

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 8th May, 1979

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

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

*Effect of Industrial Dispute:
Statement by Speaker*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): Owing to the lack of electricity for industry tomorrow the Government Printer will not be able to produce a Notice Paper for tomorrow's sitting. This being the case, questions on notice for tomorrow will be postponed till Thursday.

The power strike will also cause delays in the printing of *Votes and Proceedings* and *Hansard*.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Acts Amendment and Repeal (Road Maintenance) Bill.
2. Road Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced without notice, on motions by Mr Rushton (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (ROAD MAINTENANCE) BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [4.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Acts Amendment and Repeal (Road Maintenance) Bill is for the purpose of repealing the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act and amending the Road Traffic, Transport Commission, and Main Roads Acts to provide alternative sources of funds to maintain the State's roadworks programme and employment in the road construction industry.

I propose firstly to deal with the provisions of the Bill which provide for the repeal of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act.

The road maintenance charge which was levied under the provisions of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act was based upon equity principles that after taking road user taxes into

consideration, such as the Commonwealth fuel tax and licence fees paid by all vehicles, the heavy commercial vehicle compared with the lighter vehicle was not making an adequate contribution for the greater wear and tear it caused to the roads.

However, the defects of the road maintenance charge as a taxing measure were that it was administratively cumbersome and the evasion incidence was relatively high. The levying of the charge required a great deal of paper work on the part of road hauliers and there were opportunities for the unscrupulous operator to evade the charge to the detriment of the many reputable people in the industry. The Government was fully aware of the defects of this taxing measure but so long as it remained the standard legislative approach throughout Australia the Government had strong reasons for continuing road maintenance tax in Western Australia.

When the Queensland Premier recently announced the abolition of the road maintenance charge in that State, strong demands were placed on the Western Australian Government to follow suit. These pressures were strengthened when the Commonwealth Minister for Transport intervened in the dispute with hauliers in the Eastern States by stating that he supported the abolition of this road user charge. As other State Governments then abolished the levying of this charge, our Government, so as not to disadvantage our road transport industry, fell into line to abolish the charge in this State. Accordingly this Bill provides for the repeal as from the 1st July, 1979, of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, 1965-1978.

The Bill also includes consequential amendments to the Road Traffic Act, 1974-1977, to abolish as from the 1st July, 1979, the 50 per cent vehicle licence fee concession given to those heavy trucks on which the road maintenance charge was levied. This concession will not operate for any unexpired period of a heavy truck licence subsequent to the 30th June, 1979. When the road maintenance charge was introduced in 1965, heavy truck owners received a 50 per cent refund on the unexpired part of their then current vehicle licence and we now have the reverse situation.

Members will appreciate that with the abolition of the road maintenance charge, it is essential that alternative sources of revenues should be provided to maintain our roadworks programme and contribute towards meeting the pressing road needs of this State, as Western Australia is facing a continuing shortfall in funding for roads, especially from Commonwealth sources.

I would like to point out that the previous increase in State road user charges was the increase in vehicle licence fees in October, 1977. It is estimated that cost inflation between October 1977, and July of this year will be of the order of 16 per cent and, therefore, additional funds are required to make good our roadworks programme due to this inflation factor.

The Government had intended, in this session of Parliament, to increase vehicle licence fees by 15 per cent on all vehicles other than heavy vehicles which were to be increased by 30 per cent. Driver's licences were to be increased by \$2. Previous exemptions were to be maintained. These increases would have raised about \$7.8 million.

However, subsequently when it became necessary to abolish the road maintenance charge, the Government decided to review all State road user charges.

I will remind members briefly of some of the pressing road needs in this vast State. In the north of the State, we are pushing ahead to seal the national highway from Goldsworthy to Broome by early 1981, and this important project will take a big portion of the State road authority's construction effort and funds available for national highways. When this is completed, there are other important sections such as Fitzroy Crossing to Halls Creek and Newman to Whim Creek to undertake.

While the Government recently announced a five-year \$24 million programme to upgrade intra-Pilbara roads, and this programme will accelerate construction and sealing on some Pilbara roads, much more remains to be done to provide good road communications for the communities living in this isolated but resource rich region.

In the rural areas in the south of the State, there is a need to upgrade and widen many roads. For example, there are 4 500 kilometres of main and secondary roads only 3.7 metres wide which require widening.

In the metropolitan area, we have the funding capacity to complete only one major project at a time. As available funds are being directed to the Kwinana Freeway extension project, we cannot get on with stage 4 of the Mitchell Freeway or the Burswood Bridge project with resultant increasing traffic congestion.

Western Australia's road funding problems are closely related to the deterioration in road funding by the Commonwealth Government in recent years. Since the year 1975-76, the total Commonwealth road grant to Western Australia

has been increased from \$58.3 million in 1975-76 to \$64.4 million in 1978-79, an increase of only 10.46 per cent. This increase has been well below the cost inflation level with the result that since 1975-76, the real value of our road grant has not been maintained.

Despite our efforts to change the attitude of the Commonwealth Government on road grants, there are no good prospects that we will receive any real increase in our grant over the next few years. The Commonwealth is maintaining a stringent policy in relation to specific purpose grants, such as for road grants to the States, as part of its overall anti-inflation policy.

With the abolition of the road maintenance charge from the 1st July, our efforts have been concentrated on finding a practical, equitable, and constitutional replacement source of funds. Various alternatives to the road maintenance charge have been considered and I am now in a position to place before members a total package of measures based on equitable "user pays" principles in respect of revenue sources to maintain our roadworks programme.

These measures are contained in the proposed amendments to the Transport Commission Act, 1966-1977, as contained in this Bill and in consequential amendments to the complementary Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1974-1977.

Part IIIA of the Bill deals with amendments to the Transport Commission Act to provide for the introduction in Western Australia as from the 1st July, 1979, of business franchise (petroleum products) licensing.

In this part of the Bill, a system of State licensing of "petroleum products wholesaling" is proposed in such a manner that only the oil companies will need to be licensed. The licence fee consists of a flat fee of \$500 per annum plus 1c per litre of motor spirit (petrol) and 4c per litre of road use diesel fuel based on sales in the previous 12-months period. The Government anticipates that the oil companies will find it necessary to pass these fees on to road users. That being so, the effect of the Bill will be to require those who use the roads to contribute to their construction and maintenance on the basis of 4c per litre for diesel fuel used only in road vehicles and 1c per litre for motor spirit (petrol).

The use of fuel consumption as a base for the contribution on the user pays principle must be contrasted with vehicle licence fees which are a fixed charge which do not vary with road use. Both New Zealand and England have recently endorsed the user pays principle for restructuring road user charges. The user pays principle has a

strong equity foundation and is of paramount importance in promoting policies of petroleum fuel conservation.

As the funds are required not only to replace the road maintenance charge revenues but also to provide funds to make good the erosion in our road funds in recent years due to cost inflation, the proposed road user charge extends to both the use of petrol and road use diesel fuel.

The proposed fuel levy is being set at 1c per litre for petrol in accordance with the principle of moving towards the more equitable user pays system with a greater emphasis on a charge related to use. At the same time, in the complementary Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1974-1977, a reduction of 20 per cent is being given in the vehicle licence fees for all vehicles except heavy trucks. Vehicle licence fees are a fixed charge and are not directly related to use.

As the road maintenance charge was a legitimate charge on heavy trucks because of the greater wear and tear they cause to the road system, and as heavy trucks are diesel powered, the fuel levy for road use diesel fuel is set at the higher level of 4c per litre and combined with the abolition of the 50 per cent concession in vehicle licence fees for heavy trucks at present paying the road maintenance charge, these measures will make a substantial contribution from heavy trucks to replace the road funds lost by the abolition of the road maintenance charge.

A few motorcars and some light and medium weight trucks not subject to the road maintenance charge are diesel powered. A 50 per cent concession in the vehicle licence fee is being made in the complementary Bill to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1974-1977, for these vehicles to cushion them from the higher differential in the diesel fuel levy compared with petrol.

By limiting the scope of the Bill to oil companies' operations, the administration of the new fuel licensing system will be much simplified. For the same reason, there is no provision for any exemptions for motor spirit users or for the use of diesel fuel in road vehicles on public roads thus again minimising administration costs and procedures and providing consistency with the road use equity principle. However, the State licence fee will not be levied on diesel fuel used on farms, or in power generation, railways, or other non-road use purposes.

The Bill will be administered by the Commissioner of Transport and as this in effect is a road user charge measure, the whole of the proceeds will be paid into the Main Roads Trust

Account administered by the Commissioner of Main Roads for construction and maintenance of roads. While it is intended that the administration of the petroleum products licensing scheme will be met from Transport Commission funds, a consequential amendment to the Main Roads Act, 1930-1977, is included in the Bill to provide that if, on an occasion, Transport Commission funds are not sufficient, moneys may be transferred from the Main Roads Trust Account for this purpose. This provision is similar to a provision which applied for the administration of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act.

Powers for inspection of records to prevent evasion of the licence fees and other administrative powers are contained in the Bill and are similar to the State Business Franchise (Tobacco) Act. This Act has been successfully administered for a number of years.

The estimated net yield from this package of road user charge measures for the 1979-80 year is \$10.8 million, and after allowing for the replacement of the estimated road maintenance charge funds for that year of \$6.3 million, an amount of \$4.5 million will be available as a contribution towards meeting cost inflation compared with the \$7.8 million previously contemplated. The Government has opted for the lower figure to minimise the impact of the proposed charges on the economy of the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

RURAL HOUSING (ASSISTANCE) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier), and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: NINTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 3rd May, on the following motion by Mr Shalders—

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

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

MR GREWAR (Roe) [5.12 p.m.]: For my electorate 1979 has heralded a return to much better times with an upturn in rural fortunes. Improved terms of trade in meat and wool mean so much to my constituents and our community as we are very dependent on a prosperous agricultural sector.

We have heard much of the investment-led recovery and consumer-led recovery, and in the past four years these recoveries have led to nought, our economy has virtually remained in the doldrums. A contribution of good old-fashioned rural-led recovery will, as it has in the past, flow on into the Australian economy and bring about great improvements.

In the past four years the rural sector has had little available money to invest in improvements and developments; Australian farms are in a very neglected state. However, the upturn in receipts that looks like coming forward as we move out of the recession, will allow further farm works to proceed and it will bring about a stimulation to the economy which will be felt right through this State and the nation.

It is heartening also to read that the prospects in the mining industry are improving, with an upturn in demand and prices. This should further strengthen the economy in the years ahead.

While all was gloom and despair for the past four years, the picture today is one of guarded optimism with a return to profitability, stimulation of industry, and a reduction in unemployment.

On the debit side we have the evils of inflation tending to erode our new-found prosperity, and Governments must exercise constant vigilance to clamp down on the factors responsible if we are to enjoy the full fruits of any improvement in the economy.

With the increase in fuel prices, it will be very difficult for a Government to contain inflation at the present level.

Mr Carr: It is the Government that put the fuel prices up—the Federal Government.

Mr GREWAR: It is to be hoped we learn something, as we come out of our rural recession, that may prevent us making some of the mistakes we have made in the past three or four years. I am sure beef farmers will have learnt a great deal.

It has been most important to learn that beef is cyclical in its production; this is a recurring phenomenon. Now we are aware of this we can change our production practices to become anti-cyclical, giving us long-term stability. This is especially important for Australia because we are

the world's largest suppliers of beef and veal, and have a marked effect on world trade.

For the first time, many of our primary producers will be able to invest in their own stabilisation schemes through income equalisation deposits. This will be very significant in that in times of recession there may not be the call on Government funds there has been in the past.

Before I deal with problems specific to my electorate, I should like to refer to some issues of more general importance to this State and Australia. It is my belief that the most important problem facing us today is the exhaustion of fossil fuels. The inevitability of this happening was made known to us many decades ago. However, it was not until recently that we realised just how finite these resources were. We have learnt that replacement fuels are needed; these will need to be either inexhaustible or renewable if our economy is to remain buoyant and technological advances are to continue.

Whether or not we like it, nuclear fuels must provide our main energy source in the future, supplemented in part—hopefully, in a big part—by tidal power, solar power, hydroelectric power, wind power, etc. However, this will not solve the problem of the shortage of transport fuel, which is where our major problem lies. These fuels must be portable and must have a high energy value per unit volume.

While technologies are studying alternative fuels, it is important for Governments and industry to economise, to stretch out the limited fuel resources available to us. It is pleasing to note that our Government is spelling this out in its energy policy. Currently, about two-thirds of our energy requirements are derived from petroleum products. A document I have in front of me reveals that by the year 2000 less than half of our energy requirements will be satisfied from this source. With long-term lead times in the development of new field concepts—lead times of from 10 to 20 years—it is important to be discussing our transport position as a matter of urgency.

We could use hydrogen produced by nuclear fusion, tidal power, hydro power, wind power, etc; it is relatively abundant and can be produced cheaply; in addition, the technology to carry out this operation already is fairly well known. However, hydrogen has many problems, not the least being the ability to explode with inadequate care. We must keep our options open in respect of this fuel.

We could use liquid petroleum gas much more extensively. However, here again we have a finite

resource. LPG has various advantages. Fairly large reserves of the gas exist in Western Australia. It is a fuel with high energy value. It is less corrosive, thereby doubling engine life. It is a clean fuel, causing little pollution. Intervals between oil changes are longer, therefore it results in a saving in oil. It is also cheaper than petrol.

On the debit side there is the high cost of converting a standard vehicle to using LP gas; at the moment it costs some \$800. The fuel occupies more space in the vehicle. A widespread conversion to LPG as a fuel would result in a duplication of distribution facilities, bringing added costs to the industry.

However, I believe the Government should be promoting the use of this fuel and providing inducements, firstly, by way of assurances on price, relative to petroleum products—this price currently is lower than petroleum and we hope this will be maintained—secondly, by abolishing the sales tax on components and equipment; thirdly, by allowing taxation rebates on fuel and equipment; and, fourthly, by providing financial assistance by way of loans or guarantees to any industry wishing to establish distribution centres throughout the State.

The Government could give added impetus to the use of LPG fuel by converting the public transport system, Government cars, trucks and other equipment to run on LPG.

Initially, the use of LPG would be limited by the number of distribution centres. Currently, such centres are in Perth, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Geraldton. However, such a move on the part of the Government could provide the initiative to encourage private enterprise companies and individuals to make the conversion.

I have mentioned already the use of LPG fuel would result in a significant drop in air pollution levels. While on this point, I urge the Government to consider rescinding legislation requiring the fitting of emission control devices, especially to country users who operate in areas where pollution is no problem. I say this in the interests of fuel economy. Here we are, wasting 5 per cent to 10 per cent of our fuel through the inefficiencies inherent in these emission controls when, largely, such controls are not warranted.

We have another source in the fuel alcohols. We should be studying not so much the techniques but the crops from which methanol and ethanol can be produced. These are energy-rich fuels which can be produced from agricultural crops, waste products, coal, and a variety of other sources. The technique of using alcohol fuel is well known, be it used as an

additive or as the complete fuel itself. Some countries already are initiating the use of alcohol fuels and, in fact, Brazil intends to draw a large part of its future energy requirements from this source.

In Australia, the CSIRO had done a great deal of work on starch and sugar-rich crops and also on the various species of eucalypt and other products from which ethanol fuel may be derived. The Ord River would be an excellent area to produce crops for this purpose, with its warm and constant climate making high yields possible.

Mr Jamieson: I am glad somebody on the Government side is giving me a bit of support.

Mr GREWAR: There are many of us on this side who believe in renewable energy sources. In southern areas utilisation of agricultural crops, grain and forest products is a practical possibility, and should be investigated.

I believe the Department of Agriculture should be taking a more active role in investigating under dry land conditions the potential of beef crops, potatoes and other starch-rich crops which may be grown under our Mediterranean agricultural system.

The successful economics of using alcohol fuel will depend on utilising cheap inputs; this is based on a high production rate per acre. The Government's energy policy spells out that it will encourage this industry with specific incentives, no doubt in the hope of encouraging industry to establish alcohol-producing plants. I would like to see the further extension of Government guarantees and loans to any company which wished to exploit the potential of these energy sources, and to see legislation enacted making it mandatory for fuel companies to utilise a percentage of ethanol when it became available in quantity.

Another fuel source of considerable importance in the future is derived from the liquefaction of coal. This is a field where, again, Australia has lagged behind other countries. This is difficult to understand considering we have so much coal in Australia. The technology has been well researched in very great detail. This process has been exploited by Germany. In fact, World War II would have ended much sooner, had it not been for this fact. In South Africa plants are operating to produce fuel by the liquefaction of coal.

Several years ago, the cost of converting coal to liquid fuel was about four times the price of energy obtained from petroleum products. However, with OPEC setting higher and higher prices, the gap is reducing; it now costs only twice as much to convert coal as it does to purchase fuel

derived from petroleum. In 10 years' time, if fuel price increases continue to be recklessly imposed by OPEC the two energy sources could be equal in price.

Australia has vast resources of coal. Western Australia's reserves as yet are not fully known; only the Collie coalfield has been assessed with any accuracy; further reserves are known to exist at Encabba, but no assessment has been made of their magnitude or economic significance.

In the hinterland, to the north of Esperance, there are indications of extensive deposits of low-grade brown coal. These reserves were discovered purely by chance only 18 months ago. They are situated in what is not regarded as a mineralised area; mining companies were not interested in the area, and did not drill the site.

Mr T. H. Jones: Has the find been reported to the Mines Department?

Mr GREWAR: It is well known to the Mines Department. The farmers and pastoralists in the area, realising the land was saline and of low relief, did not sink holes to try to reach underground water; they believed the water would be too saline for their stock. It was only when the MRD needed water—saline or otherwise—for the construction of a bitumen road north of Esperance that holes were drilled. In fact, some seven or eight holes extending over 16 square kilometres encountered coal seams 16 or 17 metres thick with a similar overburden; in other words, the seams were located 17 metres underground. In layman's terms, this represents a vast deposit. However, samples from the drillcores revealed the coal to be of low quality when compared with the black bituminous coals. Its energy value is some 4 500 BTU, which is about half that of Collie coal, but which is equal to the coal produced at Yallourn. This coal find must not be discounted, as it may be of future use for steaming or liquefaction purposes.

The samples reveal a high moisture and ash content, both of which are undesirable properties. Some pegging has been carried out by private companies, but little else has been done to determine the full extent of the field. The immediate market prospects apparently do not warrant greater expenditure on exploration. However, very little research has been carried out. This is a great pity because this could be an energy source of tremendous potential just waiting to be further investigated and exploited.

Regrettably, shafts were not sunk to test the actual coal seam and analyse the various stages. It could well be the high ash and moisture content are due to the presence of soil seams, which could

be removed in the process of excavation. On the other hand, the high ash content could be due to the presence of common salt—because, of course, the area is particularly saline—which probably could be economically removed simply by washing the product after crushing. The high moisture content presents no problem in this rather dry climate, solar drying during storage being economically feasible.

On the credit side, we have a material which is easily mined. The ratio of overburden to mineral is 1:1, which is regarded as a very economic deposit to extract. The material is soft and cheesy and it is possible to excavate by means of a rotary bucket dredge.

I speculate this could be a very large deposit. I have arrived at this conclusion because of the information I have been given by geologists on the likely formation of this material. Possibly, the coal was formed in Eocene times, these beds being laid down in the large river system which drained the Yilgarn and eastern goldfields area. A study of aerial photographs reveals the remnants of several large rivers which once flowed south from the Yilgarn and eastern goldfields area. As the climate became drier and the topography became flat and more mature—characterised by wide, shallow and flat river valleys—the vegetation grew luxuriantly. The decomposing material gradually built up the coal deposits now manifested there. If conditions around the other rivers were similar to this area, other large deposits of coal may exist throughout the region.

It is a pity private enterprise cannot foresee the exploitation potential of these deposits at this stage, but is allowing them to remain without further investigation. To all intents and purposes, the area has been abandoned. In view of the importance of our transport energy requirements, I would like to see some incentives provided to encourage companies further to explore the area—perhaps in association with Government geologists. I believe the Government is to establish an officer in Kalgoorlie to study the sedimentary geology of the area.

Many questions need to be answered. Firstly, we need to assess the size of the present deposit; this can be determined by drilling on a grid system. Shafts would need to be sunk to determine the properties of the deposit. Drilling would need to be carried out in the other river systems to determine whether coal exists in those areas, and if so in what quantities and qualities. I make the recommendation, and as I believe that coal liquefaction could be economically feasible in the years ahead, with a lead time of 10-plus years, we should now be assessing the potential.

I would be remiss if I did not press the case of Esperance as the port and Kalgoorlie as the supply and distribution centre for the Yeelirrie and Lake Way uranium deposits. In an agreement between the Government and the mining company which passed through this House last year, the company was given the right to choose its port for the importing of fuel and caustic soda in tonnages up to 250 000 tonnes per annum. Such tonnages passing through the Port of Esperance would do much to improve its viability and strengthen the railway system linking Esperance with Leonora. The utilisation of the Esperance-Kalgoorlie area would also strengthen regional development. Infrastructure has been created by the Government and industry. The choice of another town as the port would mean the setting up of an additional infrastructure. I foresee that that is not necessary.

A standard gauge railway line was built at great cost between Esperance and Leonora. It was intended that the line would carry large quantities of nickel and salt. However, in recent years a smelter has been established at Kalgoorlie, and the volume of nickel carried on the line has slowed to a trickle. The carriage of salt has ceased, because its production has been unable to compete with the salt obtained in the north-western areas of the State.

As a result of this, the railway line is little used except for the carriage of imported fuel oils and other supplies for the eastern goldfields area. The operation of the line must be marginal. The carriage of an additional 250 000 tonnes on the line would do much to improve its viability. It is vital that the line continue to exist, as I believe the eastern goldfields area has a very real prospect of future development.

We all know that some areas are being mined now. There are quite considerable areas of minerals which have been assessed, and the indications are that there will be some viable mines which could be developed further. North of Leonora, there is the Teutonic Bore, which is a very high-grade deposit of copper-lead-silver-zinc. The area is being investigated by Selcast and MIM. At the present, there is an assessed mineable tonnage of three million to four million tonnes. Upon further assessment, this figure may be increased further.

In the same area, there is the Agnew nickel prospect, which is already in production. This is one of the larger nickel deposits in the world. The mine produces between 10 000 and 12 000 tonnes of mined ore a month. However, it is expected that within the next few years this tonnage will be increased five-fold to 300 000 tonnes a year. Even

on that figure, the mine has a life of 50 years plus.

Further north we have the Mt. Keith and Yarabindi nickel deposits. These deposits embrace some of the largest, if not the largest, nickel deposits in the world. Unfortunately, they are low-grade deposits, and mining is not feasible at the present time. However, it may be that mining of these areas will be economically feasible within 20 years.

The next area I want to deal with is the Lake Way uranium deposit. That is an area with significant uranium deposits which could be producing before Yeelirrie, which is also in the same area. Yeelirrie is also a significant uranium deposit.

Between Yeelirrie, Lake Way and Mt. Newman there is potential for future developments of copper, uranium, and diamond mines. Evaluations are proceeding. Nothing has been assessed fully, but there are prospects for potential mines. It appears obvious from the development that has occurred and is likely to occur in this area that a Kalgoorlie-Mt. Newman rail link will be required to transport heavy tonnages of minerals and supplies to and from the port. As a first step, I would suggest the extension of the Leonora-Yeelirrie line be carried out. This could be followed in later stages by extensions to Mt. Keith and to Mt. Newman, giving the eastern goldfields a link with the Pilbara and areas further north.

The implementation of a rail policy would effect tremendous advantages for the eastern goldfields, Esperance, and Pilbara regions. At present, all goods destined for the Pilbara are transhipped at Perth or at Kewdale, where they are warehoused and distributed by various modes to the areas in the north. The Eastern States traffic far outweighs that originating from Western Australia. The establishment of Kalgoorlie as a warehousing and distribution centre would effect more savings for the Pilbara because of its shorter distance from the Eastern States. Those members who know their geometry would realise that such a link would form one side of a triangle.

