the director to permit 10 days' early release in certain circumstances.

I was anxious to ensure that was an authority which he had directly as executive director and not an authority which I could exercise directly as Minister. I can only add to that that if the member wishes to get a more comprehensive opinion on the effect of section 83, and indeed it emerges that my own understanding of it is incorrect, then I stand corrected. The fact is that in almost seven years - first as Minister for Prisons and then as Minister for Corrective Services - the understanding of the limitations on my own authority has been as I have expressed it; certainly I have always operated on that basis - namely, I have never taken the initiative to release a prisoner for any period of time, whether 72 hours or 10 days.

JOURNALISTS - BARRASS, MR TONY

Minister for Corrective Services - Prison Release Allowance

628. Hon R.G. PIKE to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Is it possible that the Minister under section 83(2)(c), which reads -

... for any other purpose which appears to the Minister to be sufficient.

Hon J.M. Berinson: But that refers back to section 83(1).

Hon R.G. PIKE: Well, reading section 83(1) and (2)(c) as part of that, and having been the Minister for Prisons, I make the point - although I am loathe to refer to past activities in this place - there is nothing, in my view, to prevent the Minister for Corrective Services from discussing that with the director.

(1) Will the Minister discuss it with the director?

(2) Should he make the submission, will the Minister for Corrective Services now release Barrass?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1)-(2)

The answer is that I would not take an initiative of that kind. I said so directly to a rally of journalists outside the Parliament earlier today. To cut across a

sentence of seven days, which effectively will mean five days' imprisonment, would amount to an immediate and direct repudiation of a decision of the court. I believe that would be directly incompatible with an acceptance of the independent discretion of the judiciary; I would not seek to cut across its authority in that way - to repudiate the decision of that court and in effect to set myself up as some sort of appellate body with a proper authority to neutralise the decision of a court. I also indicated to the rally that I do not regard this issue as a closed issue, and that, in spite of the fact that the previous Government - of which Mr Pike was a member - accepted a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission that privilege should not be extended to journalists in this situation and in spite of the fact that that occurred in 1980 and was followed by action by the Government of which Mr Pike was a member clearly accepting that recommendation not to provide privilege, I believe, in light of later expressions of view by the Australian Law Reform Commission and others, that it would be timely to again have this question considered. That of course would not be a consideration limited to the position of journalists, but to other responsible professionals in a position where they come into possession of confidential information. That would include, among others, ministers of religion and medical practitioners.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will not permit any further questions along this line because firstly seeking legal opinions on whether some Act of Parliament says this or that is out of order in question time, and to embark on a debate on whether the Minister ought or ought not to have done something is completely out of order. If anyone disagrees with some action a Minister may have taken, or even a Minister's interpretation of what he ought to have done on this or any other matter, a provision is made in the Standing Orders for notice of motion to be given in order to debate the matter. I will not allow either the member who asks the question or indeed the Minister to embark on a debate on such a matter during questions without notice. If members want to do it, I will do what I said I would do yesterday - simply stop questions without notice because this action is precluding other members who genuinely want to use this period for the purpose of asking questions.

SPORT AND RECREATION - SYDNEY SWANS

Home Ground

629. Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) What is the name of the home ground of the Sydney Swans?
- (2) What, if any, is the form of lease which the Sydney Swans hold over the ground?
- (3) What length of lease do the Sydney Swans have and at what fee?

I ask this question because I wish to know its relationship with the 99-year lease suggested for the Subiaco Oval.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not want to sound as though I have suddenly gone berserk, but it seems to me that everything which is wrong happens all at once. It is not within the portfolio of the Minister to know what the provision of the Sydney Swans -

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: Shall I explain why I asked the question?

The PRESIDENT: The member has already done that.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I have not explained why I asked the question.

The PRESIDENT: The member can do that when I have finished saying what I want to say. The Minister is entitled to answer or not answer any question, but the rules strictly say that a question can only be directed without notice to a Minister relating to something that comes within the realms of his or her portfolio. I have a pretty vivid imagination and I am a pragmatic individual of the nth degree, but there is no way I can construe that a Minister of the Crown in the Western Australian Government could be expected to be informed about the conditions associated with some contract held by the Sydney Swans

in Sydney. If the honourable member disagrees with me and wants to elaborate, provided he can convince me, he may do so.

Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH: I asked the question because we have a proposed clause 30 to the Reserves and Land Revestment Bill now before the House. The circular sent to members says -

It had been proposed to vest the land directly in the W.A. Football Commission, to provide both the security required and the prestige of effectively owning the home of football in W.A., similar to other States.

I believe this House has the right to know what other States have. If the Minister makes a statement like that, he ought to be able to tell us.

The PRESIDENT: That is quite a different question. However, the Minister is free to answer the question if he believes it comes within the realms of his portfolio.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(3)

I should advise the member that the Government moved away from that position some time ago. The Government moved to adopt the preferred position of the Subiaco City Council. That is what Hon D.J. Wordsworth was talking about last week when he had a shot at me.

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: This has only just been circulated.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: What is the date on it?

Hon D.J. Wordsworth: The Government does not put dates on this sort of thing.

Hon Kay Hallahan: My speech notes were made available to your side of the House.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question was about the Sydney Swans and that is the question the Minister should answer.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I quite seriously ask members to simply accept that the Government is attempting to give to the major code in this State the same privileges enjoyed by the major codes in the other States. In doing that, the Government is taking into account the requirements of the local authority and indeed adopting a compromise position which was of its making.

SPORT AND RECREATION - SUBIACO OVAL

Written Agreement

630. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Given the general agreement in principle by all parties, including the Opposition, to the changes proposed in the Reserves and Land Revestment Bill regarding the vesting of Subiaco Oval, is the Minister proceeding towards a written agreement between the Subiaco City Council, the WA Football Commission and the Government which could be tabled during consideration of the relevant clause in the Bill before the House rises for Christmas?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

This question follows a question asked yesterday, but I am still in the dark. I do not know to which written agreement the member refers. I invite him to meet with me at a suitable time because I am more than happy to consider what it is he is talking about. He is asking me to commit two other parties to something about which I am not aware.

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL COUNCIL - SUMMER ANTI-LITTER CAMPAIGN

631. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Local Government:

Could the Minister outline what the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's summer anti-litter campaign involves?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I know that members in this House will be interested to hear that the Keep Australia Beautiful Council is concentrating on Western Australian waterways this summer. The character who has appeared on television the last three nights is Bunyip Bob, who will encourage us to think carefully about not carelessly dropping plastics, bait wrappings, fishing lines, or anything disastrous for the environment and the ecosystem. Bunyip Bob will remind us - and members are to let their constituents know - that at the end of the summer period we want clean waterways in Western Australia. If we can achieve that we will be able to thank Bunyip Bob and the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS - OLD TREASURY BUILDING

Sale or Lease

632. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Has the sale or lease of the old Treasury building been concluded or, if not, are negotiations for the sale/lease proceeding?
- (2) Will he table full details of the terms and conditions, including any caveat, that protect this important mid-nineteenth century heritage building from demolition or damage?
- (3) What are the grounds for allowing the sale/lease of the site?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Premier has provided the following response -

(1)-(3)

No, there has not been any sale or lease concluded for the old Treasury building, and no negotiations for sale or lease are being proceeded with. The Asset Management Task Force as part of its examination of all Government assets is currently reviewing the best future use of the old Treasury building. The Asset Management Task Force recognises the heritage significance of this building and will ensure this value is preserved in any future use of the site.

HEALTH - DOCTORS

Gnowangerup - Need

633. Hon MARGARET McALEER to the Minister for Local Government representing the Minister for Health:

Could the Minister indicate whether she is able to answer a question of which I gave notice about the lack of a doctor in Gnowangerup? I gave some notice of the question to the Minister for Health.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I will follow up that question tomorrow.

POLICE - RANDOM BREATH TESTS

Evaluation

634. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Can the Minister advise whether he has any information on the evaluation of the introduction of random breath testing in Western Australia?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for notice of the question. I have numerous copies of that evaluation and I have asked that they be distributed. I encourage members to note the contents of the evaluation particularly in the light of pending debate in this place on random breath testing. I circulate the document in the hope that members in this place might adopt a similar approach to that taken in the other place which was to deal with this matter in a bipartisan manner.

