

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 21 October 1981

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

HOSPITAL: SUNSET

Petition

MR TONKIN (Morley) [2.17 p.m.]: I present a petition in the following terms—

To The Honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, we, the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do hereby pray that Her Majesty's Government will not sell the Sunset Hospital site which should be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations.

We further affirm that the care of the elderly is best conducted in a manner which does not permit the making of profits from their distress.

We are of the firm belief that land handed down by our pioneers in trust to the care of Governments for the benefit of later generations should not be disposed of for temporary financial gain.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable house will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as duty bound will ever pray.

I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly. The petition bears 2 104 signatures.

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

(See petition No. 104).

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Lotteries (Control) Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.

2. State Energy Commission Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr P. V. Jones (Minister for Fuel and Energy), and read a first time.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE BILL

In Committee

Resumed from 20 October. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry) in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after clause 79 had been agreed to.

Clause 80: Wilful and false representation—

Mr PARKER: In my name on the notice paper appears a proposed amendment to delete clause 80; but I believe the appropriate course for me to follow is to oppose clause 80, and if it is defeated I may at a subsequent stage move for the substitution of the clause in the form appearing in my name on the notice paper.

During the second reading debate I referred to the problems inherent in the clause. What has happened here is that in drafting this Bill the Government has taken a provision which existed in fact in section 8 of the current Workers' Compensation Act and it was intended and does in that current Act apply only to third schedule diseases; that is, to diseases which are of a gradual onset nature and in regard to which there is some need to determine at which stage in a worker's employment he may have suffered the onset of that disease. The provision has been included in the Bill in such a way that it will apply to all workers, not only those who are victims of an industrial disease.

The effect of the rewriting of this provision is that instead of only those people who are suffering from diseases having to indicate that they are suffering from this compensable disease, any worker who has had any form of industrial accident which has been compensated for will have to advise all his prospective employers of that fact. That means that any provisions rehabilitation which the Government has otherwise legislated for or which it will legislate for in this Bill or anywhere else, will be completely undermined by the fact that most workers concerned will simply not be able to get employment.

The situation will be at its worst in the area of back injuries. We all know that back injuries are an area of considerable suspicion amongst employers and probably the community in general and that on occasions people have malingered, claiming back injuries as the excuse for their not returning to work. However, the majority of people who suffer or have suffered back injuries are genuine. In excess of 95 per cent of the people

concerned would be genuine. But, notwithstanding that, an employer looking at someone who puts on his application form, as he will be required to do by clause 80 if it is carried, that he has suffered back injuries or, for that matter, any other injuries, will if he is then comparing that potential employee with other potential employees who indicate they have had no such injuries, be forced into a position of having to say to himself, "Why should I take the guy who has had the back injury when I can take the guy who has not had any problems whatsoever?"

In the old section 8 it was very important for the employer to know about the industrial diseases that his potential employee might have had because with an industrial disease the new employer might be called upon to make some contribution for those injuries, either by direct payment or by payment through his insurance company to the worker, because some portion of the onset of that disease may be attributed to the new employer. The old subsection of section 8 was a very valid and proper subsection because the employer did need to have that information so he could prepare a defence if that was the situation.

The way clause 80 is worded in this Bill, there is no necessity whatsoever for it to apply to the sorts of injuries of which I have been speaking—that is, the whole gamut of injuries—because the new employer is already protected in areas other than industrial diseases by virtue of the fact that if there is a recurrence of the previous injury neither he nor his insurance company can be held responsible for the payment of that amount.

The Government is really legislating with overkill in this area because it will now force people to give information to their employer when, from the point of view of the employer's compensation liability, there is no value to the employer in receiving because he is already protected by the fact that if there is a recurrence of that particular injury the new employer has no obligation to the employee whatsoever. The obligation falls back on the old employer or the old employer's insurance company or, if neither of those is in existence, on the uninsured workers' fund rather than on the new employer. From a workers' compensation point of view there is no necessity for that employer to have that information.