The role of Kalgoorlie as an administration, supply, and distribution centre would be strengthened by a line such as this. It would be to the advantage of areas such as the northern Murchison, because the products from those areas could be exported through the Pilbara ports or through Esperance, whichever would be the cheaper alternative.

Recently a Westrail engineer investigated the possibility of utilising a Perth-Pilbara rail link, and five routes were studied. The Kalgoorlie-Mt. Newman link was ranked third in importance. I believe the engineer based his opinion on the wrong premise—that the goods were already in Perth. However, if it is considered that the goods dispatch centre be based at Kalgoorlie, there would be advantages for the establishment of a Kalgoorlie-Mt. Newman rail link. The construction of a rail line between, say, Leonora and Mt Newman would follow a shorter route. Few engineering problems would be encountered. There are no great rivers to cross, and generally the land is of flat relief. Such a line would represent the lowest capital cost for the alternatives suggested by the Westrail engineer. The construction time for such a rail link would be between 4 1/2 and seven years. It would be appropriate for a further feasibility study to be done now to investigate the establishment of this rail link. I urge the Government to give consideration to this point.

I would like now to deal with the development of the fishing industry on the south coast. The parliamentary committee, following a study last year, made various suggestions for the further exploitation of the fishing industry. Suggestions were made for an intensive interchange of ideas between fishermen and industry disciplines. Several recommendations were made which were appropriate to my electorate. The local fishermen consider those recommendations to be vital.

The first important recommendation was for the establishment of research facilities in our area. A parallel could be drawn between the fishing industry and agriculture when one considers the value of research. Two-thirds of the south-west corner of this State would not be developed for agriculture had it not been for the efforts of research workers. The use of research could effect improvements in the fishing industry. Very limited investigations have been carried out in relation to the south coast. There have been indications of the potential of the fishing industry, but a lot of work remains to be done. Even in our fisheries currently exploiting salmon and tuna, many gaps still remain in our knowledge of their potential.

There has been tremendous speculation on the potential on the shelf and in the waters to the south. No-one really knows the limitations on the size of schools of pilchards. Recently there was a report of a pilchard school south of Esperance which was 12 miles long. Without investigations and joint venture feasibility studies, such speculation will have no basis; we will not know

the potential of our pilchard fisheries. We will not know of the potential for gem fish, or blue grenadier fish, which are two very important species in South Australia. Can we afford to sit around and speculate?

I commend the Federal Government for initiating 10 feasibility studies between Asian countries and Australian interests around the Australian coast in the past few months. I hope more feasibility studies will be set up to deal specifically with the fisheries of our south coastal area.

The parliamentary committee suggested that a fishing boat harbour be established at Esperance to cater for the needs of the growing tuna industry. This recommendation has been adopted in statements made by the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife and the Minister for Works. The Government's commitment to the establishment of this boat harbour has been welcomed by the fishermen in Esperance. Those fishermen are presently operating under extreme difficulties, from a small, inadequate jetty.

However, concern has been expressed at the programmed construction time for the boat harbour. It seems that it will not be fully functional for seven to eight years. This period is quite ridiculous. The facility will be of little value other than for shelter in the first four or five years. I urge a reassessment of the construction time. The construction time should be brought into the realms of reality.

We are cognizant of the demands on Government. We do not wish to place a greater burden on the taxpayers. However, much of the funding for a boat harbour could come from within the industry itself.

Members are aware that farmers in the grain-growing industry were faced with similar facilities problems in the time of the introduction of bulk handling. The farmers formed themselves into a co-operative to pay for their own facilities. A similar co-operative, based on a levy on the catch, could provide funds for a fishing boat harbour and facilities. Additional funds could be drawn from other boat owners.

The recreational boat owners contribute little or nothing to the facilities at the moment. Some charge could be made for proper moorings and safe anchorages. The savings on insurance alone would more than cover any additional charges raised.

Concern is being expressed by country communities at the plans of the Public Works Department to enforce sewerage provisions in some country towns. The Government must be

mindful of the fact that the provision of sewerage costs residents \$1 500 to \$2 000 a block. In addition, there are annual rating charges. The addition of \$2 000 to the cost of a residential block is unwarranted and unjustified in many instances.

Development costs in country towns are considerably higher than in Perth. Formerly, it was cheap to purchase a block of land on which to build a house in country areas. However, with the provision of sewerage, sealed roads, drainage, water, power, and other things the price of country land now equals the price of city land. The all-up cost of building a home on a developed block is probably 20 to 30 per cent higher than in a city area. The factors a new home buyer must consider very carefully are the asset value and the resale potential. People must weigh up whether it is worth building in a country town.

The Government must look very closely at these policies which are contrary to encouraging decentralisation. There are many country towns which have poor drainage, and in which a sewerage scheme is required. However, there are many other areas where there are deep soils and deep water tables. In those areas, sewerage schemes are not justified. I should like the Minister to contain the enthusiasm of his department in this regard.

Most new home builders are young people who are stretching their financial resources to the limit to establish their own homes without adding unnecessarily to their burden. Perhaps in time, as the density of housing increases, a sewerage scheme may be justified. At that time, however, these people will be in a better financial position and they will be able to bear the costs involved. I should like to see clear guidelines established in relation to the feasibility of sewerage schemes. These guidelines should take into account the depth of the soil, the depth of the water table, and the density of housing.

The subject of Aboriginal housing has been debated at length in this House recently, and many questions have been asked. It is my belief that the demand for housing for Aborigines should not have occurred all of a sudden, as has been the case. Governments should never have bowed to minority groups which demanded drinking rights, equal pay, and social services for Aborigines.

Prior to the implementation of the legislation these people were catered for adequately. They lived on stations or tribal land and had a great deal of dignity. Today this has been lost. The legislation has meant that Aborigines cannot

obtain jobs on stations as a result of which they move into fringe areas of the city and become dependent on the State. I am sure, if we asked these people whether they would prefer to opt for the old life they were familiar with, they would choose to do so. Life meant much more to the Aborigines prior to the implementation of this legislation, even if by our standards their way of life was rather rugged.

It would be impossible to contemplate repudiating the legislation and hence we are left with the legacy of housing these people who are quite unable to make contributions towards it from their own funds at this stage. The reason I have broached the subject is to place before the House the folly of the policy of the SHC which results in Aborigines being scattered randomly throughout State housing areas. That is a general policy.

I concede that this policy of peppering and salting Aborigines throughout SHC areas is advantageous to many Aborigines who are ready to be assimilated in this manner. There are quite a number of Aborigines in this position, but the majority of them are not capable of being assimilated yet. These Aborigines prefer to live communally and this SHC policy is not appreciated by either the Aborigines or their white counterparts. Most white people have a higher domestic standard than Aborigines and expect their neighbours to adopt the same practices as they do in relation to house care and style of living. Most white people work together to maintain the area in a clean and neat condition with good aesthetic appeal. A neighbour, white or black, who maintains his property poorly, deposits rubbish on the street and footpaths and leaves car bodies lying around, is viewed rather unfavourably.

It is a tragedy for white people who are buying their own homes to be told that their neighbouring tenant is to be an Aboriginal. These white people have a strong vested interest in maintaining a well presented and clean environment as it reflects on the value of their houses. When Aborigines move into these areas house values drop dramatically and if anyone wishes to sell he must discount the value of his house accordingly. Once Aborigines move into the area, the value of the house appreciates no longer. This is the result of the shameful integration policy adopted by the SHC.

My belief is that where standards of hygiene and responsibility do not approach a certain norm, the people who lack such standards should be housed in a special area—ghettos, if members like—where they affect the lives of their own ilk

only. Such people are happy living in these circumstances, therefore, why should we impose our will on them?

I should like to express my appreciation that the Government has recommenced land releases in my electorate. The reintroduction of this policy has been acclaimed widely. The view has been expressed recently that the rate of allocation should be increased as primary producers' terms of trade are rising.

I support fully this concept, especially in view of the fact that one of our major land development companies has virtually completed selling its allocations of virgin land. The present policy allows for approximately 30 to 40 farm blocks a year to be made available in the Esperance area. It is believed this number could be doubled as there is a large demand for farms in the area.

I am cognisant of the fact that the increase in number would necessitate a Cabinet subcommittee going beyond the guidelines which have been established in relation to farm buildup and consolidation. The decision to stay within these parameters was arrived at as a result of pressure by a farmer organisation which wanted *carte blanche* land releases to cease. The same organisation was responsible for wheat quotas. This is a group which wishes to remove all competition in the field of agriculture. These people wish to confine agriculture to themselves. This is a selfish and anti-social philosophy and it is not viewed favourably by the people in my electorate. It is all very well for the particular people concerned—Dad probably gave them a farm and they wish now to keep out competitors; they wish to form a club and establish rules for entry—but it is too bad for the poor city fellow or the boy from the bush who wants to start a farm. He will have to buy from the club members at a higher and higher price. It is too bad for Esperance, Gnowangerup, Ravensthorpe, Lake Grace, and the Dundas districts which commenced development just prior to this policy being introduced. The virgin land will stay as it is. It will remain unproductive and will be the haunt of vermin, kangaroos and emus. It is too bad for the development of services, abattoirs etcetera, as far as this club is concerned. The members of the club are happy as long as they are not interfered with.

In my area approximately four million to five million acres are awaiting development. It will take 20 years to develop fully to the stage where that land will offer any form of competition to the club which, by this time, because of the narrow horizons of its members, will be forced out of the

industry anyway. In 20 years' time the world will be able to absorb the tiny increase which comes from the production of this land. If this does not occur, our demographers are wrong.

The club is the sacred cow of agriculture. It must not be antagonised. It must be wooed and caressed. I do not go along with that philosophy and I urge the Cabinet subcommittee to adopt a more free-thinking attitude in the national interest. Here we have the resources capable of being developed and young people with the pioneering spirit who are prepared to take the challenge. They do not need foreign capital, multi-national corporations, or joint ventures. We have young people who are qualified and financially able to undertake this work. Their ability has been proven by the information given at Land Board meetings recently and they want to have a go. Eventually the income produced from these new agricultural areas will be expended in Australia. No overseas dividends will be paid.

In the past few years millions of dollars have been foregone as a result of the cessation of the land release policy of the 1970s. We know that during the development period, Government loans will be required by these people no matter how well intentioned they are. But, like their forefathers, they will pay back these loans and Australia will have wider enterprises generating wealth long after oil and gas have been extracted from the North-West Shelf and long after the mining machines have rusted and fallen silent in the Pilbara.

History records the success of land settlement of the 1960s when the Brand Government developed one million acres per year.

Mr H. D. Evans: There will be some salt problems, won't there?

Mr GREWAR: There have been some problems, and many farmers have fallen by the wayside, but most have done so with dignity and have gained a certain amount of profit from their efforts. They have certainly gained larger profits than they would have had they stayed behind an office desk or continued to push a handpiece around a sheep.

Western Australia is no longer the Cinderella of the States in the field of agriculture. In fact, it is the foremost State in agricultural matters. Let us get on with resource development. I am not referring to developing one million acres per year, but rather I am referring to the development of a realistic area which is considerably more than is being developed at the present time, so that we consolidate the south-eastern agricultural regions which are the best in Western Australia.

Mr Tonkin: Are there no problems with salinity there?

Mr GREWAR: Whilst I am referring to agricultural matters, I again express the belief that the Department of Agriculture should carry out more research to overcome our pasture and crop problems on the south coast. I have discussed this subject on many occasions previously and it has been detailed in other speeches, hence, I will not elaborate now. I am, however, concerned that the Australian rate of increase in production is falling behind that of the countries which compete with us. If this trend continues our success in the market place must suffer.

I should like to deal also with the water supply problems of the mallee area north of Esperance which suffers from dry seasons resulting in inadequate run-off into town water supply dams. Requests have been made for the upgrading of the catchments and water supply facilities in the Salmon Gums, Grass Patch, and Scaddan townships. The local people referred the possibility of piping water from Esperance, but when costed out the people realised this proposition was not feasible because of the small size of the towns involved and the limited demand. Other proposals were examined for the upgrading of the catchments and storage facilities, concentrating on the existing scheme. However, the cost involved was again too high. In the interim these communities must suffer an inadequate service and they must face water restrictions each year. The proposition has been advanced recently that the water supply problems in the area could be solved very cheaply and quickly by improving the catchment areas only and leaving the storage facilities to a future date. If the catchment areas were extended and sealed it would allow water to be collected at times of low intensity rainfall, thus enabling the dams to be kept full. If population expansion warranted it in the future, the storage facilities of the water supply system could be increased.

I urge the Minister to give consideration to the suggestions I have made which will obviate the need for water restrictions in these towns.

I support the motion.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [5.56 p.m.]: There are a few matters I wish to mention in my speech on the Address-in-Reply. I should like to say firstly that I appreciate the fact that the member who has just resumed his seat is the first Government member who has been keenly interested in the production of ethanol as an alternative motor spirit. For some years I have been trying to convince the Government that there are great possibilities in this area in the

future. On a number of occasions I have spoken about this matter in the Chamber, but with very little result. I hope that, as a result of the support of the member for Roe in this regard, the Government will be a little more enthusiastic about the research being carried out in the Ord area and that it will look favourably on the possibility of introducing a pilot plant soon for the production of ethanol and the use of it as a motor spirit.

The Minister for Transport might be interested to know that ethanol can be used as a motor spirit, because he seems to have been unaware of this when drafting the road maintenance tax Bill. If a vehicle uses ethanol as a fuel, the owner will not have to pay the new tax. It is a moot point and no doubt it will be changed in the future when ethanol production is carried out.

I should like to dwell briefly on the subject of Royal visits to this State over the last few years. I have seen a number of such visits and I do not want to be critical of the people involved. However, I am critical of the Government for the way in which it has handled these visits. I am not critical of the Royal visitors, because I realise they must follow the programme set by the Governments of the various places they visit; therefore, one cannot blame them.

I am not anti-royalist or anything of that nature. My ultimate belief in what Australia should be is very clear and I do not believe anybody has any doubt about it. Only old-fashioned people such as the Premier want us to remain as a colony of the United Kingdom indefinitely. This is borne out clearly by the fact that he still maintains and sponsors the idea that we should continue to use the National Anthem of the United Kingdom, rather than adopting the practice of choosing our own National Anthem as has every other member nation of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Premier will live and die with that impression. One of his former ministerial colleagues used to stand up in this place and say he was born an Anglican and a conservative and he would die an Anglican and a conservative. Although the Premier may not be able to claim he was born an Anglican, I am sure he will adopt his conservative attitude so far as the Royal Family is concerned as long as he lives. I am sure he will also believe that Australia should be a colonial appendage of the United Kingdom, and not a nation in its own right—which we are—until the day he dies. The Premier will not get the idea into his brain; he never will, and he never will try to do so. He disregards it.

But let me get back to Royal visits. I can recall being associated with them for a long time, and also I can remember that members of Parliament in this State once were regarded as having some sort of standing when visits occurred. Not long after I was elected we all met the Queen and the Duke on the lawns at the back of Parliament House—or the building as it then was—where the large tree is now growing in front of this building. At that time there was a polio epidemic and the Royal visitors were not taken into the interior of any building. They were met publicly outside buildings. We did not shake hands in the normal way; we merely bowed. That arrangement proved to be very satisfactory.

Since that occasion, when there has been a Royal visitor either from the United Kingdom or one of the other nations, members of this Chamber and members of the Legislative Council have not been accorded an invitation when a function has been held. I have heard criticism from both sides of the House on that point. I do not know whether it has reached the Premier's ears, but it does not seem to matter any more that the representatives of the people in this State do not have some sort of audience with Royal visitors. It seems to be more important that those people who are elected on a property franchise to local government have a prior right. That has been the pattern over a number of years.

I can also remember that in the past I was rostered, together with the rest of the then Cabinet, to meet Royal personages at the Perth Airport. I can recall the Leader of the Opposition of the day also being rostered for that duty. I have not noticed the same type of roster system operating since the boot has been on the other foot. This has occurred mainly because members have not been asked; not because they were not prepared to go. Members have not been disloyal; they simply have not been asked.

I can recall seeing Leaders of the Opposition present at Fremantle at the departure of Royal visitors, but that has not occurred during the time of this present Government.

I have also noticed that the Government House Ballroom has been the venue for State dinners from time to time in this State. Previously, members of Parliament were invited to those functions. Usually they were invited to functions involving very important personages and ambassadors. When the Ambassador of the United States came here for the opening of the north-west base at Exmouth, every member of this Parliament received an invitation to the function.

It now seems that functions for these very important personages are reserved for certain people. One wonders how the lists are made up. According to the Press, about 600 people were present at Government House on the last occasion that the Prince of Wales was here. One wonders how those people received priority above members of Parliament—elected members of Parliament.

I understand, as a result of talking to somebody who was able to see the list of protocol and order of—

Mr Watt: The pecking order!

Mr JAMIESON: Yes, the pecking order. I was told that the last two persons at the bottom of the list, in very small type, happened to be the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Undoubtedly you, Mr Speaker, received your invitation, but you were accorded a very low priority.

I wonder what the Government is coming at; what sort of pecking order is it establishing? Members of Parliament are elected, from time to time, as representatives of the people—be they Labor, Liberal or Country Party, or even the National Party when they are here—and they should be accorded some sort of priority when invitations are issued.

I remember well when, as Leader of the Opposition, I was accorded an invitation by Her Majesty to go aboard the *Britannia* at Fremantle. The invitation was to the dinner and to the reception. I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, at the time, was present, as was the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and a former Premier in the Hon. John Tonkin was there, but I think that was the total of the Labor people who were present on that occasion. But, lo and behold, the sons of the Premier, and their wives, were present. The son of the Premier, who works with Ansett, was in the east, so he was not present, but the other sons were. I was not invited to the function at Government House on the last occasion, but I am told—and I can only rely on what I am told—that the sons of the Premier again were present on that occasion.

Sir Charles Court: That is right; there is no secret.

Mr JAMIESON: What sort of nepotism are we being involved in in this State? I have a lot of regard for most families of members, but I never put them above the State or the country. I believe they must be deserving in their own right. I do not see that this sort of thing does us any good at all.

We have to remember there are priorities, and it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that people elected as members of Parliament in this State are accorded proper consideration. I do not expect that members should be invited to each and every function although the electors seem to think that we do attend every function. I have had constituents say to me, "I suppose you will be at the function for Prince Charles." When one answered, "No, I am not on the invited list", they looked in amazement and pointed out that 600 people would be attending the function.

It seems that somebody somewhere is falling down in arriving at the order of priorities. It is all very well for statements to be released every now and again to the effect that Her Majesty wanted to see certain people. I have been in government and I know what sort of requests come forward, and how arrangements are made to entertain these people.

Sir Charles Court: In recent times the form of occasions and meetings with a wider cross-section of people has been greater than ever before in history. Today visits follow a different arrangement, not only in this country but also in the Royal Family's own country of Britain.

Mr Carr: You had better tell the Albany Town Council and the Geraldton Town Council for a start.

Mr JAMIESON: I did not want to mention individual people, but perhaps the member for Albany could have been one concerned.

Sir Charles Court: That was purely in the hands of the local authorities, not the Government.

Mr JAMIESON: I know members of local authorities are elected by some sort of restricted franchise; a property franchise, in the main.

Sir Charles Court: That happened in the case of the local authorities at Geraldton and Albany.

Mr JAMIESON: Are we to take a forward step or a backward step? We have to look at the situation in the light of what it should be, and not in the light of what the Premier wants.

Sir Charles Court: It is not me at all.

Mr JAMIESON: I do not know. If I saw the name of my son, or the names of other members of my family, on the list I would ask whether or not there would be some sort of public outcry. I do not discredit those who were on the list; they are great people and I have chatted to them on occasions. However, I do not see where they fit in in the "pecking order", as somebody suggested. This is something about which we have to be very

careful to ensure the Premier has not enacted a change so that the Leader of the Opposition is not on the list, from time to time, to meet dignitaries when they arrive at the Perth Airport or farewell them when they leave. There seems to be a definite change occurring.

The Opposition is loyal to the constitution of the monarchy, as it stands. It is my just right to object in some sort of way to the changes which have occurred.

I accept the monarchy as it is; I do not argue about it at the present time. But, if I had the opportunity I would move to change the situation in certain respects. I would not want to disregard an association with the United Kingdom completely, any more than the other 37 associated British Commonwealth countries have done. Those other countries have broken their immediate association, and accept the Queen of the United Kingdom as the responsible head of State. However, we all accept the Queen as the head of the senior member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, whence we came, and to which we owe some allegiance. There is no argument on that score.

My argument is that as a nation we should be going our own way and doing our own thing. When dignitaries arrive the representatives of the people of this State should be there to welcome them. They should not necessarily attend every function that takes place; that would be ridiculous. But, the representatives of this State should be present at particular functions. There should be a function where those representatives are accorded an opportunity to be associated with the visitors to the State.

Unless a member of Parliament is lucky enough to become a Cabinet Minister, or the Leader of the Opposition, it is likely he could go right through his parliamentary career of many years, and a number of visits, and not be accorded one single invitation. I understand that on the last occasion of a Royal visit, some local authorities did include the local member of Parliament on their lists. I understand the member for Avon was included on a local authority list, but other members of Parliament—and not necessarily all from this side of the House—did not receive any consideration at all. To me this seems to be an insult to people who are responsible members in the Parliament of Western Australia. We should not allow it to continue without some form of protest.

I am tempted to ask the Premier to produce a list of all those people who are accorded invitations by the Government to attend official

functions. However, that might be unfair because a name might be put forward to which there would be some objection in the Press. It often happens that when somebody sees the name of another person on a list such as that, published in the Press, he considers he should have been on the list before that other person. However, the name of a member of Parliament on such a list could not be considered to be unfair because members are elected by popular vote.

We should make sure that in future members of Parliament receive some recognition when a Royal visitor or an important personage from another country visits us. That should apply whether the visit is by the King and Queen of Thailand, or anyone else. In the case of the visit by the King and Queen of Thailand, we were invited to Government House to meet them. We should be invited to meet other Royal visitors; there should be one occasion when an invitation is accorded to the elected members of Parliament.

Sittings suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr JAMIESON: I want to conclude the point I was making before the tea suspension in regard to invitations to functions organised by the Government for visiting celebrities. It seems rather unkind to me that the lay representatives of the people of Western Australia rate such a lowly position in the pecking order. One could imagine that members of Parliament may not be in the top 400 people in the State, but it is hard to believe they should not be in the top 600. It seems to me that something has gone wrong somewhere along the line. Certainly should the Government change at the next election, this is one matter I would like updated to ensure members of Parliament take their rightful places on such occasions.

Mr Speaker, you will recall in the Budget debate last year I had a good deal to say about fares for members of Parliament, and indeed, I also referred to the salaries of members of Parliament. The Premier stated categorically that there would be no change in the air fare position for members of this Parliament. Fortunately, apparently some pressure was brought to bear on him—possibly from his own members—and he has now relented and granted an intrastate air fare to all members of the Western Australian Parliament each year. However, he then went on to restrict this and said that after the 31st December, 1979, no air fares would be granted until after the State election. Maybe such an attitude is justified, but maybe it is not. I want to state clearly that I believe the taxpayers of this State are entitled to have access to the top-line

members of Parliament on both sides of the political spectrum. Federal members of Parliament move around the nation when an election is pending; no restriction is placed on air travel for them, and I do not see why such a restriction should be placed on our members.

If it seems desirable that the Opposition spokesman for, say, housing, should attend a meeting in a remote country town, I do not think the Government has the right to decide that the residents in that area should not hear his point of view. Surely this is an important democratic principle. People living in the metropolitan area are able to hear the views of Government and Opposition spokesmen, but the Government is denying the people in the far flung areas of the State the same rights.

It does the Government no credit to enforce such a restriction. I do not say that members of Parliament should have access to unlimited free travel, but it is only fair that electors in remote areas should not have to make other arrangements to hear an Opposition spokesman.