SPORT AND RECREATION - RESERVES AND LAND REVESTMENT BILL
Draft New Clause 30 - Document Distribution

635. Hon PETER FOSS to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Is the Minister the person responsible for the distribution of a document which was circulated as a draft for new clause 30 for the Reserves and Land Revestment Bill? If so, did the Minister at the time of circulation know what the situation was with regard to the tenure of football clubs in other States?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I am being asked to comment on a document of which I have no copy. If I could see the document I could identify whether I circulated it.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS - COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT
Executive Council - Name Release

636. Hon P.G. PENDAL to the Leader of the House:

I preface my question by drawing attention to the remarks the Leader volunteered to the House yesterday on the imminent appointment of a new Commissioner for Consumer Affairs.

- (1) Will the Minister confirm his remark that the name of the recommended appointee has not yet gone to the Executive Council?
- (2) Will he arrange to table all relevant documents in relation to action taken by the Government beyond the point at which it received the recommendation of the panel?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) I do not know whether an Executive Council meeting was held yesterday. If it was, it is quite likely that the appointment would have been presented at that meeting although at shorter notice than is usually required. I therefore have to take that part of the question on notice. The member can take it, if he sees a public statement by the Minister of the appointment, that it did get to the Executive Council this week, and that the release of the name was therefore in order.
- (2) It is not open to me, when representing another Minister, to indicate whether particular papers would be made available.

Hon P.G. Pendal: I have asked that the Minister arrange to table the documents.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I will arrange for the question to be presented to the Minister. But I have to say that if a similar question were put to me in relation to an appointment within my portfolio I would not be inclined to comply with it.

PARLIAMENT - RECOMMENCEMENT DATE

637. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Leader of the House:

Can he indicate a rough date when Parliament will recommence in 1990, considering that people who are conducting Select Committees should be able to arrange itineraries for visits to appropriate places?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

That question has not yet been considered by the Government.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Not even a month?

Hon J.M. BERINSON: It has not been considered. I can tell the member what months have not been considered; that is, neither January, February, March, nor April - none has been considered. I expect that advice would go to members either by the end of this month or early next month.

COOLGARDIE COURTHOUSE - HISTORIC DISPLAY ITEMS

638. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Which group or association is responsible for the security and maintenance of the various historic items on display at the Coolgardie Courthouse?
- (2) What action has been taken to ensure that the various items of historic significance in respect of the gold mining industry which were left to the people of Coolgardie by the late Mr Ben Prior are held securely for the future?
- (3) Who is responsible for maintaining any inventory of the items of historic significance on display at the Coolgardie Courthouse?
- (4) What action or contribution has the Government taken or made to ensure that items of historic significance, in particular those related to the early history of gold mining in the Coolgardie area, are being kept for posterity as part of our State's heritage?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The Minister for Planning has provided the following response -

- (1) The Coolgardie Courthouse building now houses the Coolgardie Tourist Bureau and the Coolgardie Goldfields Exhibition. The building is vested in the Shire of Coolgardie, while the security and maintenance of the historic items contained within are the responsibility of the tourist bureau.
- (2) The land and contents of the Ben Prior Museum are vested in the Shire of Coolgardie and responsibility for their maintenance rests with the shire. The Western Australian Tourism Commission has contributed \$3 816 to the restoration of the museum.
- (3) The Coolgardie Tourist Bureau is responsible for maintaining any inventory of the items on display.
- (4) The WATC has contributed funds to assist with the development/restoration of museums and maintenance of historical items in the Coolgardie area. Grants include -

Ben Prior Museum - \$3 816 - 1988-89;

Coolgardie Goldfields Exhibition - housed in the Coolgardie Tourist Bureau in the courthouse building - \$2 237 - 1983;

Waghorn Bottle Collection - two grants to assist with the purchase and relocation of the collection -

\$25 000 - 1983;

\$3 050 - 1986.

This collection is housed in the old courthouse building.

Restoration of the Railway Museum - grant of \$2 000 recently approved, but not yet paid out - 1989-90.