Yet the information is to be required from the employee as a result of clause 80. The result of that will be that notwithstanding whatever attitudes the Government, the Workers' Compensation Board, the Workers' Assistance

commission, the Opposition, or anyone else might have towards the legislation, there will be a class of workers who will find it well nigh impossible to find employment of any sort because they will be forced to make these revelations about things which are of no consequence to the new employer.

It could create a class of people who, knowing that, will in effect either lie to the new employer or not divulge information which under this clause they ought to divulge. The Minister made the point in the second reading debate that the Workers' Compensation Board will have a discretion in this matter, but, notwithstanding that, it will render their not being liable to be paid workers' compensation.

As I mentioned yesterday in view of time that the Workers' Compensation Board takes to make these decisions, it could mean hardship and suffering for a number of genuine workers who simply have not provided the information which will have been sought by virtue of Clause 80 of the Act.

If clause 80 is restricted to apply to industrial diseases, I have no argument with it because that is the way it has been in the current Act and I understand the need for employers to have that sort of information so the apportionment of liability can be made. So the only reason for its being in section 8 was for an apportionment of liability to be made and that the employee would be aware that that apportionment could be made with respect to his new employer.

Apportionment will not be made with respect to every other employee because the old employer will continue to be wholly liable for anything that happens in regard to that employee's previous injuries.

Earlier in the debate the Minister said it was necessary for the Act to contain some provision to stop fraud and malingering. I agree with that, but the Government has not included in the Bill the provision relating to fraud and malingering that was in the old legislation. I therefore suggested the amendments put forward today that clause 80 be deleted. I give notice that if it is deleted, subsequently I will move for the substitution of a new clause—which appears in my name on the notice paper—to stand as clause 80.

It would do two things. Firstly, it would reintroduce the provision in section 8 of the current Act. It was originally designed to serve only third schedule industrial diseases and, where there is a logic for it would continue to serve them. The employer needs to be certain of what the apportionment of liability will be. That is the first thing my proposed amendment will do.

The second aspect is that the legislation will include provision for something for which the Government is not bound to cater—that is, fraud and malingering—and will make that a punishable offence. Of course, the Government has made certain provision elsewhere in this Bill to increase the penalty to \$1 000 and this would make it a fairly severe offence for someone to engage in fraud or to mangle or to be found guilty of such an offence. This would cut out the other aspect the Government was concerned about.

We would then be in a position where the third schedule would be catered for—that is, industrial diseases and the malingering workers would be taken care of—and there would be no area of problem in that respect.

In my view, the Government's legislative will achieve only one thing; that is, it will completely undermine any rehabilitation processes it wishes to achieve with this legislation.

The Minister may have some thoughts on this and may be prepared to review this matter if not in this place, then when it goes to the other place. If that is the case I would be interested to hear what the Minister has to say. At this stage my attitude is that the clause should be deleted with a view to substituting a new clause 80.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am opposed to the amendment proposed by the member for Fremantle. If one reads the clause one will note as follows—

Where it is proved—

And I think the word "proved" is an important part of that section. To continue—

—that the worker has, at the time of seeking or entering employment in respect of which he claims compensation for a disability, wilfully and falsely represented himself as not having previously suffered from the disability the Board may in its discretion refuse to award compensation which otherwise would be payable.

There has been some comment that if an individual had a back injury or a cut foot he would not be covered. My understanding is that he would be covered because the board has a discretion in this matter.

This applies only when a person wilfully or falsely misrepresents himself with regard to an injury. The board has conducted itself efficiently in the past and has on it representatives of the TLC, the Confederation of WA Industry, and a judge.

Mr Parker: They won't in the future, not under this Bill.

Mr O'CONNOR: Who will they have?

Mr Parker: They will have someone you choose to put on the board.

Mr O'CONNOR: If the member looks further he will note that the members will be selected from the group I mentioned previously. I am sure the member for Fremantle will find they are the sorts of people who should be on the board.