I repeat again my concern that the Leader of the Opposition in this State is treated in such a cavalier fashion by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. The chairman of the tribunal says that there are no anomalies in the consideration of this matter, but I would like to quote some figures so that members may determine for themselves whether or not this is so.

I would like firstly to quote the base salary of all members in the various States. These are as follows—

	\$
New South Wales	23 214
Victoria	25 192
Queensland	25 720
South Australia	23 200
Western Australia	23 173
Tasmania	24 105

So members can see that the Leader of the Opposition of this State starts on the bottom rung of the base salaries. However, that is not my main point. As well as that, the Western Australian Leader of the Opposition receives the lowest total salary. This is not a fair and proper reflection of the responsibilities of the position of the Leader of the Opposition in a State of this size. The Premier should do more than just try to defend an action of the tribunal as he did when he replied to my letter in which I enclosed a copy of my communication to Mr Townsing on this matter. I was not very complimentary to the chairman of the tribunal on that occasion and, in fact, I had this to say—

Thank you nonetheless for your belated though considered reply, and as I seem to unnecessarily rile you, you can be assured that while you remain as Chairman of the Tribunal, I shall not bother to submit any further matter for consideration of your Tribunal even though it has never been for my personal gain and thereby avoid any further unpleasanties.

I have long held this attitude to the chairman of the tribunal. In my opinion the people of this State would be outraged if an ex-member of Parliament were appointed to this position, and they should be outraged at the appointment of a senior civil servant. The Chairman of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal determines the salaries for certain people within the Civil Service, and when a person has been a civil servant, he usually has his likes and dislikes, whereas the chairman of the tribunal should be completely unprejudiced.

There is no comparison between the present Salaries and Allowances Tribunal and the tribunal under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Sholl. The present tribunal is running into a great many problems, as the Premier acknowledged in his letter. Initially the Premier said that the new tribunal would solve many problems as there would be regular reviews of salaries, but of course it has created more problems than it has solved. In my view the worst feature of the tribunal is that everything is hidden from the public, although the tribunal is a public body. No-one—and I am including members of Parliament in this—knows when the tribunal is about to make a change. I first heard of a recent salary rise in the bar of Parliament House. When I walked in I was told that members of Parliament had been granted a 9 per cent increase, and yet no-one knew that the tribunal was even contemplating such a rise.

When Mr Justice Sholl held the position of chairman of the tribunal, the hearings were public. Announcements were made in the Press that a hearing would take place and that any submissions should be put before the tribunal. In the last few days we have seen letters in the Press indicating that some people believe we ought to beg for our salaries and that charities should be financed from the public purse rather than through public donations. Obviously that is the opinion of some people in the community about the value of the Legislature, and they are entitled to that view.

When the previous tribunal placed an advertisement in the Press calling for submissions the result was five or six replies. Some people expressed the point of view that a rise was

justified, while others argued the other way. I remember that an ex-member for Leederville (Mr S. E. I. Johnson) regularly submitted his opinion on the matter because he had strong personal feelings about it. Two or three other members of the public did the same, but, of course, the Editor of *The West Australian* never once made a submission. If the editor then chose to comment adversely on the recommendation of the tribunal, Mr Justice Sholl could say, "Why did you not put in a submission?"

It is not good enough that the hearings of this tribunal are kept secret. When introducing the legislation setting up this tribunal the Premier misled us when he said that the tribunal would operate as it had before.

On one occasion I wrote to Mr Townsing about certain travelling allowances the Sholl tribunal had recommended. Mr Townsing replied that the present tribunal was not to consider travelling allowances and that such decisions would be made by the Premier's Department. However, in the last determination of the tribunal we see the inclusion of an allowance for country members travelling to and from Parliament. I am certainly not objecting to such an allowance, it is well deserved, but the fact that the tribunal made a determination in this area is contrary to what I had been told previously. Certainly, if travelling allowances are to be considered, it is no good stopping half way. The whole area must be covered.

I would like now to quote the present salaries of the Leaders of the Opposition in each of the States. In Western Australia the salary of the Leader of the Opposition is \$34 273. Unfortunately I do not have the exact figure for South Australia, but within a few dollars it is \$37 800. The other States are as follows—

	\$
New South Wales	39 935
Victoria	44 086
Queensland	36 520
Tasmania	40 978

This clearly illustrates the point I was making. Indeed, when the Premier noticed some time ago the level of the salary in this State he said that something should be done. However, it is rather useless talking to Mr Townsing about this matter because of his attitude towards the Opposition. Probably we will have to wait until the Liberal Party is in Opposition before any changes are made.

I do not believe Mr Townsing holds members of Parliament in very high esteem. He tolerates them, and that is all. The Premier stands up here

to say what a wonderful servant Mr Townsing was, but I do not know whether I agree with that statement. Most other people who retire from the Civil Service do not seem to have been plied with such largess as Mr Townsing has. It seems that he is on boards here, there, and everywhere. I cannot recall a previous Under Treasurer who has received such privileges. I do not know whether he is as good as the Premier believes him to be but certainly the position of chairman of this tribunal should be held by a neutral person. Recently a few fairly young judges have retired, and I instance Mr Justice Jackson. The appointment of such a person to this tribunal could not be criticised. However, with the present composition of the tribunal there will be more and more public criticism. This criticism is well deserved while the hearings are not made public.

I was not present some time ago when a debate took place on the economic situation in this State; however, it always irks me that the Premier is still able to stand up and count himself as being a mastermind in respect of economics. We have heard so often from him that he could solve the unemployment problem within six months and that inflation could be solved substantially State by State. All that is nonsense. Now, of course, the excuse is made that the reason the unemployment position cannot be solved is that people are coming here from the east. Even a third-grade schoolboy would have known that would happen if there were jobs available in Western Australia.

Of course, problems such as these cannot be solved State by State. The Opposition has always maintained that. Despite all the Premier's husbandry and careful checking and preparation, I note that between January, 1977, and March, 1979, Western Australia had the highest percentage increase in the CPI. The percentage was 20.7, and that compares with a national average percentage of 19.7. Some States were lower, but Western Australia was still out in front leading the field in inflation.

This brilliant Premier, who would bring inflation to its knees and do all things necessary to chop it right back, has the worst record of any State Premier and Treasurer in this field.

The same applies in respect of the percentage increase in unemployment between March, 1977, and March, 1979. In that period we have experienced an increase in unemployment of 77.8 per cent. That is a very high percentage increase, and it is exceeded only by South Australia, which has a percentage increase of 91.7. Some States have very low increases; in one case it is only 11.4 per cent. Of course, even that represents a large number of people unemployed.

Nevertheless, the figures I have quoted show where our economy is going. It is not improving. The 100 000 mythical jobs that were supposed to come to us from somewhere have just not manifested themselves; and, of course, they will not. The position is that we should do something more in this field. If the Premier thinks he is doing the best he can, that merely proves the point I have made on previous occasions that one cannot do very much with the economy on a State by State basis. One must move with the general trend. Surely there is no reason for elation on the part of the Premier, nor is there any reason for him to say his stewardship is going so well.

Despite what the Premier has said this year and the statement he made recently, it is my guess that as a result of the balances and excesses proposed in last year's Budget—which were clearly noticed and mentioned at the time—we will have a Budget which is more than balanced. I predict this year we will have a surplus because in certain venues the figures were stacked, particularly in respect of proposed salary increases which were calculated at the old inflation rate and have not been reduced to the present rate. The situation is such that it is difficult to understand how the Premier can think he is doing a mighty job in respect of Treasury matters.

I would like to mention a matter I raised by way of a question without notice directed to the Minister for Industrial Development. That Minister always likes to be so correct in respect of everything; he likes to be right.

Mr Bryce: But he is not right in respect of small business, is he?

Mr JAMIESON: He is not right on much business. If the AMWU can be accused of anything, it is that it well prepares the documentation it uses from time to time. When the AMWU produced the publication "Australia Ripped Off" it did not just pick figures out of a hat; it took figures from reliable sources. That union quoted figures in respect of the North-West Shelf and its proposed cost, and it was taken to task by the Minister for Industrial Development. When I pointed out to the Minister that the union used figures which were presented to a ministerial conference by his colleague, the Minister for Labour and Industry, in November last year, he did not seem to appreciate the point or to know much about it.

If one Minister is not combining with another Minister in these sorts of releases, that is a lame excuse. Those figures were made available at a ministerial conference, and they were used by the

AMWU, along with figures from another source which the Minister for Industrial Development more or less pooh-poohed in his answer. Of course, his answer was given off the cuff and the Minister did say something to the effect that, "Although the member expects a lot of me, I will answer the question nevertheless."

The other source of the figures used by the AMWU in its publication was a seminar conducted in Singapore by the North-West Shelf consortium for the purpose of informing people throughout the world—and particularly in this region—of what the costs are likely to be. Those were two substantial sources; they are better than the Minister's department, yet he was prepared to pooh-pooh them. When I asked whether he was prepared to apologise to the union he said, "In no way."

When a person is found to be incorrect usually he shows how big a man he is by whether he is able to accept the fact that he has made a boo-boo. On such occasions it behoves any person proved wrong to admit to his mistake. I would hope the Minister for Industrial Development will not show off again by indicating that he knows everything and has all the answers, and that other people are not as well informed as they should be; particularly when the people concerned have taken the trouble to obtain figures from well-documented sources which are printed for everyone to read. The union would not do that without having due regard for the fact that if the figures it uses are wrong, it will be slammed down. On the occasion in question the figures were not wrong; nor has the Minister been able to find any wrong figures in the publication.

Earlier in the year I asked some questions about the construction of the proposed new building for the Metropolitan Water Board. I had heard rumours that the proposed building had not gone to tender. This rather intrigued me because it is a very large project. However, evidently the matter did not go to tender but was dealt with in a rather peculiar way. The board has become its own builder and has called some sub-tenders. This is not the Government's usual practice. The Government usually calls tenders for the whole structure as was the case with the court buildings, and most other buildings that have been undertaken.

When I asked a question as to when tenders were called, I was told that tenders for approximately 20 building components were invited progressively from the 6th November. Tenders were not called, but invited, from various people, no doubt in expert positions. My second question was in respect of who was the successful

tenderer and what was the price. The reply was that each component is being provided by the relevant successful tenderer, and a list of major items was supplied. The answer to the other part of my question was that the total of tenders is \$10.8 million.

If there has been a change in the attitude of the Government towards the construction of such buildings, surely the public are entitled to be informed of it. In this case they are entitled to be informed that a change has occurred in respect of the principle of supporting private enterprise. The Government seems to have gone into the building industry itself and is using subcontractors. The State as whole should know what is being done.

When the questions were asked, I believe it caused a bit of movement around the dovecote at the time; I suppose it was hoped the matter would be forgotten by now. It seems to be a most unusual way for a Government to conduct business. It has changed from one system to another. If the Government opts for a tender system, it should call full tenders to see if a better price could be obtained than the present \$10.8 million, rather than going into subcontracting on the basis used on this occasion. I suggest there is a problem there.

I have always had a lot of time for the engineers of the Main Roads Department. However, I found that the recently constructed Shelley Bridge seems to be cracking up and causing problems. Here again is something which was not announced by the Government. Evidently heavy trucking firms now must obtain permission to haul heavy cargoes over certain routes, and they have been told not to use the Shelley Bridge. Such things soon get out to the public.

I asked whether in respect of the problem of the Shelley Bridge there was any residual responsibility of the contractor. The answer was "No." That surprised me, because with all the disasters that have occurred in respect of bridges around the world surely the design responsibility of the Main Roads Department should err on the side of safety. In this case obviously it did not. The structure is not holding up as well as it should do, and it has had to be strengthened with steel supports. The bridge, as members would well know, has been open for only about one year. It seems that even the good record of the Main Roads Department is cracking up under the stress of the present Government.

It appears to me that in respect of such things we should err on the positive or safe side. It is true it has been said that the design for the new bridge at Mt. Henry has included in it protection against

a recurrence of such a problem, and I would hope that is so. We do not want to have any problems with bridges disappearing, as has been experienced in Victoria.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier).

be applied for adjusting vehicle and drivers' licence fees.

It is essential that these fees be adjusted at least to keep pace with the cost of inflation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [7.58 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes to amend the Road Traffic Act, 1974-1977, and as explained to members, it is complementary to those measures contained in the Acts Amendment and Repeal (Road Maintenance) Bill.

The Bill before us provides for a 20 per cent reduction in licence fees for all vehicles except heavy trucks. Heavy trucks are classed as a motor wagon exceeding 5 100 kilograms tare weight, a prime mover exceeding 3 060 kilograms tare, and a semi-trailer exceeding 2 040 kilograms tare, and approximate the heavy truck class on which the road maintenance charge has been levied.

This provision of a 20 per cent reduction in vehicle licence fees is built into the second schedule, part III, of the Bill.

The Bill also provides for an amendment to section 19 of the Act to provide a concession of one-half of the licence fee for all diesel powered vehicles up to the level of the heavy truck class.

The purposes of these concessions has been explained to members in the previous Bill before the House and are part of a total package of measures for a more equitable system of road user charges based on the user pays principle. These amendments are therefore in the form of consequential amendments.

The Bill also contains a proposal to amend section 28A of the Act to provide that vehicle and drivers' licence fees, as contained in the second schedule to the Act, may be varied in future by means of regulation.

At present, changes in vehicle and drivers' licence fees can be implemented only by amending the Act. This method is inflexible.

It is desirable that the practice followed by other State instrumentalities, such as the State Energy Commission, MTT, third party insurance, Fremantle Port Authority and others of adjusting their charges by means of regulation should also

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: NINTH DAY

Motion

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

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

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

MR WILSON (Dianella) [8.01 p.m.]: In this International Year of the Child it is appropriate that the Government, in the Governor's Speech, should address itself to the issue of education. A quote from a section of the Speech is as follows—

The Government's continued upgrading of primary schooling includes this year an increase in staff; strengthened instruction in basic skills; and a quarterly newspaper to improve communications with parents.

Pupil/teacher ratios have been further reduced in both primary and secondary schools. More specialist teachers have been recruited this year.

Just over a week ago in my electorate the Montrose Primary School was notified that, because its numbers had fallen below 616 to 606, a year-2 teacher would be taken away as from the following week. This move will mean the complete rearrangement of the seven year-1 and year-2 classes in the school; in fact, that rearrangement has been put into effect as from this week.

Two of the classes affected are special classes, a year-1 class and a year-2 class in which the numbers will go up in one case from 22 to 27 children, and in the other from 24 to 29 children. The year-1 special class comprises children who have been identified from the pre-primary year as having problem backgrounds, and serious adjustment and reading problems, and requiring extra special education. The year-2 class comprises children identified from year 1 as having serious learning difficulties.

Many of the children have deep emotional problems. They have been involved in a special development programme—for instance, a rapid reading scheme which is a language-based scheme requiring a lot of verbal interaction with an adult who will listen carefully.

I suppose most members would say that an increase of five in class numbers would not be very great and should not have a very serious effect. But from what I can gather, for children with this degree of emotional disturbance, an increase in numbers results in an increase in very adverse reactions.

This particular school has done its own survey of parental backgrounds of the children at the school. Of the 369 families represented at the school, 12 are families in which the parents are unemployed, 104 are families with single supporting parents, and 11 are families where the parents are pensioners. In fact, when the school was making its own submission in order to protect the interests of the children at this school, the guidance officer who served the school indicated that many children up to years 2 and 3 are experiencing, in a learning sense, emotional problems because of split homes. Due to these problems they are in need of suitable learning situations. This officer found that there are children who suffer from backgrounds in which the capacity to learn is nearly non-existent; consequently, they have very poor behaviour patterns.

It has been shown that 35 per cent of the children at this school are judged to be at serious risk; 30 per cent are judged to have serious educational needs.

Mr MacKinnon: Is it classified as a disadvantaged school?

Mr WILSON: No. The removal of the year-2 teacher virtually will mean the cancellation of these remedial programmes. It will mean the disruption of children in their first two years of schooling—the most vulnerable years in a child's education.

This is not an isolated problem. I am not talking about something which is just of parochial concern; it is not a matter which is cropping up only in this school. This circumstance is the direct outcome of the deliberate policies of the Government. It is a policy which is becoming wholly and solely a numbers game.

Although the numbers at this school did fall from 616 to 606, the fact is that by the beginning of the second term—that is, in a matter of a few weeks—the numbers at the school will most likely rise to 616 or even more. After all, in this area 10

children represent a mere three families. In fact, at the beginning of the following week the enrolment at the school went up by three; that is, one family of children enrolled at the school.

The other special factor about this particular school is that the area from which it draws its children comprises a large section of medium density State Housing Commission accommodation. I have done my own survey during the past week and in that area I found 12 vacant houses and other units of SHC accommodation. This means there are a possible 12 new families who could move into the area. This could mean 30 to 40 new children attending the school in a matter of weeks—overnight in fact.

What happens if, suddenly, the population of the school in a matter of weeks or days again rises to 616—the magic number—or above? Will another teacher be appointed? Will there be need for further restructuring and disruption to year-1 and year-2 children at that vulnerable stage in their school career? There will always be fluctuations in the number of children attending this school because of the housing factor; because of the sudden movements of families.

I am amazed that in taking this particular teacher away from this school that very special factor, along with the others I have mentioned, has not been taken into account. Worse still, the teacher who has been moved has gone to another school to replace a teacher who has gone on accouchement leave. If we consider this we will see the real basis for the department's move. It is saving one teacher's salary.

There was another option open to the department and that was the obvious one to a lot of people, especially the parents of the children at the school. An unemployed teacher could have been employed to replace the teacher going on accouchement leave. The disruption, distress, and damage being caused to the six and seven-year-old children, many of whom are at risk already, could have been avoided. So the Education Department may save one teacher's salary for perhaps one month, but at what cost in human terms?

Recently we have heard of Government plans to establish a two-tiered system of administration in the Education Department which will involve the creation of two new senior administrative positions with salaries of over \$30 000 a year. One can only hope that this growth of the bureaucratic monster will not result in more decisions in which human values are subjugated to mean accounting

procedures in order to allow the Government to boast of a balanced Budget.

Mr P. V. Jones: There is only one new position.

Mr WILSON: I thank the Minister for correcting me.

Mr P. V. Jones: To head the finance and administration area.

Mr WILSON: I hope the kids at the Montrose Primary School can count on the Minister to care for kids in the International Year of the Child. I hope the parents of the six and seven-year-old children at that school can count on the Minister to find a spare minute for their kids. I call on the Minister, if in fact we are not going to make a complete travesty of this International Year of the Child, to have a look at this situation himself. I do not believe—I cannot believe—that sufficient care and attention have been paid to the children affected in this school.

I repeat that paragraph of the Governor's Speech which reads—

The Government's continued upgrading of primary schooling includes this year an increase in staff; strengthened instruction in basic skills; and a quarterly newspaper to improve communications with parents.

How on earth a quarterly newspaper to improve communications with parents will do anything to assist the parents of the children at this school to understand what the department has done to their children, I do not know.

I call on the Minister personally to intervene and rectify the shocking situation I have outlined. I say without any hesitation that if he is not prepared to do this, the words I have quoted from the Governor's Speech stand condemned as an obscene abuse and cheap public relations jargon.

Mr P. V. Jones: I think that is a bit rough, because my information would indicate you have very emotively referred to a situation which is not quite as you have alleged.

Mr WILSON: I would be amazed if the Minister can say he knows of the situation and has done nothing about it. I would ask the Minister not to interject further. I hope the Minister is prepared to do more than interject on my speech when the people of my electorate have no chance to answer back.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: What is the difference?

Mr P. V. Jones: I am not trying to interject, but I think in fairness you might like to go back and have a look at the arrangements prior to the situation occurring and have a discussion with the

guidance officer, which you probably have already done.

Mr WILSON: I have had that discussion.

I do not know how thoroughly the Minister has gone into the matter, but if he has not studied it, I am saying it is a situation in which I would have expected him as Minister to be personally involved.

While we are talking about the International Year of the Child and this Minister's concern for children, I would like also to raise again a matter I dealt with in the Estimates debate last year which was at that time and previously taken up by WACSSO. I am referring to the need for the establishment of a committee of inquiry concerning the problems of children-traffic conflict in the vicinity of schools. Recently we have had visiting Western Australia a world renowned expert on the issue of accident prevention. I am referring to the Swedish Professor Berjenstam who was in Australia recently. He is the professor who, in 1954, helped pioneer the Swedish Committee for Prevention of Childhood Accidents. He is quoted as having said, when he was here, that more children die in Sweden and Australia as a result of traffic accidents than as a result of any other accidents.

He went on to say that the traffic situation today is too complicated for even a child of 11 years to handle. He quoted studies in the town of Gothenberg which showed that where underpasses and cycleways were provided in the new part of the town, the traffic accident rate had been lowered by about 80 per cent.

Following approaches I received from WACSSO I put some questions on notice to the Minister about some correspondence he had had with that organisation regarding its request seeking his assistance to institute a committee of inquiry into problems of traffic-children conflict in the vicinity of schools. His answers were not encouraging. They were simply a bit of a fob off. On the 11th April in reply to my question he said that a group representing the interested parties meets irregularly—note the word “irregularly”—to discuss the matters referred to in the question and that no permanent committee of inquiry was envisaged as these matters were on-going.

Anyone who can talk about this matter in terms of its being covered by a committee which meets irregularly and who can say there is no concern about the establishment of a permanent committee of inquiry because it is an on-going matter, has not grasped the significance of the problem. I really cannot understand the Minister

who is not even prepared to look further into a matter when there is some doubt about the degree of dangers involved.

Of course the Government is probably afraid of increased costs because I understand that every guarded school crossing involves a cost of \$2 000. This would be taken into consideration if we were measuring the value of human life in dollars and cents.

In other parts of the world the authorities have taken the trouble to look at other ways to deal with the problems. I understand that as early as 1961 in New Zealand a scheme was instituted under which senior primary school children rather than adults are trained and used. I also understand there is a system whereby "Stop" signs on extended poles are lowered across the road at a given signal by senior primary school students who are trained to stand on either side of the road to allow younger children to cross. The younger children are those whose lives are at risk and, as the Swedish professor said, they are completely confused by our complicated traffic system.

I understand also that in Victoria a system of lights is used to assist children in negotiating roads on their way to school. Therefore I do not really believe that the Government or the Minister has looked at this matter with a serious degree of concern, certainly not with the concern with which parents and people in the education field view it. The Government's attitude is not adequate.

Recently I noted a report on the results of some research which has been conducted in Busselton over more than 15 years. It is unique research and is being conducted by a paediatric officer (Dr Gracie); the report mentioned the results of a study of 550 Busselton high school students by his research team. The report showed that 24 per cent of the girls and 17 per cent of the boys were overweight.

The report went on to indicate that the survey also revealed that the standard of physical fitness of girls declines as they move into the older teenage group. At 13 years they could run 2 250 metres in 12 minutes. By the age of 17 years they were down to 2 100 metres. The doctor reported that the physical fitness of the students was not bad, but that the declining fitness is a pointer to the way things are going and is part of the whole pattern of change in the general eating, exercise, and social habits of young people.

According to the report television watching has had an effect on the fitness level of our young people and in that connection I put other

questions to the Minister which he answered subsequently by letter. I asked a series of questions regarding the physical education facilities and staffing provided in schools in Western Australia. In his answer the Minister indicated that he believed it is a complete fallacy to consider that a planned, continuous, effective physical education programme can be implemented only in a conventional gymnasium.

I had asked generally about the availability of gymnasiums in Government high schools in Western Australia and he indicated that in an ideal situation the Government's policy does take into account the need to adopt a programme which would make physical education a regular requirement at all levels in Government schools. However, this can only be considered the objective as many factors influence the priorities which are established throughout the total education system or in individual schools. I would have thought that the sort of information which is coming through such as that which is provided in that very realistic survey and assessment of the decreasing levels of fitness amongst children in Western Australia was not covered by that threadbare answer of the Minister.

He went on to say—and I was amazed to learn this—that 14 senior high schools in Western Australia have no gymnasium. He also indicated that although there were 510 full-time special physical education teachers practising in Government schools, it is virtually impossible to determine a meaningful teacher-student ratio within this discipline as many school teachers, especially in primary schools, conduct their own effective physical education and recreational programme.

That may be the Minister's information, but it certainly is not mine. My experience as a teacher and as a parent of school children indicates that regular physical education programmes for primary school children are generally left to those interested in that kind of thing. If there is no specialist at the school and if the class teacher does not have any special interest in physical education, then quite often that is an important area of a child's education which is sorely neglected, but one about which we should be concerned, in view of the information of the research which indicates a decline in the level of fitness among children in Western Australia.

I do not agree with the opinion that gymnasiums are not essential in high schools. During the winter months when it is raining, and during inclement weather, when there is no gymnasium available it is very likely that physical education goes by the board. Certainly in many

primary schools there are no covered areas where physical education can be conducted during winter months.

In terms of the health of the developing population of this State, and in connection with the aspect of preventive medicine in terms of physical and other forms of fitness, this is an area of education which requires a great deal more attention and devotion of a great deal more of the community's resources.

Recently, when the Prime Minister of Australia was visiting this State, much publicity resulted from some comments he made I think in an address he gave in either Esperance or Kalgoorlie when virtually he tried to lay the blame for youth unemployment on the education system and on our schools. Naturally I would not agree with that point of view because I maintain that even if the schools were doing everything the Prime Minister wanted them to do, many young people would still be out of work because there are not enough jobs.

There is a problem in connection with the school curriculum and this is revealed in a number of ways at the present time with the squeeze on the job situation. In the first place as I go around and talk to principals of high schools, I find they have detected a marked tendency developing in the way in which high school students are deciding whether or not to stay on at school once they reach the school-leaving age. From the information I have been able to collect as a result of talking to principals it appears that at the moment those students who are deciding to stay on at school are either those who are very bright and who will obviously go on to tertiary education or those who have very poor academic skills and who will find it very difficult because of that to gain job placements.

The ones who are deciding to leave as soon as possible are those in the middle of the school streams—those who could go on to further education but who do not want to risk doing so and then finding themselves out of work. Therefore they grasp the first opportunity they can when a job comes up.

That is an interesting trend in our high schools at present and one of which policy makers should be aware.

Mr Clarko: Do you think that it is necessarily bad?

Mr WILSON: The principals to whom I have spoken have expressed some regret about it in the sense that they feel those middle-of-the-stream students, some of whom could go on to further academic study, are choosing not to do so; and

that those in the problem area who do not have the capacity for academic work are staying at school and having difficulty in coping with the curriculum.

Mr Clarko: It is not necessarily bad to have some of those people out in the work force rather than all in tertiary institutions.

Mr WILSON: That is another matter. I am saying perhaps some of those students will choose to take up studies in their spare time at a later stage, and I hope they do; but there is a possibility that some of them are missing out on opportunities of which they could make good use.

Another serious factor among 14 and 15-year-olds is that an increasing number of them who are not able to cope with the school curriculum—because they either do not have the academic capacity or have in their earlier years at school not developed the basic skills which are required—develop behaviour problems and are virtually being forced out of the schools. But into what? In fact, they are being forced into unemployment because not only can they not cope with the basic academic curriculum of the school but also of course they are not equipped to deal with any work, and they are not regarded as desirable people in terms of the jobs which are available. It seems the school curriculum, generally, is failing to equip such people with the appropriate skills to obtain employment.

Unfortunately, in some areas the tendency is growing for young people in this age group, who have virtually been forced to leave school but who are unprepared to join the work force or for whom there are no jobs anyway, to become involved in anti-social behaviour by way of petty crimes and vandalism, which leads them into contact with the police, and in some cases that initial contact with the police and the court system eventually leads them into long-term criminal activity.

I think it would be a good thing if the Government, the Minister for Education and other Ministers, and the departments concerned ensured that some attempt is made to revise drastically the secondary school curriculum and provide more practical training and experience to assist in overcoming the resistance of many young people to the present curriculum and make for a more effective transition from school to work. The alternative courses which have been provided at some high schools are doing this to some extent, and I think more scope should be given to the dedicated staff who have pioneered those alternative courses for year 11 students, some of which are now being provided for year 10 students as well.

The Government could well consider the establishment of alternative secondary schools to equip students with the required practical skills and enable them to make more effective use of increasing leisure time, whether it be the leisure time available outside working hours or the leisure time which is forced on them through unemployment.

I now turn to another area of concern which to some extent has been before the Parliament already today in one form. I am concerned about the situation in relation to the development and planning of regional roads and road systems, generally, in the north-east metropolitan area of Perth; that is, the area which runs between Wanneroo Road and the Swan River.

I am aware that the original concept of the corridor plan for Perth ruled out a corridor to the north-east because of the unique character of the Swan Valley. While I do not contest that that was an important consideration, I now hold the view that the decision has inadvertently led to a much less than desirable degree of attention to the planning and development of the regional road structure and the consequences of that in the north-east section of the metropolitan area.

If we take the suburb of Dianella, for instance, we find the perfect example of the way in which road development and the apparent *ad hoc* development of the regional road system is having a very serious effect on suburban streets in that part of the metropolitan area.

Dianella is at the crossroads of a number of important regional roads. It is virtually bisected by Morley Drive in an east-west direction and by Alexander Drive in a north-south direction. Recent developments have resulted in large extra volumes of through traffic being pushed into these road systems without adequate planning and attention. A disastrous increase has taken place in the flow of through traffic in the streets of that suburb. The whole area has been adversely affected. New roads have been developed without proper attention being given to the extra pressures they will put on the existing road system.

Alexander Drive has been pushed north right through to Wanneroo. As the Minister indicated in answer to a question from me last year, that has been done so that Alexander Drive can be developed as a parallel road to Wanneroo Road to take some of the traffic from that road. This single-carriageway road has been developed for that purpose, and it feeds more traffic into the Dianella roundabout and the suburban streets of Dianella.

In addition, the Housing Commission has proceeded with the development of the Mirrabooka shopping centre and the further development of the Mirrabooka town centre without making provision for proper roads to serve that major centre. Yirrigan Drive has been developed as a single-carriageway road and Mirrabooka Avenue has been left as a single-carriageway road. As a result, vastly increased volumes of traffic have been fed into single carriageways from double carriageways, causing bottlenecks.

The Minister indicated to me recently that the Housing Commission has sought and gained permission to develop a new major road linking the Mirrabooka town centre with Grand Promenade, Dianella. This will result in great changes in the level of traffic using that major road.

All these changes have been effected without any consultation with the people in the locality involved. A member on the other side of the House, in his speech a few weeks ago, expressed some disquiet about developments in one of those favoured areas where corridors do exist and where the MRPA calls meetings so that the people in the area have the advantage of being able to put their points of view and have a degree of consultation. The member said those meetings were not being sufficiently advertised and people did not have the opportunity to attend them to express their point of view.

I wish we had that problem in Dianella. We are not consulted at all because Dianella is not one of the favoured areas in a corridor, although perhaps that is a debatable point. But at least the people in corridor areas are consulted about major road changes and have a structure whereby they can make their views known and perhaps have some effect on the ultimate development. The people in the north-east section of the metropolitan area, in Dianella and other areas bordering it which are affected by these big road changes, do not have that opportunity.

The changes are made *ad hoc*. The Housing Commission makes a request. It goes to the Stirling City Council and the Town Planning Board, and that is the stage that particular road has reached at the present time. But before those residents know it, they will have a major road pushed through their area. Had the matter not been made known to them by their member of Parliament, they would not have known about it at all.

I believe some attention must be given to the problems confronting residents in the north-east

metropolitan area, particularly in suburbs like Dianella which are being so seriously affected by increased through traffic for which adequate provision has not been made and proper planning has not been carried out.

In February I wrote to the Secretary of the MRPA expressing this view and requesting that consideration be given to calling in those areas meetings similar to those held in areas affected by corridor planning. I have not had a reply to that request. The reply I received from the Main Roads Department to a similar request was not very illuminating. It simply told me what I already knew; namely, that road construction in the State is falling behind the needs of the community because of the shortage of funds. That may be true, but I believe we will hear more about the effect that has on some other parts of the State than about the effect it has on areas such as the north-east section of the metropolitan area.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to bring those matters before the House. I hope the Ministers and departments concerned will look at them. I particularly reiterate my concern about the situation at the Montrose Primary School and my request that the Minister personally intervene and take the trouble to satisfy himself that the children of that school have not been discriminated against in a way which will mar the rest of their educational career.

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [8.44 p.m.]: I thought there may have been a contribution from the other side of the House, so I waited for a moment. However, no-one rose.

I take the opportunity to bring to the notice of the Government, as other members on this side of the House have done, some of its shortcomings and failings.

Mr T. J. Burke: You would need more than 45 minutes.

Mr HARMAN: That might be true, but I must restrict myself to the matter of social welfare in Western Australia. In order to appreciate the remarks I intend to make, members should have some knowledge of the background of social welfare in Australia. Firstly, Australia has been a country only for the last 180 years, and it has been a nation only since 1900. Prior to that the various colonies comprised the various parts of Australia and conducted their own affairs.

In 1900 a Constitution was drawn up which made provision for social welfare only in that it allowed the Commonwealth to legislate on matters regarding invalid and age pensions. It was not until 1946—some 46 years later—as a

result of a Labor Government initiative, that the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth was extended so that allowances and pensions could be paid in various other fields. These were maternity allowances, widows' pensions, child endowment, unemployment benefits, pharmaceutical benefits, sickness benefits, hospital benefits, medical benefits, students' allowances, and family allowances. So during the first 46 years of this nation we did not have any great concept of the redistribution of the resources of the country for the benefit of those who were not so well endowed or were needy.

I might add that since the election of the Federal Labor Government in 1972 a tremendous upsurge has occurred in social welfare planning, social welfare payments, and in the whole area of the redistribution of the resources of the country in a more equitable fashion. However, that has applied only since 1972.

Since the defeat of the Federal Labor Government in 1975—if one likes to call it the defeat; perhaps a better description is the withdrawal of its powers by the Governor General—a downturn has occurred in respect of social welfare planning and in respect of the whole concept of social welfare in Australia.

It is important that we should realise what has happened in Australia since 1975; and first of all before even thinking about that we should have some idea of what the whole matter of social welfare is all about. I refer the House to the 75th Annual Report of the Social Welfare Commission which contains a good discussion on three ideological concepts in respect of social welfare.

Firstly, there is the view that there is a residual attitude that the onus for survival of the individual should be met wholly by the individual's efforts or those of his family. Secondly, there is the attitude—which I think is generally adopted now—known as the institutional view, which is that poverty is a relative concept and it does exist in our society, and that permanent social welfare institutions are necessary to achieve a just allocation of goods and services. Those institutions must be provided on a universal basis, expanding rather than contracting in scope. The third attitude is the social development view, which sees social development as a positive agent for change intended to bring about improvement in the scope and quality of life for all, and to ensure an equitable redistribution of resources within society. Social policies are not merely attempts to rectify imbalances caused either by failings in the individual or in the system, but the basis for programmes which

provide genuine opportunities for development at community and individual level.

I ask members to consider those three concepts and to see where their views fit in. I ask members to consider whether they still regard themselves as being in the Victorian era, when to be poor and living in poverty was regarded as a sin and something which was brought about by the individual or his family; or whether they regard people in need as requiring Government intervention and action of a universal nature; or whether they are really concerned about the fact that there are some people in this community who live below the poverty line, and who do so through no fault or choice of themselves; but who are there and should not be there; and whether we as an enlightened country should be taking steps to ensure that the inequities and gaps which exist between the haves and the have-nots are reduced. That is a choice members must determine for themselves, and perhaps they might give some consideration to it.

In 1972 a number of changes were made to the whole concept of social welfare planning in Australia. These changes were brought about by the Labor Government which was elected in that year, and they were brought about because the Government considered the situation had existed for long enough. The Government was concerned at the impoverished school system; it was concerned at the shoddy hospital system that operated at the time; it was concerned about the shoddy transport system; it was concerned about the lack of finance available to local governments; and it was concerned about the shortage of recreational facilities and other amenities in the community which give people an opportunity to obtain some support or help for the problems they face and the positions in which they find themselves.

All of those reasons prompted the Labor Government of 1972 to take the steps it took within the following three years to do something about social welfare planning. The Labor Government was conscious of the attitude adopted by previous Liberal Governments, which was to preserve the status quo. Members of that Government knew as well as Liberal members sitting opposite me in this Chamber know, that the Liberal Party absolutely venerates inequality, adores privilege, and is in business to ensure those two concepts remain in the community.

Mr Clarko: Who are you kidding?

Mr HARMAN: It is the essence of the philosophy of the Liberal Party to ensure that inequality and privilege remain in Australia.

Members opposite do not want to see people from all walks of life having the same opportunity in respect of education, housing, and employment.

Mr Clarko: That is not so.

Mr HARMAN: It is a basic philosophy of their policy to ensure equality does not exist.

Mr Clarko: And the basis of your philosophy is to take from those who have.

Mr HARMAN: That is the reason the Labor Government of 1972 took the initiatives it took to try to redistribute the resources of Australia so that every citizen of Australia would have an equal opportunity for education; that is why it introduced the Schools Commission. The Labor Government wished to ensure that everybody had an equal opportunity to be healthy; that is why it introduced the Hospitals Commission. It wanted to ensure that all persons in Australia had an opportunity to take part in decision making for their own well-being; that is why it introduced the Australian Assistance Plan, and that is why it decided there should be regional decision making so that local people could get together and make decisions in respect of how money provided by the Commonwealth Government should be expended in their interests and on their behalf within their own communities.

Perhaps it may have been the fault of the Labor Government at that time that the Australian Assistance Plan did not get off the ground; because the decision was made to opt for regional areas rather than to continue with the traditional local authority areas. However, it is interesting to note that in respect of all this assistance—and particularly in respect of finance that was made available—certain State Governments were prepared to challenge the legality of the expenditure of the Commonwealth Government. One such Government was the Government of Western Australia.

Therefore, after some three years of the Federal Labor Government of 1972-1975 endeavouring to show Australia what could be done in terms of social welfare planning and social welfare assistance, one can only conclude, as a result of the opposition raised by conservative parties—whether in Government or in Opposition—that they were absolutely frightened of what was happening. Why were they frightened? They were frightened because the very concepts to which I referred some minutes ago—the concepts of inequality and privilege—were under challenge. They were frightened that people from the other side of the tracks would enter into the establishment. They were frightened that people, in respect of whom in

the years past Liberal Governments had said, "We know what is best for you", would start to think for themselves. They were frightened that people would begin to realise it was about time they started making their own decisions.

When in 1974 the decision of the High Court in respect of the extra senator for the Northern Territory became known, all hell broke loose, and it became necessary for certain action to be taken by the Federal Liberal Party, perhaps assisted by some of the State parties, to ensure that the Labor Government was done away with. How successful that action was!

Mr Sodeman: The voters had nothing to do with it?

Mr HARMAN: That action was taken, as has been said here on many, many occasions, because the Labor Party was showing the way for Australia to become a nation on its own, standing on its own two feet. Of course, we all know what has happened since. In 1975, the Federal Labor Government was dismissed, and since then we have had a period of inaction by a Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government.

What has been the Federal Government's approach to this entire question of social welfare? First, it allowed the Australian Assistance Plan to continue for another 12 months, then it cancelled it. Next, the Federal Government decided to establish a commission headed by Mr Bailey, to examine all the social welfare policies of the Federal Government at the time. That report since has been received.

Before I go on to discuss that report, perhaps I should say something about the Liberal Party's approach to social welfare planning. An examination of the document titled, "New Government policies 1976"—the Liberal platform—is to see a development in Liberal Party thinking which must have been due partly to Labor initiatives in this field. The view of the Liberal platform of "the dignity of the individual" who may need assistance to enjoy "the benefits of a free society" but who must be encouraged "to assume responsibility for his own affairs as soon as possible" has been modified, and reads as follows—

Our social welfare policy seeks to enhance the security, dignity, self-reliance and well-being of Australians. There are circumstances out of peoples' control, situations which deprive people of the social and material resources necessary to living a good life, which subject them to hardship and insecurity, and prevent them from realising their potential . . . We reject the notion that

deprivation is a necessary spur to achievement . . .

I am sorry the member for South Perth is not in the Chamber tonight.

Mr B. T. Burke: He is selling a hole to one of the councils.

Mr HARMAN: I understand a former Minister for Social Security (Mr Wentworth) was in the building a few days ago. What was his attitude towards pensioners? On one occasion, he said—

The old and sick in our society are entitled to live in frugal comfort.

The other day, the Minister for Overseas Trade (Mr Lynch) said that people receiving unemployment benefits were being paid too much; that was his personal view. He is one of the senior Ministers of the Australian Government and, of necessity, his personal view must intrude into any decision he makes within the Federal Cabinet. If he is going to come out publicly and say that people who are unable to find employment are receiving too much in the way of unemployment benefits, what can we expect in the next Federal Budget?

How many members of this Chamber are contacted in their electorates by mothers and fathers of children who are just leaving school? I have many such parents in my electorate, and quite a number of their children are unable to find employment, unable to find any work which will set them on a career. What do members opposite say when they meet those people? What sort of solutions can they offer them? It is very difficult for me to offer them any solution or hope. Certainly, I suggest the obvious things parents should do: Their children should be registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service, should attend a youth support scheme and should motivate themselves by consulting the newspapers every morning and following up any prospect which may offer the opportunity of employment. But of course, the parents are ensuring their children do all of these things.

However, the parents are telling me now that because their children have been out of work for so long, they are beginning to see a change in their character. In the early days, they saw their children coming home, perhaps after the first appointment for a job, still optimistic. They saw them return home after their second appointment to seek employment, still optimistic. After their third appointment their children were starting to waver; after their fourth appointment, they started to feel disillusioned; after their fifth appointment they began to feel they were not

wanted in this society; and, after their sixth appointment, they had become totally disillusioned.

Who has brought this situation about? It is none other than the Liberal-National Country Party Government of Australia, led by Fraser and Anthony. The price to the community has been some 400 000 people out of work. Yes, Mr Acting Speaker, you may well turn your head; so may other members opposite turn their heads in shame.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! I take exception to that remark, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr HARMAN: I am sorry, Mr Acting Speaker; I was looking at you when I made the remark; I regret it. However, I know you looked away from me and I thought perhaps you realised that some of the things I am talking about have occurred in Albany.

Debate Resumed

Mr HARMAN: The fact is, many young people in Western Australia have gone through this process of seeking employment only to be rejected time after time. They are reaching the situation now where they are becoming disillusioned. This does not apply only to young people in my electorate but also to unemployed people generally. They reach a stage where they begin to fit into the category of people who do not want to be employed. They think society is against them and that there is no real necessity for them to motivate themselves any longer.

I ask members to imagine themselves in the position of a 17-year-old girl or boy in our community who is trying to find employment. Their opportunities are so limited that only very few are accepted for employment.

It is no wonder that we reach the next stage, where young people turn to drugs, alcohol and other anti-social features of our community and finish up perhaps as very anti-social people. We wonder at times why this occurred. I lay the blame fairly and squarely upon the State Government and the Federal Government. A Government has the responsibility to ensure its citizens have the opportunity to be employed; however, this State Government and the Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government has failed on that score.

I continue with the Liberal Party's platform on social welfare planning. As I said, the experience

of Fraser's welfare policies does not quite come up to the high-sounding ideals expressed in his policy statement. The evidence suggests that preoccupation with the principles of "new federalism" and with saving money have been deciding factors. I believe that is very true when one considers all the schemes initiated by the Whitlam Government, many of which were set up under specific purpose grants. In each year since the Fraser Government has been in office there has been a downturn in the amount of money provided for specific purpose grants and each year the States have had to take cognisance of it, either by curtailing some of those expenses and, naturally, some of those schemes or by providing money out of their own coffers to continue those schemes.

As I mentioned, in July, 1976, Prime Minister Fraser established a task force on co-ordination in welfare and health under Mr Peter Bailey of the Prime Minister's Department. It was to recommend which programmes could be better handled by the States; consolidation into broader programmes; and, arrangements with the States, local government and voluntary agencies for planning, administration and service delivery.

Its 1977 report has been much criticised. The claim is that it was primarily about federalism and secondarily about health and welfare. In fact, one critic said the task force attempted to put flesh on the bones of that policy—that is federalism—in the welfare-health field when its task was not to recommend changes in policy, however desirable.

The critic concluded that the most striking feature of the Bailey report was—

... that the Commonwealth is quite determined that it wants to wash its hands of a whole range of welfare functions. That point comes through first and foremost. What happens next is seen as a brand new ball game that hasn't really been thought about ... It knows that the Commonwealth wants to move away from, but it is not at all sure that it knows where it wants to move to, nor how it might go about it.

The measures relating to social welfare in the 1978 Budget suggested that the old attitudes are still not far below the surface. Perhaps I should remind members that one of the provisions of the 1978 Budget was to ensure that pensioners had no increase in their pensions for at least 16 months. The Federal Government decided that pensions would be indexed from July to July and, further, that any increase granted in July would not be paid until November. So, since July, 1978—we

are well into 1979 now—the pensioners of Australia under the Fraser Government have had no increase. They must wait until their pensions are indexed in July, this year—12 months after the last indexation increase—and will not be paid until November, 1979. In effect, they will be forced to wait some 16 months between pension increases.

I know all Liberal members in this Chamber were very proud of this decision. I challenged them some 12 months ago to say whether they had written to the Federal Government or expressed any objections to this policy decision. Apart from the member for Murray, not one voice was raised; indeed, I am not sure what even the member for Murray did about the problem.

Mr B. T. Burke: What he usually does.

Mr HARMAN: Nothing.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is right.

Mr HARMAN: The Federal social welfare policies of the 1978 Budget were only typical minor adjustments to the existing order. I might add that unemployment benefits to single people were not increased in that Budget; in fact, there has been no increase in unemployment benefits to single people since 1975. So, in the light of what a senior Federal Minister (Mr Lynch) has been saying, I think every member in this place would have the same reservations as I about the prospect of increased benefits being paid to people who are unemployed after the 1979 Budget.

Perhaps I might conclude my remarks on this aspect with some of the words uttered by Mr Lynch in 1977 when he said, "The dramatic expansion of welfare programmes over recent years is a very important if not principal reason why such a heavy burden has been placed on Australian taxpayers." If members analyse those words they will see they typify the real feeling of the Federal Liberal Government and it reverberates throughout the Federal Liberal system into the State system when it comes to the question of social welfare and social welfare planning.

The whole policy of the Liberal Party is based on the first view I expressed tonight on attitudes to social welfare; that is, that people who are in need are in that position as a result of their own actions. It is their own problem. The situation they are in was caused by themselves or by their families. It was not caused by society. They are in that situation because of a sin they themselves have committed. That attitude prevails and is seen in all of the policies in relation to social welfare planning adopted by the Liberal Party.

I should like to refer to another problem which has beset the community in the metropolitan area for some considerable time and, particularly, over the last six months. This problem dates back to the announcement made in the newspapers in December, 1978, when the Perth City Council decided that it ought to look at the Bold Park area in City Beach as a possible site for a rubbish dump. That idea did not last very long, because it was met with an immediate outcry from the ratepayers in the area. The Perth City Council then suggested rubbish should be dumped on Burswood Island and, surprisingly enough, the Government and the Minister for Health who is sitting here tonight agreed.

Mr Young: I beg your pardon?

Mr HARMAN: I should like to refer to an article in *The West Australian* of the 23rd December, 1978, in which the following statement was made—

The Perth City Council is to use Burswood Island as a stop-gap rubbish dump.

The WA Government said yesterday that the council could dump solid wastes on the island for up to two years while a long-term solution was found.

Does the Minister deny that?

Mr Young: Approval was never given to the City of Perth to dump rubbish on Burswood Island.

Mr Tonkin interjected.

Mr Young: The member for Maylands is making the point that this Government gave permission for rubbish to be dumped on Burswood Island.

Mr HARMAN: I am not making the point; I am quoting from *The West Australian*. The Minister for Health (Mr Young) said it was necessary—

Mr Bryce: It is your paper. You call the tune.

Mr HARMAN: —to let the council dump rubbish on the island.

Mr Young: Official approval was never given.

Mr HARMAN: Members opposite do not like it, but this is a report published in *The West Australian* newspaper. The Minister for Health (Mr Young) said it was necessary to let the council dump rubbish on the island to overcome its immediate rubbish disposal problem and yet, two seconds ago, the Minister said no such approval was given.

Mr Young: That is right.

Mr HARMAN: Am I to believe what is written in *The West Australian*, a very authoritative paper, and a paper that prints the facts?

Mr Clarko: It is the best morning paper we have..

Mr HARMAN: I am in a quandary.

Mr Sodeman: You have not read out the whole article. You are a slow learner.

Mr HARMAN: We can see the hurricane lamp.

Mr Bryce: There is a very dim glow from the back bench opposite.

Mr HARMAN: To continue—

The council would have to operate the site strictly in accordance with Public Health Department rules and conditions.

We have the Minister saying they can dump rubbish on Burswood Island and then the Public Health Department is laying down rules under which the dumping will take place.

Mr Young: All of which was part of a proposal—

Mr HARMAN: I am making my speech.

Mr Young: I will answer you later.

Mr HARMAN: I hope the Minister will give us a full answer later. To continue—

This meant that the site must be operated in a manner consistent with the future use of the area for passive and active recreation.

No noxious material must be allowed to reach the river.

There is no doubt about the fact that the Government said the council could dump rubbish on Burswood Island. The Government gave preliminary approval to the City of Perth, otherwise had there been—

Mr Young: I notice the change in stance you have made. I think the change is noted.

Mr Bryce: You are guilty. You know it and we are going to prove it.

Mr Sodeman: The hurricane lamp is helping him to see the light.

Mr HARMAN: Had the Government said that under no circumstances could the City of Perth dump rubbish on Burswood Island, no controversy would have arisen; but the Government gave approval to the Perth City Council to dump rubbish on Burswood Island. Then, when members of the public, including Dr Riggert, and when the Opposition through myself started to make statements and there was an avalanche of public opinion against dumping rubbish on Burswood Island, the Premier and the Minister

for Health decided to change their minds. However, the Government has forced the City of Perth into a position where it has a temporary site for dumping rubbish, but it has not resolved the whole problem of waste disposal in the metropolitan area.

Mr Skidmore: They will not get rid of their rubbish there either.

Mr HARMAN: The Government is continuing to duck for cover and run away from this issue. It is an issue which concerns not only the mere fact of getting rid of our waste, but it is also an issue which concerns our health. I do not have to refer in detail to the reports issued over the years by the Public Health Department, but in all its latest reports it has referred to the spread of salmonella by seagulls. One has only to visit the land-filled sites in Fremantle, the City of Stirling, the Manning area, the Midland area, and in Claremont and one will see the dumps are alive with seagulls which are spreading the poison throughout the community. The seagulls spread the poison over the areas they travel. That is one of the reasons we ought to do something more positive in the whole field of waste disposal in the metropolitan area.

When we see the attitude adopted by the Government, we start to wonder whether it is really concerned about this problem or whether it prefers to stand back and say, "Let us leave it to the local authorities." If we leave it to the local authorities, we leave it to individuals in individual areas who have no appreciation of how to solve the problem on an overall basis. All they are concerned about is solving the problem in their own areas for their own ratepayers and making it possible to arrange some sort of rubbish disposal method which is convenient for them and for their ratepayers. They do not take into account the overall aspects of all of the people in the metropolitan area. They do not take into account some of the benefits which could be achieved as a result of a unified approach to rubbish collection and disposal. One cannot blame the local authorities for this, because they do not have the resources to adopt a unified approach to rubbish disposal. In order to do that, the resources of the Government must be used.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr HARMAN: When I am referring to "the resources of the Government" I mean the State Government. The State Government must accept this responsibility. However, so far it has dodged its responsibility.

Amendment to Motion

Mr HARMAN: For the reasons I have mentioned, I should like to move the following amendment to the Address-in-Reply—

That the following words be added to the motion—

However we condemn the Government for not taking the initiative to resolve the problem of domestic and industrial waste disposal in the metropolitan area and the Opposition requests the Government to establish a statutory waste disposal authority to co-ordinate the collection and disposal of waste in the metropolitan area under conditions that are ecologically sound and also conducive to the recovery of resources for further use.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [9.25 p.m.]: I second the amendment. In so doing, I should like to indicate to the Chamber that we hear a great deal about vandalism and the fact that it is a common problem. People go around breaking electric light bulbs and smashing telephone booths. However, in my opinion the greatest vandalism occurring in this State at this time is the vandalism of the Government. We see that it is vandalising our forests and our environment as a result of bauxite mining. The time will come in the year 2000 when people will curse the name of Sir Charles Court who has superintended this policy of vandalism of our natural resources so that our children and grandchildren will not have the kind of beautiful country which we inherited.

Another type of vandalism is the vandalism over which the Government is presiding with the destruction of our wetlands. In the last 25 years half of the wetlands on the Swan coastal plain have been destroyed. This is a terrible situation in a very arid country. We live in a very dry area where the rainfall is intermittent, sparse, and unreliable, and yet we are destroying wetlands which other people who live near desert areas are attempting to preserve. This can be seen in places like Spain where the Moors came over from the desert and developed the fountain—the moving water—to a fine art, because they were desert people and water meant a great deal to them.

And yet despite the fact that we live in this dry, arid land, we are in favour of the destruction of our wetlands and river foreshores. The Government says, "No; we have not given permission." The Minister for Health said, "We did not give permission to dump waste on Burswood Island." The Government does not care a damn where the rubbish is dumped. It is the problem of the Perth City Council. It is the problem of all the local shires and the

Government believes they can scurry around looking for a place to dump this noxious effluent which leaches through to the water table. This Government has washed its hands of the problem.

At the 1977 election, the Australian Labor Party indicated it believed this problem was beyond the power of any one local authority. We cannot expect one local authority to be able to develop a waste disposal system which could deal with the problem. We believe a body should be set up to co-ordinate waste disposal throughout the metropolitan area in order that it can be dealt with in an efficient manner. We were attacked by many local authorities which were worried about their own little empires.

Mr Bryce: Little empire builders.

Mr TONKIN: The local authorities were worried that we might be taking away their power. The little moguls were worried about what would happen to them, instead of being worried about the State and being big enough to admit they were too small to be able to cope with the problem. Of course, seeing a vote in the making, this Government jumped on the bandwagon. They talked about centralism and the grabbing of power by the State Government. Now we find the chickens have come home to roost. This Government does not know what to do with the waste. It has the problem that Burswood Island—the entrance to Perth on the beautiful Swan River—a lovely island which could become a recreational haven for people in their leisure time, is being used as a dumping ground for all kinds of rubbish.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister said that was not acceptable.

Mr TONKIN: What kind of Government do we have that is prepared to accept there is to be destruction of our rivers and destruction of our wetlands, and wipe its hands of the problem? We do not believe in that kind of irresponsibility. We do not have any respect for a Government which will do nothing. We know how the Government falsifies the electoral laws, and how it will cheat and connive in order to get into power. It will commit legal crime because it controls the machinery of the law. But, once having achieved that power, the Government will not use it on behalf of the people it spuriously claims to represent.

We have a rubbish disposal problem because the shire councils in the Perth metropolitan area are not in a position to look after this problem. The shires are too fragmented; there are too many of them; they are too small. We need co-ordination and a plan for the future, as would

happen in any enlightened community and with any enlightened Government.

The latest plan for rubbish disposal is to dump it in the hills. What a cheek—the Perth City Council stating that it will dump its rubbish in someone else's backyard. That council offered money to a former Minister of this Government to take his land from him; a Minister who, by the way, says we are paid far too much. He does not need his salary because of his wealth.

Mr Bryce: And a millionaire to boot!

Mr TONKIN: He is one of the part-time members to whom this salary is being paid, and he says that members of Parliament are paid too much. Some of us work full time—seven days a week and not only the three when Parliament is in session—and we do not have other sources of income.

So this former Minister is to have his land used and have rubbish dumped unceremoniously in the hills. This unco-ordinated approach to the problem is not good enough.

Mr Bryce: It is a *laissez-faire* approach.

Mr TONKIN: We need a co-ordinated approach. We believe that if this Government wants power so badly—as it obviously does when it connives and cheats to get into power—then it should use that power to better the development of Western Australia and it could do that by looking after waste disposal.

Many methods are available. We could talk about the creation of compost, for example, or the burning of the waste to create energy. Whatever method is used—and many fine methods are used in Europe and the United States—it is clear the only way this is possible in Western Australia is for the establishment of one authority to be in charge of the whole of the metropolitan area. That authority should have the resources to handle the volume of rubbish, and should be able to co-ordinate and develop a scheme.

The present situation is laughable. We have seen many shire councils waste money by sending experts overseas. Obviously, the problem is beyond the facilities of the Bassendean Town Council or the Bayswater Shire Council, or even the larger shires such as the City of Stirling. Those shires cannot go into this kind of development.

What is possible, and what was included in the policy we put to the people of Western Australia in 1977, is for the Government to take the responsibility in order that co-ordination can occur. We do not suggest that power should be taken away from local authorities. They should be

co-ordinated to enable them to deal with the problem. At the moment the problem is dealt with in an ecologically unsatisfactory manner.

It is not good enough to destroy our foreshores and our wetlands in this way. If we continue in this manner for the next 30 years we will be living in a desert. We will raze our forests in order to get the bauxite beneath them. We will destroy our wetlands and we will have a barren, dry, arid, sterile environment for our children. We believe that the attack on our wetlands and our river foreshores, and the dumping of rubbish in the hills, must cease.

This rubbish does not need to be looked at as “rubbish”. It is a matter of knowing how to convert the rubbish into energy so that something good will come out of the waste disposal problem.

There is the problem of scale. An authority will have to be big enough and have the capacity to borrow money in order to do this work. That is the reason for the amendment. We believe the Government should no longer shirk its responsibility.

The 1977 election is far enough away now. If the Government wants to save face—and saving face seems to be the main job of this Government—the Australian Labor Party policy of 1977 is far enough away for the Government to embrace that policy. A co-ordinated approach is needed so that we can stop the damage to the environment and, in fact, turn this waste into a useful ally. This is something in which we believe; something which we urge upon the Government. The time has gone for point scoring; the time has gone when we have to prove which party has the better policy. Let us look at the policy itself, irrespective of which party has put forward that policy. Let us decide what is best for the people of Western Australia. Let us embrace that policy and accept it. Let us work together so that we will be able to dispose of our rubbish in a responsible and enlightened way, similar to what is being done overseas. That will indicate that we care about our environment and we care about people first and foremost, instead of caring about scoring points off one another.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.38 p.m.]: I certainly support the proposition put before the House by my colleague, the member for Maylands, when he suggested the State Government deserves to be condemned for not taking the initiative—the operative words in his amendment—to resolve the problem of domestic and industrial waste disposal in the metropolitan area.

There is no doubt that the disposal of industrial and domestic waste in our city poses a very serious problem to the city itself. It is a phenomenon which has tended to be ignored for a little too long, and time has caught up with the existing Government.

I take the point made so perfectly clear by the member for Morley. In 1977 the Australian Labor Party suggested as a positive proposal that the State needed—and particularly the metropolitan area badly needed a statutory authority to control the disposal of industrial and domestic waste in our city. At the time, of course, the suggestion was disparaged by the Premier of the day as a typical Labor Party suggestion involving all the unnecessary statutory arrangements and all the bureaucratic appendages to involve the State Government interfering in the cherished rights of local government to handle a particular problem. All that sort of rhetoric was trotted out by the Premier of the day to denigrate a positively good idea.

What the city needs, precisely, is a statutory authority. It is more than passing strange that when a Liberal-Country Party coalition government decides to introduce legislation into the Parliament to establish a statutory authority of its own, whether it is for the promotion of small business in Victoria by Mr Hamer, or whether in some other State of Australia, it is usually described euphemistically as the most sophisticated, modern, and up-to-date approach to the particular problem.

When the Labor Party proposes the establishment of that sort of organisation it is denigrated by Liberal Party spokesmen as socialist bureaucratic bungling. In this particular instance the Government has egg on its face. How dearly it would love to have at this particular time a metropolitan statutory authority to handle the disposal of waste. The Cities of Perth, Belmont, and Stirling—and so many other metropolitan local governing authorities—simply cannot handle the magnitude of the problem which they now face.

You, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), are a very reasonable man and with your concern you would naturally appreciate that in this highly materialistic society of ours it is not just industrial enterprises which are producing an abnormal level of waste but, in fact, almost without exception every home in the suburbs of this city which is producing a fairly abnormal level of domestic waste compared with a decade or so ago.

Only a decade ago one rubbish bin at the front gate of a house seemed to be able to cope with the normal rubbish of that home. We now find that in many homes in suburbia most local authorities permit residents to place up to two rubbish bins at the front gate each week.

In addition to that increase, in this age of materialism there are now a number of young entrepreneurs who are making a very healthy "quid" out of providing supplementary rubbish disposal services. Quite a number of my own immediate neighbours have availed themselves of this service for the princely sum of \$4 per month. These enormous bales, assuming the proportions of about double the size of the old-fashioned chaff bag, are emptied once a month for about \$4.

Mr Young: It is a wool bale. I thought the supporters of the farmers would have commented and advised you.

Mr O'Neil: Wool bales, for sitting upon.

Mr BRYCE: It is probable that you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), were not aware that you were sitting on a wool bale! I think the point is understood and appreciated by most people who have given it more than superficial consideration. Not only is the average member of suburbia now expected to have one or two rubbish bins, but in addition he is expected to have one of these bales in order to dispose of his domestic rubbish each month.

That serves as a pointer to the magnitude of this particular problem. The City of Perth, the City of Belmont—and I am speaking of an area of which I represent at least a part—and the Shire of Bayswater, all of whom have within their areas these wetlands on the edge of the Swan River, are tending to encroach upon very significant reserves of this old river system.

My colleague, the member for Morley, has indicated already the health dangers. However, there are other fairly significant physical dangers to the people living in the Swan Valley from Guildford to Midland. The decision-makers have been so ready to forget just what the consequences are if the State Government fills in half of Crawley Bay for freeways, a significant portion of the lowlands of the City of Perth near the cement works for rubbish tips, the City of Belmont does its little bit and fills in hundreds of acres near the racecourse, and the Bayswater Shire Council does its little bit and fills in hundreds of acres on the other side of the river a little further upstream from the racecourse. In years to come we will finish up with a large river which represents a flood problem to the people living further upstream in Guildford and the

Swan Valley. This flood threat is quite apart from the threat to health that can emanate from salmonella outbreaks, etc.

Clearly we on this side of the House are opposed to any decision to dump domestic and industrial waste on Burswood Island. We have made our position perfectly clear. As long ago as the 1977 election we indicated that if our city is to grow up it is time we had a State Government-sponsored statutory authority to handle the disposal of industrial and domestic waste.

I can well understand members of this particular Government feeling fairly sensitive about challenging the empires of local government within the metropolitan area. We have been told in recent days that a very high proportion of the members of the metropolitan local governing authorities are very staunch members of the Liberal Party. We can appreciate, therefore, that this particular Government does not find it very comfortable to be treading on the toes of so many of its friends in local government, the people who cherish their small empires within the city.

In fact, this is an appropriate opportunity to rerecord those wonderful statistics that were highlighted by nobody more objective than a Ph.D. student inquiring into this subject for his doctorate. His figures were based on a return of only 50 per cent to his inquiry, but they showed that 30 per cent of all councillors involved in local government are members of the Liberal Party; 16 per cent are members of the National Country Party; and only 3 per cent of councillors are members of the Labor Party.

Mr Sodeman: Don't you read *The Sunday Times*.

Mr BRYCE: The honourable member is a good student of the Murdoch Press.

Mr Sodeman: That indicates an apathy on the part of the Labor Party.

Mr Jamieson: That would be a laugh, that would.

Mr BRYCE: If that is true, does it mean the member for Pilbara has conceded that there are politics in local government?

Mr Sodeman: No, I asked you.

Mr BRYCE: If the member for Pilbara says there are no politics in local government, there would scarcely be a member of this Legislative Chamber who would think he could hold his head up.

Mr Sodeman: That is not what those statistics prove.

Mr Jamieson: Of course it is.

Mr Sodeman: They can be members of any political party.

Mr BRYCE: And of course, they just happen to be elected to those particular local governing bodies with the assistance of the Liberal Party machines of the communities in which they live.

Mr Sodeman: Rubbish!

Mr BRYCE: It is just purely accidental, as I am about to be told by members opposite. As they canvass the neighbourhood, as they raise funds—

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: —as they trot out the motorcars on polling days, and as they man the polling booths, we see all the members of the Liberal Parties in these immediate communities trotting out their candidates, and yet they have the temerity to say there are no politics in local government.

Mr Tubby: And they are dead right.

Mr BRYCE: What it amounts to in the strictest philosophical sense is that the politics of local government are bourgeois politics.

Mr Skidmore: Rubbish—of course that is what we are talking about.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): I would like to draw the attention of the member on his feet to the fact that we are talking to an amendment. I suggest that he should restrict his remarks to that.

Mr Skidmore: That is what it is about—rubbish.

Mr BRYCE: Most assuredly, Mr Acting Speaker, you will have my co-operation in doing just that. I was attempting to establish just how difficult it is—

Mr Clarko: You were talking a lot of rubbish.

Mr BRYCE: —for this particular Government to tread on the toes of the people in these local governing authorities. It is very interesting to note how many Government back-benchers just happened to spring up from local government. That explains the difficulty this Government has in dealing with local governing authorities.

Mr Sodeman: Tell us a little secret. Who have you just endorsed to stand for the City of Fremantle?

Mr Young: Norm Marlborough.

Mr BRYCE: We do not try to hide this. We are the party which is setting about the process of exploding the myth.

Mr Young: How are you going to do it?

Mr BRYCE: We are the honest party.

Mr Young: How many are you going to endorse?

Mr BRYCE: For years we have said that there are party politics in local government. It is members opposite who have run for cover.

Mr Young: How many are you going to endorse?

Mr BRYCE: Marlborough just happens to be part of the 3 per cent.

Mr Sodeman: Oh, is that it.

Mr BRYCE: Members can now see how sensitive members opposite happen to be on this touchy subject. We can appreciate how difficult it would be for any Government composed of members like this, to bring legislation to its party room suggesting that a metropolitan-wide statutory authority should be established to dispose of domestic and industrial waste.

The Government members know of this difficulty because so many of them come from local authorities, and they know that the local governing authorities would have their noses put out of shape; they simply would not wear the idea. Back in 1977 the Government knew that this would indeed be a very prickly situation to tackle. So rather than accept the validity of the very concrete proposition based on the needs of the city, they were quite happy to say, "We dare not touch this particular problem; we will leave it to one side. We will ignore it in the hope that it will go away." Of course, by the very nature of our materialistic and consumption-based society this problem will not go away.

Mr Sodeman: If only *Hansard* could record the smiles on your faces.

Mr BRYCE: I am smiling only about the idiocy that emanates from the Government back bench about this problem.

Mr Sodeman: We are smiling at the ridiculousness of your debate.

Mr BRYCE: I am absolutely bemused by some of the interjections that come from members like the member for Pilbara who rarely participates in debates. One would imagine that if he were really interested—

Mr Shalders: You have your tongue in you cheek like a lollypop, and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: If the member for Pilbara was the slightest bit interested in participating in one of the few opportunities for non-legislative debate in this House, and exposing in this place some of the problems confronting the people he represents, he would stand up and make a speech. However, we may well see this particular debate expire before he has the courage to get to his feet. We

understand, for the sake of his Whip, he is behaving like a virgin on the verge—he never quite gets up to make his speech. We would love to hear a contribution from him.

Mr Williams: What would you be called then?

Mr Sodeman: Does that overshadow your idiocy.

Mr Clarko: Do you believe that Stirling City councillors who support the Labor Party uphold the view you are putting forward?

Mr BRYCE: The member for Karrinyup, who is the Chairman of Committees, should realise that his interjection is out of order. Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Blaikie), if you are not being prevailed upon by another colleague of yours at the moment, I am sure you would have recognised the irrelevance of that interjection as I did.

Mr Clarko: Are you prepared to answer it, because Labor Party councillors do not agree with you, and I can take you very quickly to meet a few?

Mr BRYCE: I would be very happy for the honourable member to introduce me to a few Labor Party councillors since I happen to believe it is only the wolves in sheep's clothing opposite who pretend that there are no politics in local government and who support the use of the Liberal Party machine to elect Liberals to local government.

Mr Tubby: Your party members expect to get paid for it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): I have asked the member to confine his remarks to the words of the amendment. He keeps referring to local government, and that is quite irrelevant.

Mr BRYCE: We suggest that this Government is near sighted. It has failed to recognise that this is a very important issue, and it has failed to look at the city as a whole. Rather it prefers to see the metropolitan area as a fragmentation of different governing units.

Mr Sodeman: Will the member for Perth speak on this debate tonight?

Mr BRYCE: He may well do.

Mr T. J. Burke: No, not tonight, although thanks for the invitation.

Mr Sodeman: That would surprise all of us!

Mr BRYCE: We have suggested that it is very near sighted of the Government to have waited until well into 1979 to make temporary arrangements when it knew a major problem was building up with regard to the disposal of this waste. It has become a city-wide problem when a local governing authority as big as the Perth City

Council has to find some temporary expedient. It is absolutely absurd to dump industrial and domestic waste on Burswood Island.

The Government made a blue intitially—and the Minister knows it—by giving preliminary approval to this scheme—no matter how the Minister may seek to describe that approval. The Government has withdrawn from that decision, and a temporary expedient has now been established.

The Government deserves to be condemned for turning its back two or three years ago on a problem that was obvious then. We could see the direction in which the solution to this problem lay. The Government knew it then but it was not prepared to grasp the nettle.

In the terms of this particular amendment, we are asking that the Government should sit up, and take a little bit of notice of a positive suggestion from this side of the House to establish a statutory waste disposal authority to co-ordinate the collection and disposal of waste in the metropolitan area under conditions which are ecologically sound, as set out in the amendment.

I have already touched on the magnitude of the problem with regard to domestic waste. However, it seems to be a never-ending problem, with the number of vehicles which arrive at the Belmont City dump and the Bayswater Shire dump from outside those constituencies which want to get rid of their industrial waste. It is not waste like the Town of Albany, the Town of Geraldton, or the Town of Bunbury generate from within their communities. In those two local governing areas, both of which I represent at least a significant part, they face this problem, where industrial waste is accumulated all over the metropolitan area and people are seeking to dump it in those two dumps. Building contractors, demolition experts and others are desperately keen to find some little corner, some little nook and cranny of the metropolitan area which will accept their refuse. That number of places is becoming fewer and fewer.

It is only a couple of months ago I had a direct association with one particular and specific aspect of this problem, which was the disposal of used vehicle tyres. That in itself constitutes one of the most difficult disposal problems we face. It never ceases to amaze me that at the very time the Government knew there was a monumental problem with the disposal of industrial and domestic waste, it failed to help a business established with the express purpose of processing some of this waste.

At present there are between three million and five million used vehicle tyres in the metropolitan area which absolutely nobody wants. Even in the temporary arrangement the Perth City Council made with the City of Subiaco, used tyres will not be accepted. They do not decompose; they need to be processed and to be treated differently from anything else. It is just one facet of the problem.

Mr Clarko: Was not the attempt to do something about that problem a failure?

Mr BRYCE: It has not failed; that is the point. I am fairly critical of the Government on this point, because it involves another Minister, the Minister for Industrial Development. In my candid opinion if this Government had had a very keen eye on the magnitude and the nature of this particular disposal problem, perhaps a sensitive and aware Minister could have prevailed upon his colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development, to do more to assist a very enterprising firm of keen Western Australians who wanted to do something about continuing in business, a business that was based on a scientific method of disposing of used tyres.

Mr Clarko: Do you think it was economically viable?

Mr BRYCE: My word, I do!

Mr Clarko: I understand they found that, financially, they could not continue.

Mr BRYCE: That is the whole point: It demonstrates the superficiality of the honourable member's examination of the problem. I studied the operations of that firm. I had a look at the industry and at the work being done; I examined the products which were the result of their energies. It seemed to me that at the very point when some of the Victorian Country Roads Board authorities had approved of the product and were quite happy to prescribe the inclusion of rubber crumbs with asphalt as a means of using the by-product of mulching tyres, and the company needed the assistance of the Department of Industrial Development, it did not receive it, and I believe that to be a crying shame.

The factory itself was established just outside Midland and, at the moment, there are between one million and two million tyres lying at that factory. The Belmont City Council, the Perth City Council and the Bayswater Shire Council will not accept used tyres for disposal. In fact, that happens to be the case in most shires throughout the metropolitan area.

I understand that under some circumstances, the Wanneroo Shire may accept them and, if one happens to have a business established inside the limits of the Gosnells City Council, one can

dispose of used tyres at the local dump in that area. So, there are only two or perhaps three local authorities in the entire metropolitan area which will accept this particular unwelcome form of industrial and domestic waste. I believe an authority such as that suggested by the Leader of the Opposition of the day in 1977 would satisfactorily cope with this problem.

In conclusion, therefore, the Opposition thinks it is a disgrace that just because the Government is so wary of treading on the toes of people who make decisions in local government, it puts that preference far ahead of the needs of the city in ecological and plain common-sense terms by refusing to set up a statutory authority.

I have pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by my colleague, the member for Maylands.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [10.06 p.m.]: I cannot agree with the amendment before the Chair to establish a statutory waste disposal authority, and I do not believe the Opposition has put forward a clear-cut, properly set out proposition which would convince the House. I reject the criticism of local government that because the 1 500 members of local councils are politically biased in favour of non-Labor interests, they made a decision which was not favourable to those interests. The City of Stirling, which is the local authority my constituency is within, is totally opposed to such a metropolitan rubbish disposal authority.

Mr Bryce: Are you one of the non-political former councillors of the City of Stirling?

Mr CLARKO: Of course I am not, and the Hon. Roy Cloughton who stood for the City of Stirling at a time when he was a member of Parliament certainly showed quite clearly he was happy to be a member of the council while he was a member of Parliament.

Mr Bryce: So there are politics in local government.

Mr CLARKO: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asks Mr Cloughton he will find that Mr Cloughton and I were in closer accord on matters relating to education than any other members of that council. We were able to work together on many matters, particularly the promotion of kindergartens.

I think one of the great problems which exists in local government is when we get people who are politically juxta-opposed and who also represent a particular political party; it tends to inhibit their thinking on this sort of body.

Whilst I would not wish to touch on the matter at the same length as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I point out that the survey done by Wood apparently received replies from only 125 people, just over half of the 247 people contacted. There are, of course, a very much larger number of people than that—probably about 1 500 councillors—in Western Australia who have an interest in this problem.

The survey found that of the 125 people who replied, only three were members of the Labor Party; or, alternatively, that the vast majority of those who replied were Liberal voters. Three out of 125 is very close to 3 per cent; that means, perhaps, that only 3 per cent of the Labor Party can read or write. Of course, I do not agree with that proposition; that is an argument which often is used in local government in a derogatory way. Local government councillors contribute their time on a voluntary basis; that is why there are not many Labor people in local government. The same applies to service clubs; let members opposite ask those service clubs sometime, if they do not believe me.

The City of Stirling is opposed to a combined metropolitan disposal authority as proposed in the amendment before the Chair. In addition, the Shire of Wanneroo, part of which I used to represent and which is immediately adjacent to my local authority, opposes the proposal.

The City of Stirling has a population approximately twice that of the City of Perth, and the Shire of Wanneroo is the fastest growing local authority in Western Australia. Those two authorities play a very large proportionate part in metropolitan local authorities.

I do not believe the City of Stirling decided to reject the proposal for a local authority in a light manner; clearly, one cannot reject a proposal for a combined authority out of hand. I say very sincerely that as far as I am concerned, the authorities in the City of Stirling and the Shire of Wanneroo have looked very closely at the case for a combined authority. Obviously, there are arguments in favour of such an authority; one cannot simply reject them.

However, when we have an authority such as the City of Stirling, with all its experience and the benefit of its staff, who have made a very thorough investigation into this matter, deciding, in conjunction with the Shire of Wanneroo—after careful consideration of the matter by councillors who represent both sides of the political spectrum—to oppose the establishment of a single waste disposal authority, we should listen with great care to that opinion.

The City of Stirling, which is the most populous—though not always the most popular—council in Western Australia has not been lacking in the attention it has given to this matter. For a long time now it has paid a great deal of attention to the future rubbish disposal problems of the area. The City of Stirling produces something of the order of 6 500 tonnes of rubbish each week.

Only a month ago, on the 9th April, the Stirling City Council announced it had agreed to proceed with a medium baling system at a cost in excess of \$2 million and that it had already signed contracts for approximately \$1 million. The authority would like to collect—for later transfer—this rubbish from a central site within the City of Stirling, preferably in the important Balcatta light industrial area.

That is one of the problems with a combined authority proposal: Where do we dispose of the rubbish? The greatest cost associated with these programmes is the transport of the rubbish as regionally collected to perhaps an intermediate site, where it might be reduced in volume and then transferred to some other central place. I would be interested if the Opposition could provide us with a site which would be suitable from which we could work within the metropolitan area. The cheapest one, of course, would be located in St. George's Terrace. I do not think that would be very acceptable. Certainly, dumping rubbish at Burswood Island was totally unacceptable to me; I think I would rather have it dumped in St. George's Terrace than there.

No conclusive argument has been advanced tonight in support of a combined authority. As I said, the City of Stirling at the present moment is arranging to have its rubbish taken to a central site where it will be compacted into what is called a "medium bale". The council has a number of sites in mind one of which is the Maylands clay pits. It is a pity the member for Maylands is not in the Chamber at the moment because I would appreciate his views on this suggestion.

It is very important to ensure the material which is to be placed in the Maylands clay pits—if any—has proper protection, and that some sort of bund is built which will ensure that in no way will the material in the "medium bales" affect the underground water supplies of the area.

It is possible the City of Stirling may decide on another area within its boundaries, because it is considering a number of other sites as potential places to put these bales. It may even reach an agreement with the Shire of Wanneroo.

I believe it is very important in terms of the recent comments about rubbish from the City of Perth being taken to the Helena Valley area and dumped that the opinions of the local people be respected. In that case, it appears that the local people or the local council—call them what we will—opposed what was being proposed; namely, that rubbish be taken from the more central areas to the outer perimeter of metropolitan Perth, and dumped there. The local council must have a real say as to whether the rubbish should be located within its particular municipality.

I do not think it is appropriate for one council, without referring to the people, to go ahead and dump rubbish in a particular area. There are great difficulties in terms of this sort of future planning.

In the early 1970s, the City of Stirling paid \$300 000 for the purchase of some land. Before the money was paid, the council approached the Public Health Department and asked whether the land was suitable for a sanitary land-fill site. The council was given approval. A couple of years later, the council received advice that the land was no longer suitable because the Metropolitan Water Board had decided to put down various bores for groundwater to supplement the water supply. The City of Stirling suddenly found that it had \$300 000-worth of land which had been approved of by the only approving authority, the Public Health Department, but the actions of the MWB had ensured that the land could no longer be used for such a purpose. Obviously the City of Stirling will have to find some non-degradable material, such as builders' waste, to place on the land. It will be interesting to see what the council finally does in order to recover some of the large amount of money expended.

A combined metropolitan authority is not necessary at present. Certainly the largest authority, as I have shown clearly, at its meeting a week ago made it quite clear that it rejected such a combined programme. I have considered carefully the material put out by the council. That material carefully weighs up the various arguments in regard to this matter. I believe that its decision to use a baling system and to place it in a site such as the Maylands clay pits—

Mr Jamieson: It is on the Swan River flood plain again. They would be in more trouble again.

Mr CLARKO: The City of Stirling has not chosen this site definitely. It is in the process of appointing consultants, who will examine that proposal. I do not think there is any chance whatsoever that the placing of the medium density bales in the clay pits at Maylands will

affect the Swan River or its nearby environs. If they would affect it, clearly it would not be done. The member for Welshpool would not want that done, and neither would I.

Mr B. T. Burke: It nearly got onto Burswood Island.

Mr CLARKO: I have already explained my position on Burswood Island. It is at one with the member for Balcatta.

Mr B. T. Burke: The point is that these things happen. Your Minister was urging Burswood Island at one stage.

Mr CLARKO: I do not think he was. He said quite categorically that he was not. I would ask the member for Balcatta, as his constituency is also totally within the City of Stirling, whether he supports the city's decision.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is not totally within the City of Stirling. I do not believe the City of Stirling looks beyond its own boundaries, as does any other local authority. I believe the City of Stirling may well be looking to taking work from other local authorities for their baling plant. I do not think that is the right idea.

Mr CLARKO: As far as I can see, the City of Stirling will have plenty of rubbish for its own plant. As far as I know, the city has not entered into negotiations with adjacent municipalities to use the plant the City of Stirling is proposing to set up. That is of tremendous importance.

In the Kalamunda Shire, there is a central depot in the scarp area where the rubbish is received. It is treated in some way to reduce its volume. From that point, it is moved down to below the foothills where the main dumping site is.

None of the arguments tonight have indicated a place where metropolitan rubbish could be disposed of. Are we to imagine some vast hole in the ground, or are we projecting some fancy machine which will receive and treat our material in various ways?

One of the municipalities adjacent to Sydney established a plant for the treatment of rubbish as long ago as the early 1970s. It cost about \$4 million, as I understand it. Part of the machine lasted for only three to four months before the various acids in the waste refuse eroded and corroded the rollers of the machine. The machine could then be used in part only. Certainly it was unsuccessful.

With an amendment such as the one before us tonight, I think Opposition members might have given us some further information in terms of the various ways that they believe rubbish should be

treated. I wonder whether they are supporters of a sanitary land-fill system. Everybody in Western Australia has heard a lot about the new methods. However, at the present moment land-fill disposal of rubbish treated in various ways is certainly the cheapest form. As long as the swamps or the wastelands that are used are not clearly definable lakes or water areas where there are environmental issues, the areas will provide a benefit to the municipalities afterwards.

In the City of Stirling, I understand that the Hertha Road tip will be completed towards the end of this year. Certainly it will not be in use for more than 12 months. The closing of the tip will be to the relief of the people who live near it, because there are numerous problems associated with living adjacent to one of these sites—problems of dust, smell, fires, and so on. We must face up to these problems.

With the closure of the Hertha Road tip, the City of Stirling will gain one of the biggest recreation areas in metropolitan Perth. One would not be able to put a cost estimate on the long-term advantages to the people of that part of Perth. Its value will be inestimable.

If we consider the proposal for a combined system advanced tonight, the biggest authority in terms of population in the metropolitan area is opposed to such a concept. The City of Stirling and the Shire of Wanneroo are happy to enter into discussions with other municipalities. They are happy, on a mutual basis, to work out schemes on which they can co-operate. However, they do not want the State Government to set up a body which will direct them in what they do.

I have a great deal of confidence in the people who govern the municipalities of Western Australia, and of Perth in particular. I am sure that they are capable of making wise decisions. I am sure they will do better in many cases in making their own decisions and co-operating on a mutual basis without being directed by a central body. We have seen enough of central authorities in Perth which have overridden local authorities. Certainly local authorities are much closer to their people; they are much more likely, in my opinion, to make decisions which are close to the wishes of their people.

Mr Bryce: That is emotive garbage. You know that.

Mr CLARKO: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wishes to make a specific point, I am happy to listen to him.

Mr Bryce: I said it is emotive garbage to say that local governing authorities are closer to the people. Do you not see that it is possible that what

the city as a whole needs is something that individual local authorities may not recognise?

Mr CLARKO: Of course it is possible. That is the whole key to the argument. What the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants to do—and I am glad he has made his statement—is to have a central body which can and will override the will of the local people. That is the whole basis of one of these schemes. What he is saying is that we do not trust the local authorities. We do not believe that they will make the right decisions. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is saying that he has no confidence in local authorities to make decisions.

Mr Bryce: I am not saying that at all.

Mr CLARKO: He is happy to have a central body telling the local authorities, "You cannot do this. You shall do this."

Mr Bryce: I am saying that the problem has reached the stage where it is too big for the local authorities.

Mr CLARKO: I totally reject that. I can refer to the situation in my authority, the City of Stirling. I am saying that authority has worked out a programme. The City of Perth, for whatever reason, has failed to plan for its long-term rubbish disposal needs.

Mr Bryce: Can you not be bigger than your own little bailiwick? Are you not concerned about the city?

Mr CLARKO: I am saying that the City of Stirling has 170 000 people, and is expecting to have 200 000 people by the year 2000. Together with the Shire of Wanneroo, that area will have the largest group of ratepayers and citizens in metropolitan Perth. Those two authorities are confident that they can resolve these particular problems without having a central body to tell them what to do. I totally agree with that view. This is not to say that local authorities are all-wise. However, they think that central authorities such as the waste disposal authority would not have the collective brains which would make the best decision for all people.

In a centralised body, it is likely that they will make a decision which, on average, will suit the metropolitan area. That is the nature of such an organisation. They will work out a system to the best advantage of all the citizens of metropolitan Perth, as they see it. However, that decision might be to the disadvantage of parts of the metropolitan area. Many municipalities have worked out what they need to do in relation to handling their waste. They are doing it extremely well.

Mr Bryce: What about the ones that cannot? What about Bassendean, Claremont, Cottesloe, and Peppermint Grove?

Mr CLARKO: A few local authorities have not planned properly and correctly. However, they are not typical. The Opposition is using the usual socialist attitude, that because one person has a sore left foot we will cut the left legs off every person in the community.

Mr Bryce: The inner city and older local government authorities cannot cope.

Mr CLARKO: I think I know more about Cottesloe than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, because I was born there. I have said quite clearly that because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition feels it is appropriate for one or two authorities—

Mr Bryce: Not one or two—numerous.

Mr CLARKO: That is the word used by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—numerous. Some authorities could perhaps not organise their future programmes because of some geographical disadvantage. However, all local authorities should not be forced into a scheme because of that. They should not be forced into it, irrespective of whether it is desirable from their point of view. I know that is socialism. I know that is the centralist approach.

Mr Bryce: That is not right at all.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is Clarkoism. No-one is talking about forcing anybody to do anything.

Mr Bryce: That is right.

Mr CLARKO: That is the whole *raison d'être* of socialism, where one forces everybody into doing what is regarded as the common will.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are saying that.

Mr CLARKO: It is important that we do not set up yet another authority as a sort of temporary palliative which would seek to provide a solution to the rubbish disposal problems of all of Perth. It would depend necessarily on having a group of people working together to resolve their problems but the only way they will resolve the problems is by making a decision which the separate authorities cannot make for themselves. If it is to be said that they cannot solve their problems because they do not have the capital, or some other reason, let them now put that forward, and let us try to resolve the problems of these municipalities.

The City of Perth, which is the second largest authority in Western Australia in terms of population and the largest in financial backing, has not resolved its rubbish disposal problems

despite the money it has. At present it is trying to work out a scheme by private negotiation.

As we know the Minister for Health will shortly be making a decision on the disposal of rubbish by the City of Perth. It is clearly better that decisions are made on this basis thus resolving the problems of a particular authority than by forcing authorities which do not have a need and do not want a centralised plan for their rubbish disposal into a system they do not want especially when there is no certainty that the statutory authority will resolve its dilemma.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [10.31 p.m.]: I wish to support the amendment. I listened with great interest to the member for Karrinyup, and I have never heard so much garbage in all my life.

Mr Clarko: Listen to yourself some time.

Mr SKIDMORE: Obviously members opposite have no idea the type of authority my party wishes to establish so perhaps it would be best for me to read the platform. It states—

Waste Disposal: The establishment of a statutory authority which will, with the co-operation of the Public Health Department and all the various local governing bodies process household waste in the region embraced by the statistical division of Perth so that its ultimate disposal is ecologically sound.

There is no compulsion whatever in that.

Mr Bryce: Precisely.

Mr SKIDMORE: There is to be co-operation with the Public Health Department and—

Mr Clarko: You do not need authority to do that.

Mr SKIDMORE: —with the local shires. Members opposite who have such feeble little minds when it comes to this subject should consider the reality of the situation. At no time have members of my party or I ever denigrated the efforts of those who have a rubbish disposal problem. The difficulty is that the shires with this problem adopt a parochial attitude which causes them to forget the overall situation.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned some of the problems associated with the disposal of the waste on the wetlands. It is true of course that areas in the Swan Valley which in the past were never subjected to flooding, now do flood in winter as a result of the filling in of the wetlands along the Swan River.

I want to deal specifically with the question of the Grayden "garbaganza" which is a twist of words which appear on a sign in the Helena

Valley adjacent to the proposed site for the disposal of rubbish by the Perth City Council. I wish to inform members opposite, and particularly the member for Karrinyup, that the people in Midland have just about had enough of catering for everyone else's rubbish.

Mr Carr: Hear, hear!

Mr SKIDMORE: For five years we have accepted the rubbish of the Perth City Council to the detriment of the residents in the area. Now we have a tip which has almost outlived its usefulness because it has been the recipient of thousands of tonnes of other people's garbage. Very soon Midland residents will have to dump their rubbish elsewhere. The Swan Shire has had the temerity to suggest to the residents of Guildford that the rubbish will be dumped at the bend of the river behind a residential area. The river flats there will be utilised.

Mr Clarko: Where should it go?

Mr SKIDMORE: Quite rightly the Guildford people held a protest meeting and let the shire know in no uncertain fashion that they would not tolerate such a suggestion.

Mr Clarko: Where do you think the rubbish should be put?

Mr SKIDMORE: I will tell the member for Karrinyup in a minute if he will be patient and shut up. He is the greatest yapper this side of the black stump!

Now the problem is being made worse because the PCC is suggesting that it should get rid of its rubbish by placing it in my electorate. It is amazing how all of a sudden the Liberals are taking such a keen interest in my electorate. They call meetings and do not even inform me that they are being held. One would think there was a popularity contest by the Liberal Party at present.

Mr Young: You are a bit late getting into the act.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am already in it. They apparently believe that the more noise they make, the more popular they will be when a certain ballot is taken in the future.

That situation is bad enough but what is worse is the site where it is intended to put the garbage. The site has been tested and declared suitable for the disposal of garbage. I say quite categorically that no area is suitable for the disposal of the type of garbage we have at present. Schemes, as old fashioned as the world itself, are suggested by members opposite as the panacea to the problem. When I hear of such schemes my mind boggles. Members opposite ought to open their eyes and

consider how other cities dispose of their garbage to the benefit of all concerned.

Mr Clarko: Name one city and the price involved.

Mr SKIDMORE: Rome is one.

Mr Clarko: That is a bit bigger than Perth.

Mr SKIDMORE: Of course it is.

Mr Clarko: And that makes a big difference.

Mr SKIDMORE: Did I ever say that Rome was the same size as Perth?

Mr B. T. Burke: The member for Karrinyup did not specify a size when asking him to name a city.

Mr SKIDMORE: Come on. Grow up!

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister wants to put the rubbish in the Swan River. He has made the position clear.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! I suggest that members stop rubbishing each other! The member for Swan.

Mr SKIDMORE: The problems which will be foisted upon the people of the Swan electorate, and particularly the Helena Valley residents, are the same problems which have been faced by the people in the vicinity of the Morrison Park tip which has been utilised by the Perth City Council for the last five or six years. Those problems have been dealt with and concern the spread of salmonella by the seagulls which frequent the tips.

A major problem will involve the roads which are already inadequate, particularly the road which leads to the site. They are inadequate even to handle the existing traffic. Right next to the junction of the two roads—Helena Valley Road and Ridge Hill Road—is a primary school. Unless a new road is established to the area to take the traffic away from the school, trucks will come thundering around the corner which is already dangerous enough for the children without their having to put up with the rubbish trucks. The tip will be used not only by the Perth City Council, but also by many builders who will seek to deposit their rubbish at that tip.

The resultant damage to the roads will be colossal, and the roads will have to be upgraded. Not only the Mundaring Shire but also the Swan Shire will be involved.

It is completely wrong that that area should be used. It is like inviting people from other areas to come to the hills with their stinking rubbish. The member for South Perth, whose land is involved,

will finish up with a beautiful piece of real estate. To me that is just not on.

Other problems associated with the dumping of rubbish are obvious to all of us. The life of the Brockway tip is very limited. Already the member for Karrinyup has told us that the Hertha Road tip, run by the Stirling City Council, is reaching the end of its useful life and something must be done with the rubbish from that shire. I know that the Bayswater Shire tip has a limited life of no more than 12 months.

Mr Harman: Less than 12 months.

Mr SKIDMORE: That means that at least two shires will be involved.

The Midland tip area has almost reached the end of its useful life and I am not enamoured of the way in which that tip was conducted, particularly in regard to the health regulations. However, I will not dwell on that aspect because I have mentioned it before in this House.

All the places I have mentioned have reached the end of their useful life. The City of Stirling has suggested that the rubbish be compacted. All this means is that the rubbish will be compacted before it goes to the tip whereas up to date it has been dumped in a loose form and then compacted at the tip by the bulldozer. The volume will not be much less, but it will be possible for the rubbish to be compacted tighter and much quicker than under the present method. That will be the only advantage. The volume of garbage will not be reduced at all.

We all know that there are schemes of disposal which can utilise the waste. We have heard the member for Ascot on the disposal of tyres and the inability of the Department of Industrial Development to assist a certain company in this regard.

I am not unmindful of the fact that the Western Oil Company which has a refinery in Bellevue has not had its licence renewed for the treatment of engine oil and it has been necessary to close down a very useful method used for the disposal of certain waste material. This has been because of the failure of the Department of Industrial Development to assist the company to relocate itself. My understanding is that the company has worked as hard as it can, but I do not know how much longer it will be able to hold out. It appears to me that as far as the department is concerned the matter has been put into the "too-hard basket" and it is hoped it will be forgotten.

Nevertheless this was a local company which was employing labour and disposing of a waste which is a problem at any tip, but it cannot get

help to relocate itself. I know efforts have been made, but they are so inadequate that they disgust me.

Mr Mensaros: The company is in the hands of a receiver. If you can suggest any other help which could be given it to enable it to operate viably, I will consider it. On the other hand there is another company established which deals with the rubber tyres and that solves the problem you are mentioning.

Mr SKIDMORE: Right. The disposal of oil is but one aspect. Let us consider the disposal of garbage by the compaction-and-fill method. A particular organisation became alarmed when a large marine dealer closed his doors and there was no method by which to dispose of bottles. A co-operative was formed and it is now recycling every bottle that is brought to it and every bottle it can pick up, other than the bottles which are returned to the brewery for reprocessing. In this way we can recover a useful time from our rubbish.

I had the pleasure of attending a discussion with an Italian person who came over here with a proposition for a total waste disposal unit which would utilise 85 per cent of the waste and get rid of it. The energy from it could be used in various ways—for the generation of power, the generation of steam for industrial use, the generation of fuel for central heating, and so on. It was capable of disposing of all the waste. In Rome this process works very well. Of course, it is costly, but it is not half as costly as the disposal methods we are at present adopting.

Mr Young: When you said it is nowhere near as costly as what we are doing now, could you explain that in terms of dollars?

Mr SKIDMORE: If one can measure the cost of the health of people, the disadvantage of stinking rubbish, of having a rotten smell permeating people's homes, the spread of salmonella, leachates in the Swan River and other wetlands, and the removal of those wetlands from the fauna which have to go elsewhere, the answer in dollars and cents may be available.

Mr Young: You state those as facts rather than theory?

Mr SKIDMORE: Of course they are facts.

Mr Young: I want to know whether you state them as facts.

Mr SKIDMORE: The fact of the matter is one cannot measure inconvenience to people in dollars and cents.

Mr Young: The things you enumerated you accept as absolute facts? The leachates going into

the Swan River, the threat to health, and the spread of salmonella are absolute facts?

Mr SKIDMORE: Certainly. There is no question about it. If the Minister thinks for one minute that leachates are not going into the Swan River, I suggest he read some of the reports of the Swan Shire.

Mr Young: I want to evaluate your speech and get an answer back to you.

Mr SKIDMORE: The rubbish disposal system I looked at and on which I got a brochure is very costly. The capital cost is \$10 million. In operation it would dispose of approximately 1 200 tonnes of rubbish a day. The \$10 million would be a worth-while investment.

Mr Clarko: How much of the metropolitan area would that satisfy? The City of Stirling picks up 6 500 tonnes a week.

Mr SKIDMORE: It would look after the area of the Stirling City Council.

Mr Clarko: And it is doing it for \$2 million, not \$10 million.

Mr Harman: It would accommodate all the metropolitan needs.

Mr SKIDMORE: Let me buy into this. It is my speech. I take up the remark of the member for Karrinyup that the Stirling City Council can dispose of its waste for \$2 million as against \$10 million. From the \$10 million plant we would recover products which are usable.

Mr Clarko: And they are using it for recreation grounds and playgrounds. Glass would be recycled.

Mr SKIDMORE: Glass would be taken out of this process. So would all the steel, the aluminium cans, the tin, wire, cardboard, leather, and plastic. The plastic would be returned in a form in which it could be used again by industry. That would be offset against the \$10 million. I go one step further and say all the Stirling City Council will do is get rid of garbage quicker and fill up the holes quicker than the present system does. It will not get rid of anywhere near the same quantity of garbage. It will just be compacted quicker and disposed of in the wetlands which are becoming scarce.

I do not want to dwell on the question of the rubbish going into the clay pits, other than to say I hope the clay pits are never used. That in itself would be a disaster.

Mr Clarko: The council will not put it there if it is going to be a disaster.

Mr SKIDMORE: Wherever it is put it will be a disaster. There is no need for it if we can get

some sense out of the Government and persuade it to look at the disposal of rubbish in a more proper and responsible way than it is doing at the present time.

Mr Clarko: What will you do with the remnants, what is left over?

Mr SKIDMORE: My understanding is that it will be completely inert material which can be used to fill in a backyard if necessary.

Mr Clarko: In bales it will have no effect, so that is even better.

Mr SKIDMORE: It is not as easy as just putting a lot of garbage into a bale and placing a top on it. Much more has to be done before that stage is reached. And what happens to the residue? A complete recycling system such as the one I have seen and would propose would be of far more value to our people than any other system I have seen up to the present time, and the Government should look at it.

I will now take up some of the matters which were raised by the member for Maylands. The attitude of the Perth City Council in its efforts to get rid of its rubbish is that it can go on anyone else's doorstep but its own. Dr Riggert, who attacked the Perth City Council's plan to dump rubbish on Burswood Island, was actually accused by the council of saying, "If you can't use Burswood Island I direct you to use Helena Valley." He did not say that at all. He categorically denies saying that. He said it was a matter for negotiation on a private basis between the council and a person called Mr W. L. Grayden, and that the area was near the Helena Valley Primary School.

At no time did Dr Riggert suggest the Perth City Council should take note of what he said. In fact, he is as appalled as anybody else at the manner in which this garbage is disposed of, but nobody seems to want to listen to what that learned person has to say about the disposal of rubbish, except that fortunately for us and the people who protested about the Burswood Island site the rubbish will not go there.

If one can accept the word of the member for Maylands, it appears the Government was quite prepared at one time to allow the dumping of rubbish on Burswood Island, until all of a sudden public opinion and pressure forced it to run for cover. Whether or not we like it, that seems to have been the case, and if the Minister has been wrongly reported time alone will make that clear to us.

I give the lie to the suggestion that all we are interested in is getting hold of a great big stick and belting every local authority over the head

with it, saying, "This is what you will do with your rubbish." The ALP platform does not indicate that in any manner, shape, or form. It is the old ploy of a worn-out Liberal Government with worn-out thinking on this question, to try to denigrate any progressive steps the Opposition proposes in regard to making the life of the people in this city, and perhaps in the country, a darned sight better than it is at the present time. The Government denigrates, misuses the truth, and suggests things which are not apparent and cannot be read into the platform of the ALP. It is a pity the member for Karrinyup uses smear tactics by saying that when one person has a sore on his leg socialism cuts off everybody's legs. How sick can one get?

Earlier, when we were discussing politics and local government and other speakers were talking about the Liberal-minded people on the other side, I made the remark that we were only talking about garbage and rubbish anyway. My remarks were directed to the Liberals. I am sure they would not indulge in any sort of politicking in local government! Heaven forbid! If anyone would like to come up to my electorate during the forthcoming local government elections, he will see the Liberals handing out how-to-vote cards for people who are not political. One might see the member for Swan handing out some how-to-vote cards, being quite conscious of the fact that he is supporting a person who may or may not be a member of the Australian Labor Party.

I support the amendment. I believe it is a good one. It is the only way we can convince local authorities which are self-centred, such as the Perth City Council and the Stirling City Council, and which are big enough to be able to say to all the smaller councils, "We will bury our garbage in your dumps and when your holes are filled up with the rotten filth we will go out into other areas." If we had a statutory waste disposal authority to co-operate and co-ordinate with the shires and the Public Health Department, we would be on the way to disposing of our household and industrial wastes in an ecologically sound way.

MR YOUNG (Scarborough—Minister for Health) [11.00 p.m.]: At the outset I want to say something about the challenge made by the member for Maylands. He certainly gave the House the impression that I embraced the idea of the Perth City Council dumping rubbish on Burswood Island.

Mr Harman: That is right; you approved of it.

Mr YOUNG: The member for Maylands claims again that I approved of it. I again

categorically deny that I approved of it. We must remember what was going on at the time and consider the context in which I made the comments which the member for Maylands obviously did not quote in full. I do not claim that I was in any way misrepresented in the article; I make that point clear before any complaints are made from members opposite. I am trying to get the matter into perspective, as I was trying to keep it in perspective at that time.

The situation was that the Perth City Council could no longer use the Midland tip. The Commissioner of Public Health had told the council that after the 31st December, 1978, he would not allow it to use that tip. The Perth City Council was then confronted with the situation of having to find an alternative dumping site within a matter of months.

Mr Skidmore: They knew about that for years.

Mr YOUNG: I am not suggesting for one moment that the council did not know of the situation. I am stating the facts as they are for the edification of the member for Maylands and the member for Balcatta, who claimed that I wanted to dump rubbish in the river.

The situation at the time was as I have described it. Having to get out of the Midland tip, the Perth City Council had to have somewhere to dump rubbish. The proposals that were put to me within about a month of my becoming Minister were that a site somewhere in Bold Park could be suggested to the Commissioner of Public Health as a suitable site for dumping rubbish, or that the Burswood Island site could be suggested for approval to dump the rubbish of the Perth City Council.

Mr Harman: What happened to Bold Park?

Mr YOUNG: I was waiting for that, because I want someone on the other side of the House to say the rubbish should have been dumped there.

Mr Tonkin: We introduced legislation to try to protect it.

Mr YOUNG: As Minister for Health, two solutions were put to me; and I want a member on the other side of the House to say that the rubbish should be dumped at Bold Park.

Several members interjected.

Mr YOUNG: The situation therefore became a matter of considering the two proposals. Under the conditions laid down at the time through the Commissioner of Public Health, the Perth City Council would have been allowed to dump rubbish at Burswood Island only under the most stringent conditions ever laid down in regard to a sanitary land-fill site in this State. Approval was

never given for the council to dump rubbish there; what we said was that the council may consider the site if it were able to satisfy the Commissioner of Public Health that all the conditions laid down could and would be complied with.

Mr Harman: You should have rejected it straightaway.

Mr YOUNG: And told the Perth City Council to dump its rubbish in which spot?

Mr Harman: You should have suggested another place.

Mr B. T. Burke: You should have suggested some other place.

Mr YOUNG: The answer of the member for Maylands was that the rubbish should be dumped in some other place. Rather than come up with an empty suggestion of "another place", I sat down and negotiated with the Perth City Council and the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority. I got both bodies around the table, overcoming a situation they had got into in which neither side was prepared to accede to the conditions of the other in respect of the Brockway site.

At all times that the Burswood site was being considered, I was negotiating with the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority and the Perth City Council in an endeavour to get them around the table so that we could eventually end up with the Perth City Council using the Brockway site. The answer of the member for Maylands was, "Find somewhere else!" We were prepared to negotiate, and we ended up getting the Perth City Council to the Brockway site, at least for a period of time; and it is not using the Burswood Island site. The situation was that the Perth City Council would never have been able to use the Burswood Island site without complying with all the conditions I laid down. That situation can be backed up by correspondence and files, which obviously I cannot produce at this moment, considering that I heard of the amendment only 1½ hours ago.

Mr Harman: Then produce it tomorrow.

Mr YOUNG: I will be happy to.

Mr Harman: Table it.

Mr YOUNG: I will not table any files.

Mr Harman: Why not?

Mr YOUNG: I think the member for Maylands knows better than that. I will produce the correspondence between myself or the Commissioner of Public Health and the people involved, regarding the conditions laid down in respect of that site.

Mr Harman: Selective correspondence.

Mr YOUNG: The Perth City Council, the biggest disposer of waste in this State, was confronted with a situation in which it had nowhere to dump rubbish after the 31st December, 1978. I had to consider the possibility, at least, of the fact that it may have to use Burswood Island. I want to know what the Opposition would have done had I done nothing other than simply reject out of hand the two sites offered to me by the Perth City Council. Could I in my position, without the lack of responsibility of the member for Maylands, simply have said, "I don't care, find another site"?

Mr Harman: You should have found one.

Mr YOUNG: I happen to be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all the things suggested by members on the other side of the House do not happen. So I had to make a decision.

Mr Harman: That is right; what have you done about it?

Mr YOUNG: For a start, at least I have got the Perth City Council and the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority to reach an agreement; and that is a little more than appeared to be possible at the beginning. At least I did not say, "Go away, and don't bother me."

Mr Harman: You should have found the solution.

Mr YOUNG: I was working towards a solution and negotiating with the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority in an endeavour to enable the Perth City Council to dump rubbish at the Brockway site. After my first meeting with the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority the Perth City Council decided to go to Melville. Of course, that was not entirely acceptable to the councillors of Melville.

Mr Harman: Why was it not acceptable to them?

Mr YOUNG: Obviously because they thought they should be able to make up their own minds about the matter. I never suggested that the Perth City Council should go to Melville: that was a situation the authority itself chose to get into. The councillors of the City of Melville were not exactly carried away with the idea. So on the 6th February I was finally able to get the Perth City Council and the Central Zone Rubbish Disposal Authority to sit down around the table and negotiate a set of conditions. I pay compliment to both sides for the way in which they handled the agreement. A set of conditions was drawn up to enable the largest disposer of rubbish in the metropolitan area to use the Brockway site until the 28th February next year.

Mr Harman interjected.

Mr YOUNG: One of the conditions was that a plan for the overall disposal of waste by the Perth City Council had to be presented to me by the 30th June, this year. I am not waiting until the 30th June for that proposal; I have already been to the Perth City Council and spoken with the town clerk and the city engineer. I have done this recently, and I asked them when it is likely they will receive an interim report from Maunsell & Partners. They said they thought it would be available this week. I hope to be in a position to look at that report. I will want to look at the entire report if, in fact, the council allows me to do so. After all, it is its report, and my condition was that the report had to be presented to me by the 30th June; and it had to solve the overall short and long-term waste disposal problems of the Perth City Council.

The suggestion made by the Opposition was that the Government is not interested in the problem and has totally ignored it. That was backed up by the suggestion by a number of speakers from the Opposition that they had the answer to all the disposal problems of the metropolitan area.

It seems to me that I have never met so many experts on any matter as I have met in respect of the disposal of waste in the last 12 months. There used to be a saying in this Parliament that if a Bill were introduced in regard to dogs, traffic, or liquor, everyone would speak on it because everyone claims to have some intimate knowledge on each of those subjects. It now seems to me that we can throw rubbish disposal in with those three because I rarely meet anyone nowadays who is not an instant expert on rubbish disposal.

We had the suggestion from the member for Morley that the City of Perth is faced with becoming an ecological desert. If that is not stretching a long bow, I do not know what is. We had talk across the Chamber tonight of recycling rubbish; and everyone who claims to be an instant expert on rubbish disposal also claims to be a recycling expert. One of the things that is overlooked—and the member for Swan knows very well that I have been personally involved in this matter—is that the solutions are not as simple as some people would make them out to be.

Mr Skidmore: I did not even hazard a guess that that was so.

Mr YOUNG: No, I am talking about some other suggestions in regard to the recycling of waste and, in particular, the suggestion that there

is almost an inevitable open market for every product that has been recycled.

Mr Skidmore: I do not know who made that statement; it was not me.

Mr YOUNG: Certainly I heard the suggestion from that side of the House tonight, but I cannot recall which speaker made it. A list was enumerated of items which are saleable after going through the recycling process.

The plain fact of the matter is that glass is about the only thing that has an almost certain market after recycling, that having been proven world wide.

Mr Skidmore: What about plastic?

Mr YOUNG: That is if we do not take into consideration the marginal costs and the input of the subsidy. I understand it is cheaper to recycle glass than almost any other product, with the possible exceptions of fertiliser and stock feed additives—and, having worked on the matter for quite a while I am not even convinced of them. In regard to all other items such as metals, plastics, paper, and cardboard it is considered to be cheaper to manufacture them from raw materials.

Mr Tonkin: What do you mean by "cheaper"? What is the price of a wetland?

Mr YOUNG: Oh!

Mr Tonkin: You will not place any value at all on that.

Mr YOUNG: I will talk about recycling land in a moment. The situation in respect of tin and other metals, plastics, etc. is that, generally speaking, it is cheaper to manufacture them from raw materials.

We have also had the strong suggestion from speakers on the other side of the House that almost every aspect of sanitary land-fill is an environmental or ecological hazard; that certainly seemed to be the tenor of the remarks that came across the Chamber tonight. I do not believe that is true. In considering the overall matter of recycling, it is well to remember that in addition to recycling the products that have been disposed of, during the course of sanitary land-fill we recycle an awful lot of land that otherwise would not have been usable by people.

Mr Tonkin: By people?

Mr YOUNG: That is so. Many parks which would not otherwise exist have been produced by sanitary land-fill.

Mr Tonkin: What about the birds?

Mr YOUNG: I have heard a great deal of talk about sanitary land-fill and birds, etc. I do not knock the suggestion that certain wetlands must

be retained for some bird life. But there is another animal ubiquitous on this earth, and that is man. He has the right to enjoy some of the land produced by sanitary land-fill which otherwise he would not be able to enjoy. We have recycled a tremendous amount of land as a result of the sanitary land-fill system, so it is not totally bad.

Mr H. D. Evans: Man has a choice regarding what he does to the land.

Mr YOUNG: All of the so-called experts who suggest that they have the absolute answer to all of these problems are in fact suggesting that they have a better input of information and a better assessment of that information than has every local authority in Australia; because there is not a single local authority in Australia that does not use the sanitary land-fill system. I am not suggesting—and probably I will say this twice more before I finish my speech—that sanitary land-fill is the ideal and absolute system; but taking everything into consideration and having particular regard for what the community can afford in dollar terms, the sanitary land-fill system has been proved to be the best we have, at least at this stage.

The ideal system has not yet been produced at this stage. The optimum system for the disposal of waste in any local authority in this country has not yet been put together.

This is a little like the energy situation. Everybody knows that it would be infinitely better to use the power of the sun than it is to use a finite resource such as oil. Everybody knows it would be better to use tidal power and wind power. It is easy to drive around with stickers on the back of one's car making glib statements such as "Use solar power"; "Solar not nuclear"; "Use the wind"; "Use the tide"; and others; but we never see the words, "Pay 10, or 15, or 20 times the cost for it". Those are the facts in regard to energy; and a similar situation applies in regard to the recycling and disposal of waste.

If the Opposition, as part of its programme, wants to put to the taxpayers of this State the arithmetic of the cost of an alternative system of disposal that will recycle or that will dispose without risk to the ecology, or the health, or anything of that nature—

Mr Tonkin: Several countries do it.

Mr YOUNG: —it should put to the State the cost to the taxpayer or ratepayer of implementing one of those systems. This is probably the first of the couple of times I will say it: I am not saying that we will not have to face the situation one day; I am not saying that one day we will not be able to afford the situation; I am saying that right

now I do not believe we can face it. That does not mean that we have stopped evaluating every single proposition or proposal which has been put to the Government. Suggestions have been made by members of this House and by members of the public. Each one of those proposals and propositions has in fact been evaluated, and is continuing to be evaluated and assessed.

We do not have in this city the mayhem that has been suggested by the member for Morley in particular. We will not rush into an authority until all local authorities have been given a fair go. It is quite clear that the Perth City Council is the largest disposer of waste in the metropolitan area. Would it not be ludicrous if we were to try to embark on a total plan for the disposal of waste in the metropolitan area without taking into consideration the wishes of the Perth City Council?

Mr Tonkin: No-one is suggesting that. Why don't you talk to them?

Mr YOUNG: What is the member for Morley suggesting?

Mr Tonkin: We are talking about consultation. We are not talking about forcing something on them. They need a lead.

Mr YOUNG: At the moment we are giving them a lead. We are giving them the opportunity to come to us with a plan.

Mr Tonkin: You have been in government for 17 of the last 20 years. You talk about not rushing things!

Mr YOUNG: The Perth City Council is the biggest disposer of waste. It has the biggest responsibility. This Government has no intention of allowing the health and the ecology of Perth to be put in jeopardy by the Perth City Council or anybody else.

Members of this House, and anybody else who cares to bend his mind to this problem, must remember that the Perth City Council is vital to the overall solution of the problem in the metropolitan area. I have made that clear to the member for Maylands and others. I have said I have been in contact with the Perth City Council, and I have told the council what stage we have reached. I hope to receive the report from Maunsell & Partners within the next week. I hope people will understand that I want a system more enlightened than sanitary land-fill as the solution to the overall disposal problem of the Perth City Council.

It is not the intention of the Government at this stage to adopt any authoritarian stance until the Perth City Council submission is evaluated

properly. If the report does not measure up, we will take whatever action is necessary to protect the health and the environment of this city.

One would think that the members of the Opposition had sole rights to the enjoyment of life in the City of Perth and the environment. The suggestion invariably comes from the other side of the House that we do not care a darn about the City of Perth, and that we do not care a darn about the environment and the ecology. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I have said that sanitary land-fill is not the obvious permanent solution. However, in relation to the recycling of land, I am certain there is hardly a member of this House who has not within his electorate some parkland or place which people can enjoy which has been created from sanitary land-fill. Clearly sanitary land-fill is not the final and only solution. Everybody knows that. Members of the Opposition do not have the sole rights to that opinion. One does not have to be a genius to work that out.

It is all very well to trumpet about the problem; but there has not been a single solution put up which evaluates the total picture by any members of the Opposition tonight. There is no single, simple system which does not impose a higher burden of cost on either the ratepayer or the taxpayer. There is no complete system, no ideal situation that is acceptable in money terms at least for a city of the size of Perth which has been recommended by members of the Opposition. At this stage there is no apparent system which would not involve the ratepayer or the taxpayer in considerable extra expense.

Contrary to the suggestion by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, we know the problem will not go away. I want to tell the members of the Opposition that we never believed it would. We will make it clear to the Perth City Council, and to any other local authority, that we do not expect them to believe the problem will go away. If the members of the Opposition were to be fair about the situation, if they were not to grandstand and try to grab a headline; they would realise that anything which could be done is being done at this stage by the Government.

The suggestion that an authority would solve the problem is totally wrong. Authorities do not solve problems. Authorities can point to the direction of the problem and say what may or may not be the solution to it. Eventually, however, somebody has to remove his tie and do the work.

We believe that the local authorities in the metropolitan area should not at this stage be forced into control by a disposal authority. The

City of Stirling is potentially the biggest producer of waste, and it is working as hard as it can on the problem. The Perth City Council should be in a position where it can come forward to the Government with its plan, and the coastal councils south of Stirling constitute the central zone committee.

We have reached the stage where we can reassess the situation without having to set up another authority situation. We believe that the Perth City Council has received the message.

I believe that this motion is not about government; it is about the Perth City Council's waste disposal problem. We have tried to make it clear to the people of this State, to the members of the Opposition, and to anyone else who is interested that at this stage the problem of the disposal of the waste of the City of Perth is the problem of the City of Perth. The Government has an overall responsibility to ensure that that problem is overcome in the best possible manner, and we intend not to dishonour that obligation.

We oppose the amendment.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [11.24 p.m.]: The Minister is quite wrong when he says that suddenly, on his side of the House, there are a number of instant experts as far as garbage is concerned.

A number of members on this side of the House, however, can claim some knowledge of faulty ministerial performance when it is displayed as blatantly as it has been displayed by this Minister tonight.

I ask members to cast their minds back to the initial proposition that the Minister for Health put before the House; that he had no alternative, when presented with possible sites by the Perth City Council, but to endorse or accept one of those sites. He said that if the Opposition rejected the proposition that rubbish should be dumped at Burswood Island, then implicitly it was accepted that rubbish would be dumped at Bold Park. That is a nonsensical proposition. It is faulty in the extreme.

By analogy, let me ask the House whether, if the two propositions by the Perth City Council were to dump rubbish in St. George's Terrace or Kings Park, and the Opposition objected to Kings Park, automatically we would be arguing that we were in favour of the dumping of rubbish in St. George's Terrace. What nonsense!

Mr Young: Let me put the proposition to you that you suggest to the House where the Perth City Council should dump the rubbish.

Mr Jamieson: Not in St. George's Terrace.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will grant the Minister the courtesy of answering the question that he puts to me. I will answer it in this way, by referring to the Minister's own statement when he said that "the ideal system has not yet been achieved". The Opposition's proposition is that a solution will not be arrived at by the efforts of 127 separate local authorities, working with a lack of co-ordination, in different directions, towards a common solution. That is how we will answer the question that the Minister so blithely asks the Opposition tonight to provide for him.

The Minister is unable to find an answer; the Government is unable to find an answer; and yet the Minister seeks to hide himself by saying that the Opposition cannot provide the solution that the Minister cannot provide himself.

Mr Young interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let me just reiterate the faulty reasoning the Minister used. He said that if we did not accept that Burswood Island is a suitable site for the dumping of rubbish, then we implicitly accept that Bold Park is a suitable area. The Opposition rejects that contention, and it rejects the faulty performance by which the Minister arrives at that position.

Mr Young: You have a right to reject the proposition if you can come up with a suitable site where the Perth City Council can dump the rubbish.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Opposition is saying that the Minister is refusing to acknowledge—and I will explain to the House why he is refusing to do it—that there are means available to us by which we can efficiently and accurately identify the most desirable site, even if it is an undesirable one from some points of view. We are saying that the Minister continues to prefer a lack of co-ordination, shifting all the responsibility to the local authorities when the local authorities by their performance have demonstrated that they cannot fulfil that responsibility. We do not accept that we will arrive at a solution which the Minister seems to think is necessary and which the Opposition says is essential.

Let us consider some of the Minister's other statements. He said that he negotiated to provide the facility at Brockway for the Perth City Council. Members know that the Minister was dragged screaming from the position he initially occupied. When he was dragged in that manner, he antagonised the present users of the Brockway site. He provided nothing more than a short-term solution, and then abrogated the responsibility of Government by putting back onto the Perth City

Council the task of finding the site that it was unable to find for so many years.

The Minister knows full well that he was dragged from his initial position because he miscalculated badly the public opinion. That is exactly what happened. If he did not miscalculate, then why did he not say to the Perth City Council, "Neither the Burswood Island site nor the Bold Park site is acceptable."?

Mr Young: I said to the Perth City Council that the site that was acceptable was Brockway. I negotiated towards it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I wonder when the Minister said that? On the 23rd December he said it was necessary to let the council dump at the island to overcome its immediate rubbish disposal problem.

Mr Young: That is right—at that stage.

Mr B. T. BURKE: So the Minister is putting five bob each and every way.

Mr Young: I have explained my position. If you want to ignore that, that is all right, because you do it regularly.

Sir Charles Court: If the Minister had not negotiated very ably—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Bryce: Hello, the knight is back.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I concede ground to the arch conservationist.

Sir Charles Court: If the Minister had not skilfully negotiated Brockway there would not have been a solution.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I do not deny the Minister's skill in negotiating the availability of Brockway to the Perth City Council; I acknowledge that. I am saying it was skill used only when it had become obvious to the Minister and the Government through pressure by public opinion, that the solution accepted by the Minister and perhaps by the PCC would not be worn by the public. The Minister did skilfully and properly—

Mr Tonkin: Extricate himself.

Mr B. T. BURKE: —extricate himself from the position he found untenable. The Minister himself knows that this has been a sorely embarrassing position for him. No-one, not even members of his own party, could maintain solidarity on the proposition advanced by the Minister.

I am sure, and the Opposition repeats, that had not a public outcry been raised—

Mr Young: There was no proposition advanced by me. I was considering the situation. At the same time I was trying to get the other people together.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let me pause to ask the Minister why he did not reject out of hand the proposition that rubbish should be dumped at Burswood Island.

Mr Young: I didn't want to dump it in St George's Terrace.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not sure whether the Minister is deliberately attempting to persuade the House that he is so bereft of ideas or that his choice was so limited.

We are seeking from the Minister the answer to the question, "Why did he not say that Burswood Island was unsuitable?" or, alternatively, if it is more palatable to the Minister, why did he say he would accept rubbish being dumped on Burswood Island and then suddenly tonight in this House say it is unsatisfactory?

Mr Young: Once again I will repeat that the Brockway site was the site I wanted to continue to negotiate the PCC into using. There were two possibilities if we could not do that. One was the recommendation of Bold Park, and the other was Burswood Island. What would I do if I failed to get the central zoning authority to do that? Would I have to tell them to dump the rubbish in the river?

Mr B. T. BURKE: That is what the Minister proposed at the outset.

Mr Young: No; that is what you have tried to put over, but failed.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I think the Minister's touchiness on this subject is touchiness directly related to his grasp of the opinion of the electorate. His position quite clearly tonight is not that which led him to say the PCC could dump rubbish on Burswood Island. If it is suddenly so unpalatable tonight, why was it not so to the Minister at that time?

Let us consider the other comments the Minister had to say in his facile defence of his opposition to the amendment the Opposition has put forward, which is a well thought out amendment. It is an amendment that reflects the policy of our party as considered and placed in the policy document by the State conference of the party. It is not something dreamed up for the occasion; it is something which has long been considered and thought worth while.

The Minister said the PCC had nowhere to go. The Opposition concedes the point and agrees with the Minister and says that there should be a central authority able to plan and co-ordinate the needs of local authorities in this area. Such an authority may well have provided the answer to the search the PCC was carrying out.

Why did so much time elapse before the problem became apparent and urgent; before we were told there were just months to go in the life of the tip being used? This happened because there is no co-ordination or co-operation and no Government lead.

On the one occasion during this Minister's short period as Minister when he was challenged he was found lacking by his inability to give a lead until the lead was forced on him by public opinion which acted so forcibly on this occasion.

One or two other points I would like to make touch firstly on the Minister's challenge to the Opposition to provide some perspective on costs when it is talking about alternatives for the despatch of garbage. The Minister has the gall to seek that sort of perspective from the Opposition when he has failed to present the perspective himself; when he has yet to detail the Government's considerations upon which he has based his decisions; and when he has yet to show that the alternatives are so expensive. How valid—how credible—is this Minister's claim that the Opposition should provide the figures he cannot provide himself?

The next comment was the Minister's claim that we should not be rushing into the establishment of an authority. The Minister appears to imply that an authority will come one day, but he does not want to rush into it. He seems to indicate that, after all the local authorities have solved their problems in a haphazard and unco-ordinated manner an authority will come, but let us not rush into it.

The Opposition says that without any inference of the use of force or direction it is possible to establish a central planning committee which could provide valuable guidance, advice, and expertise in the question of garbage disposal.

The Minister has not made a valid case to support his own about-face on this issue or his opposition to the claim by this side of the House that such an authority is needed.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16	
Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Harman	Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Mr Blaikie
Mr Clarko
Sir Charles Court
Mr Cowan
Mr Coyne
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr McPharlin

Noes 26
Mr Mensaros
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr O'Neil
Mr Rushton
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Stephens
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Young
Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Ayes
Mr Pearce
Mr Bertram
Mr T. D. Evans
Mr Hodge
Mr Grill
Dr Troy

Pairs
Noes
Mr Sibson
Mr Ridge
Mr Crane
Dr Dadour
Mrs Craig
Mr Nanovich

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tubby.

SUPPLY BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.40 p.m.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FUEL: TAX

Rate, Revenue, and Effect on Inflation Rate

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

I know this question may be answered in debate in the House later tonight, but in case it is overlooked I felt I should ask it. It is as follows—

- (1) Is it correct, as reported in tonight's issue of the *Daily News*, that the new fuel tax which the Government has represented as being a replacement for the road maintenance tax will be levied at the rate of 1c per litre on petrol and 2c per litre on diesel fuel?
- (2) Is it correct also that this new tax is estimated to raise more than \$15 million per year, which is almost three times the amount raised by the road maintenance tax?

- (3) Have estimates been made of the percentage amount by which the inflation rate for Western Australia, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, will be increased by the new tax and, if so, what are the estimates?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (3) The question was lengthy and I did not get the gist of it completely. As far as I can see, it pre-empted the Bill which will be debated soon.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

Funds

2. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

I should like to ask the Premier whether he will acknowledge the disgraceful state to which the legal aid system in this State has deteriorated, with aid being withheld from people who urgently need it. Will the Premier inform the House as a matter of urgency what steps the Government can take to augment the funds available to the Legal Aid Commission?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I reject completely the member's allegation that the system is in a disgraceful state.

Mr Tonkin interjected.

Mr O'Connor: How about listening!

Sir CHARLES COURT: In my opinion not only is the Attorney General of this State very competent, but also I believe him to be one of the outstanding Attorneys General in Australia. By his actions, he sets the lead for the other States of Australia.

This State was one of the pioneers of the legal aid system under which assistance was given to the citizens of this State at a time when the system was not financed heavily, as it is today, by the Government. I believe in those days we had a system which worked extremely well, having regard for what was available at the time.

In many ways the system has become more sophisticated. It has been enlarged considerably from time to time. It may

be that people are now expecting aid from a Government agency which they did not expect previously.

However, my understanding of the situation is that the Attorney General keeps the matter under review and looks at it from time to time. Having regard for the finance available, I believe the maximum use is made of the facilities. However, if the honourable member insists that he does not regard the system as being adequate, I shall certainly refer his complaint to the Attorney General.

ROADS: ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

Replacement

3. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

I have given the Minister notice of my question and, as it is a very current issue, I am sure he will be able to answer it. My question is as follows—

- (1) What action has the Government taken to ascertain the views of the road transport industry on the form of the replacement tax for road maintenance tax?
- (2) When the Government was discussing the future of road maintenance tax, did it ever tell the industry that in implementing a replacement, it would be seeking to raise almost three times the amount of revenue it raised from road maintenance tax?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Obviously the member has to be a little patient, because he could have the bull by the horns and I would not like him to be in that tenuous position. The answer to his question is—

- (1) This part of the question relates to the position of the industry and the situation has been set out in the newspapers.

- (2) All sections of the industry have indicated to me that they support a replacement of the road maintenance charge with another equitable charge which should relate to the wear and tear on the roads caused by the particular vehicle. If the member will be a little patient he will see that is what the Government has set out to do.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

May's Case

4. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is he aware that a letter dated the 27th June, 1978, from Parker and Parker, solicitors, states inter alia "... in view of what appears to us to have been a very real benefit accruing to insurers as a result of the considerable delays involved in appealing May's case to the Privy Council, your company may decide that it is in its interests to refuse to pay in respect of the agreements with provisos and run the gamut of the various courts of appeal"?
- (2) Does the Government's policy condone this use of the machinery of the law to deprive employees injured in the service of the community of their due and just rewards?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
(2) No.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE: ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

SEC: Rejection of Recommendations

5. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

I should like to ask the Premier whether he is aware of reports that the SEC has refused to accept recommendations from the industrial commissioner in respect of the settlement of the dispute which currently threatens this State's power supplies. If the Premier is aware that the SEC has rejected these recommendations, will he bring influence and pressure to bear on the SEC to ensure it reacts reasonably to

the recommendations put forward by the industrial commissioner?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I know of no such rejection by the SEC.

Mr B. T. Burke: You have not denied it. It has been published.

Sir CHARLES COURT: When has it been published?

Mr B. T. Burke: It was published in last night's paper on the front page.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have no knowledge of the SEC rejecting such a proposition. However, I do know that the unions concerned have refused to accept arbitration in the matter.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

East Beechboro

6. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many classrooms of a permanent type, commensurate with modern standards, will be built this year at the East Beechboro Primary School?
- (2) What is the present enrolment at the school?
- (3) To what figure is this expected to rise by the end of 1979?
- (4) What is the expected enrolment in February, 1980?
- (5) Is there any truth in the rumour that transportable classrooms will be erected at the school?
- (6) Is he aware that the so-called temporary classrooms have, with the aid of Government neglect, the habit of becoming permanent as has happened at the Hampton and Eden Hill Primary Schools?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) None. At present, the school comprises an eight-classroom block with two classroom areas being used temporarily as an administration area. With the construction of an administration block later this year, these two classroom areas will be released for normal use.
- (2) 180 pupils at the 2nd April, 1979.
- (3) 215 pupils.
- (4) 284 pupils.
- (5) One transportable classroom will be required to accommodate the anticipated enrolment in February, 1980.

- (6) The school will receive consideration for the provision of four additional classrooms and a library-resource centre when the 1980-81 building programme is compiled.

**MINISTER OF THE CROWN:
MINISTER FOR LABOUR
AND INDUSTRY**

Sale of Land to R. New

7. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Has the Minister not severely compromised the office of Minister responsible for industrial relations by accepting what appears to be a substantial profit from the sale of land to Mr Ric New, a person who is a director of Security and Industries, an organisation which has admitted its function is to break strikes?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

RAILWAYS

Miling-Toodyay Line

8. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

My question results from phone calls I have had today from people in the Toodyay-Bolgart district. Hence I have been unable to give any notice of it. My question is—

Is it a fact that the Government is considering closing the Toodyay-Miling railway line?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

No.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Pamphlet

9. Mr TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) At the earliest opportunity will he provide the cost to the taxpayer of the production of a party political

propaganda pamphlet containing accolades for himself and Lady Court, which is entitled "Hon. Sir Charles Court and Lady Court", but which has no author or printer's name?

- (2) Will he tell the House where the pamphlet was printed, how many copies were printed and how they are being distributed?
- (3) Did he approve the text of the pamphlet?
- (4) Which department is responsible for its production?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (4) The pamphlet to which I think the member for Morley is referring is not a party-political pamphlet.

Mr Tonkin: "International Figure" is one of the headlines.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the honourable member will keep quiet, I will tell him that it is not unusual for the leader of any State or the nation to have a pamphlet or brochure—whatever one likes to call it—about himself prepared when he is going abroad, and I would not be the first one by far to do so. It is desirable and necessary when going abroad that people should at least have summarised information about who one is, what one is, where one comes from, and so on, because one will be meeting a range of people in a number of industries and callings and it is desirable that they have in advance a document which summarises the person they will be meeting. This practice is not unusual. I took such pamphlets abroad last year and in earlier years. Last year it happened that my wife was with me, so naturally she was included in the pamphlet.

If the honourable member wants to make mischief about it he may do so but he will be laughed to scorn. The Government of the day has to do this sort of thing whether or not the individual involved likes it. One has to have it as part of one's equipment when undertaking a visit representing one's State, when one has to speak to people in all walks of life. It is not unusual or extraordinary and I am amazed that the

honourable member has referred to it. He could have had one a couple of years ago if he liked. I will autograph one for him if he so desires.

Mr TONKIN: I did not ask the Premier whether or not he liked it. I asked a series of questions relating to the cost,

the fact that it was unauthorised, and the department which prepared the pamphlet. He has not answered my question at all.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has answered the question in the way he wanted to answer it.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

719. *This question was postponed.*

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

K. Mason

728. Dr TROY, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that one K. Mason was first granted legal aid by the Legal Aid Commission which was subsequently withdrawn before trial on the grounds that the proceedings were not likely to be determined in a manner favourable to him?
- (2) Is the Attorney General aware the man was acquitted of a crime by unanimous decision of the jury?
- (3) Is the Attorney General aware that this man was held in custody for 5½ months before trial, possibly because bail was set so high?
- (4) Does the Government intend to grant compensation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) No. The Legal Aid Commission Act preserves the confidentiality of all communications between solicitor and client and such information is not available to me from the commission. I have, nevertheless, been informed from other quarters that the commission did originally agree to provide legal aid and that this was subsequently terminated. I am not aware of the reason for that decision.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) I am aware that Mr Mason was in custody for this period. The Court of Petty Sessions had allowed bail with a surety. On 6th March, 1979, the Supreme Court examined the bail conditions but refused to dispense with the requirement for a surety. The amount of the bail was apparently not in question.
- (4) No. That the accused was unable to comply with the bail conditions set by the Court of Petty Sessions and confirmed by the Supreme Court after due re-consideration is not a ground for compensation.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

R. M. Donovan

729. Dr TROY, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the Attorney General aware that one R. M. Donovan was offered legal aid by the Legal Aid Commission provided he would plead guilty?

- (2) Is the Attorney General aware that the man was acquitted of a crime by unanimous decision of the jury?
- (3) Is the Attorney General aware that this man was held in custody for 5½ months before trial, possibly because bail was set so high?
- (4) Does the Government intend to grant compensation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) No. The Legal Aid Commission Act preserves the confidentiality of all communications between solicitor and client and such information is not available to me from the commission. I have, nevertheless, been informed from other quarters that the commission agreed to provide legal aid to cover a plea in mitigation if Mr Donovan decided to plead guilty.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) I am aware that Mr Donovan was in custody for this period. The Court of Petty Sessions had allowed bail with a surety. On 6th March, 1979, the Supreme Court examined the bail conditions but refused to dispense with the requirement for a surety. The amount of the bail was apparently not in question.
- (4) No. That the accused was unable to comply with the bail conditions set by the Court of Petty Sessions and confirmed by the Supreme Court after due re-consideration is not a ground for compensation.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

Appeal Committees

730. Dr TROY, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) When an application is made for legal aid how many committees of appeal can be consulted?
- (2) Who are the members of each committee of appeal?
- (3) Do the members of the committees receive any payment for services rendered and, if so, how much?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) There are two avenues of appeal; either to one of the legal aid committees or to one of the review committees.
- (2) There are three legal aid committees, all composed of lawyers—
 - (a) Mr H. Wallwork,
Miss S. McClellans,
Mr L. Davies,
Mr M. Hall;

(b) Mr P. Dowding,
Mr R. Hill,
Ms D. Bryant,
Mr P. Blaxwell;

(c) Mr P. Nisbet (retiring),
Miss A. Kennedy,
Mr A. Auguste,
Mr S. French;

and three review committees consisting of two lawyers and one lay appointee—

(a) Mr B. Rowland, Q.C.,
Mr G. Miller,
Mrs P. Giles;

(b) Mr P. Seaman, Q.C.,
Mr I. Temby,
Mrs E. May;

(c) Mr T. Walsh,
Mr L. W. Roberts-Smith,
Mrs R. Clarke.

(3) No. But the Director of Legal Aid—who is a salaried officer—is able to claim re-imbursement for expenses incurred.

WATER SUPPLIES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Uncleared Land

731. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What is the total area of uncleared alienated land in each of the following areas:

(a) the Mundaring Weir catchment area;

(b) the Denmark River catchment area;

(c) the Kent River water reserve;

(d) the Warren River water reserve?

(2) What is the area of uncleared alienated land in each of the zones into which each of the four areas referred to in (1) have been divided?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) The approximate areas are—

(a) 38 square kilometres;

(b) 42 square kilometres;

(c) 450 square kilometres;

(d) 538 square kilometres.

(2) The approximate areas are—

(a) Mundaring Weir catchment area:
Zone A—38 square kilometres;
Zone B—Nil;
(There are no zones C and D in the Mundaring catchment area.)

(b) Denmark River catchment area:
Zone A—31 square kilometres;
Zone B—Nil;
Zone C—11 square kilometres.
(There is no zone D in the Denmark River catchment area.)

(c) Kent River water reserve:

Zone A—430 square kilometres;

Zone B—Nil;

Zone C—20 square kilometres.

(There is no zone D in the Kent River water reserve.)

(d) Warren River water reserve:

Zone A—421 square kilometres;

Zone B—38 square kilometres;

Zone C—19 square kilometres;

Zone D—60 square kilometres.

RAILWAYS

Lower-than-cartload Consignments

732. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will he advise if it is Westrail's intention to dispose of its lower-than-cartload traffic?

(2) If "Yes":

(a) when will it commence; and

(b) who will the Government engage to deliver lower-than-cartload consignments?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

TRAFFIC: ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

Northam

733. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

(1) Is it customary to have an official opening where a new Road Traffic Authority complex has been constructed?

(2) If "Yes" when will the Northam centre be officially opened?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

(1) and (2) No.

MINING

Australian Heritage Commission Act

734. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Federal Affairs:

Is the Minister aware of any proposed changes to be made by the Federal Government to the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1976 that will allow mining companies to gain easier access to areas controlled under that Act for the purposes of exploration or mining?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

No.

LAND: RESERVE

No. 25211

735. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Would the Minister have surveyors check the boundaries of reserve 25211 (Swan Lake/Deadwater reserve, Augusta) to establish as to whether or not land owners immediately adjacent to the reserve have developed a residential sand pad and concrete machinery foundations on the reserve?
- (2) If it is found that development has taken place on the reserve, will the Minister take immediate action to have the sand pad and cement slab removed forthwith and the reserve rehabilitated?
- (3) Would the Minister have the existing fence on the reserve, erected by people unknown, removed immediately?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Reserve 25211, set apart for "recreation", is vested in the Augusta-Margaret River Shire Council. It will be inspected at the first opportunity.
- (2) and (3) No. Inquiries will be instituted with the controlling body, which conceivably is developing the reserve for its purpose.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cockburn Council

736. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is it a fact that she is required to advise the Cockburn Council that they may make refunds to those people who were moved from the Naval Base settlement and thus allow rebates of rates to be paid to them by the Council?
- (2) If "Yes" when will she undertake to issue the instruction so that these displaced people may receive their rebates?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) No approach has been made to me in relation to the refund of rates imposed on the naval base settlement and in this circumstance no action could be required of me.

FUEL: OIL

Rig

737. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What surveys are being undertaken by the *Western Endeavour* adjacent to the coastal areas of Augusta/Busselton?

(2) When will these surveys be completed?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) None.
- (2) Not applicable.

MINING: URANIUM

Lake Way

738. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) In regard to the uranium mine site at Lake Way, will he advise who are the partners who envisage developing these deposits?
- (2) What is the present position regarding the future development for the mining of this uranium ore and have the necessary environmental and cost feasibility studies been made?
- (3) If the studies are being prepared, when is it anticipated that they will be available for public comment?
- (4) Is there any fact in the information given to me that this project should be in operation before the end of this year?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) 85 mineral claims held by Delhi International Oil Corporation covering a uranium prospect at Lake Way are currently being explored under a joint venture agreement between Wyoming Minerals, Delhi International and VAM Ltd.
- (2) Exploration and assessment of the deposit are continuing and preliminary environmental and feasibility studies have been made.
- (3) If firm proposals are made for mining, normal environmental assessment and protection procedures will be followed.
- (4) No firm proposals for mining have yet been made to the State Government.

HEALTH

Wittenoom Report

739. Mr SODEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he been able to have the report titled "The Wittenoom Report—Wittenoom Working Committee—April 1979" assessed?
- (2) If "Yes" by whom?
- (3) As a consequence of the report, has there been any change in the previous assessment of the health risk level by Western Australian public health authorities, as depicted in the publications

"The Health Hazard at Wittenoom—Public Health Department—8/12/78", and "Exposure to Crocidolite in Wittenoom"?

- (4) What is the currently assessed level of health risk to—
 (a) children;
 (b) adults,
 living in the town of Wittenoom?
- (5) What is the currently assessed level of health risk to tourists travelling through or staying for short periods in the town?
- (6) Did the Wittenoom working committee report take cognisance of the information and estimate of health hazard depicted in the Western Australian Health Department publication "Exposure to Crocidolite in Wittenoom"?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The report was widely distributed and I have assessed it with departmental officers.
- (3) No.
- (4) (a) There already has been one death from mesothelioma in a young person exposed to crocidolite as a child at Wittenoom. Since that person's exposure was in 1948-1949, however regrettable, it will be reasonable to assume that more cancers will appear.
- (b) There is a risk to adults but it is less because the nature of their exposure is different and because of the many years between first exposure and the appearance of cancer.
- (5) Negligible or non-existent.
- (6) No. Although the working committee report refers to it, it does not discuss the estimation of risk embodied in that report.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

Camboon

740. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Was an extra teacher appointed to the Camboon primary school during the week ended 4th May?
- (2) If so—
 (a) what was the number of students, and the grade groupings in the charge of each teacher prior to that appointment;
 (b) what are the class groupings and numbers since the appointment referred to above?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes, an additional staff member was appointed to Camboon primary school from 3rd May, 1979, because the school enrolment had increased to 511.

(2) (a) Student distribution as of 4th May '79 (15 class organisation)				(b) As of 7th May '79 (16 class organisation)			
Year				Year			
1	33	1	30	} + 3 Yr. 2 Remedial
1	....	....	30	1	....	30
2	....	....	36	2	....	32
2	....	....	37	2	....	32
3	....	....	34	2/3	....	30
3	33	3	33	}
3/4	....	....	35	3/4	....	31
4	....	....	35	4	....	35
4/5	....	....	33	4	....	35
5	....	....	34	5	....	32
5	33	5	33	}
6	....	....	39	5/6	....	28
6	....	....	39	6	....	32
7	....	....	30	6	....	32
7	....	....	32	7	....	31
			511	7	....	32

The new organisation and the class groupings are in accordance with the 1979 staffing policy.

LAND: CROWN

Fires

741. Mr CRANE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Does the State Government provide funds or assistance for the suppression of fires on Crown lands by shire councils?
- (2) If "Yes" how much and in which way may councils apply for funds or assistance?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that one-third of the Dandaragan Shire district consists of vacant Crown land, national parks, wildlife reserves and other Government reserves?
- (4) When large fires have occurred on this land in the past, the council has found it necessary to call upon privately owned graders, dozers, etc., to fight the fire. In the event of future such fires would the council be—
 (a) responsible for meeting the cost of hiring such plant; and
 (b) entitled to pass the cost of such hire on to the Bush Fires Board for payment?
- (5) Will the Minister advise if special consideration is given by the Government to shires such as Dandaragan which have such large areas of vacant Crown land, national parks, wildlife reserves and other Government reserves?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) No.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) Yes.

(4) (a) Yes.

(b) No.

(5) Yes. Priority in allocation of funds is made for hazard reduction on vacant Crown land where large areas of bush adjoin farming communities, particularly where the Bush Fires Board is able to negotiate agreements with the local authority, and the local community itself is willing to become involved in fire suppression.

During 1978/79 \$121 000 was granted.