When a person wilfully and falsely misleads in a case such as we have mentioned, we must consider the employer who has been misled. The employer, as well as the employee, ought to be looked after.

I see nothing wrong with this clause because a person who does the right thing has nothing to worry about. The member for Fremantle indicated some fields in which a person may not be able to get a job because of a back injury. Should he apply for a job if he has a back injury? Should he be given a job if he has a back injury and if the job involves lifting?

Even if the person wilfully and falsely misleads, the board has a discretion in this matter. If there is some justification on the part of the employee the board can rule accordingly. I believe this is a fair clause for both the employer and the employee.

If we accept the recommendation of the member for Fremantle, it would reduce the strength of the Bill in the areas I believe require strengthening.

Mr PARKER: The Minister has completely misunderstood the points the Opposition made during the second reading speech and the Committee stage in relation to this clause. The point is that there is no disadvantage to the employer when a worker is not suffering from a disability, when it is not an industrial disease as listed under schedule 3.

The Minister mentioned wilful and false misrepresentation, but all that could lead to is that it has to be proved. We must consider the question of whether the employer could have an application form similar to that which is filled in for an insurance claim. The employer could have an employment form which asks the applicant to tick off certain questions. They could be questions as to whether a worker has had an injury to his back, thigh, or head. It could mean that a worker would be in a position where he would perhaps not wish to put down something he did not believe to be relevant to his employment because he felt it could reflect on his ability.

If a worker has a back injury it is hardly likely he would wish to apply for a job which entailed heavy work which would involve his back.

If my amendment is successful it will include in the Bill a provision which is in the current Act. I believe all the aspects concerned have been more than adequately covered and if the Minister wishes to look at both sides of the coin, he will note that both sides will be covered in my proposed amendment which is more sensible and consistent with the current legislation. It is also consistent with the needs of the employee and industry. If the Minister is not prepared to accept my amendment I ask that he be prepared to look into this matter further before the passage of the legislation in the other place.

Mr O'Connor: I am quite happy to have a further look at the legislation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 81 to 83 put and passed.

Clause 84: Industrial award and partial incapacity—

Mr PARKER: Once again I wish to oppose clause 84 with a view to having it deleted from the Bill. I do not propose a replacement amendment because it seems to me that clause 84 does not achieve anything at all.

The purpose of this clause was that if a worker is partially fit for work and is being paid an amount of compensation, then he may be employed in a limited capacity. I think it is the case that, in total, a worker would achieve his normal wage in different proportions from different areas during that time. It is not in issue and I am not arguing that with the Government. However, the issue is that I do not believe clause 84 sets out to do what is intended. It is a badly worded clause. In fact, it is very hard to work out precisely what it does mean and how it would operate.

I believe this clause is unnecessary because virtually all awards have a clause which allows workers to be paid at a lesser amount in any case which may be determined by the arbitration board or the Industrial Commission. It may be that people can be employed on light duties or on a partial duties basis. It may be arranged that an employee can work to his full capacity for 20 hours or at half capacity for 40 hours. He may do a job of sweeping the floor, and it is envisaged that those sorts of things will be covered.

In my view they are covered by the industrial award. I do not believe that clause 84 covers those people and it is not necessary because of the

provisions I have already spoken of in those awards. Subclause (1) reads—

Notwithstanding any industrial award or industrial agreement, where a worker is partially incapacitated for work and has received compensation under this Act for that incapacity he may be employed at that proportion of the relevant award wage and allowances as is appropriate to his capacity to do the work which a worker not incapacitated would be able to do.

Again, that does not make clear how it is envisaged that this particular clause will operate. I do not believe it will be operative. I understand the philosophy behind it, and I agree with it; I just do not see that it will operate in the way it is intended, because as I said, in my experience the provisions within industrial awards and agreements are exercised with the full co-operation of the workers and management concerned. I do not think the clause is necessary, and therefore I oppose it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not like opposing all the Opposition's amendments, but on this occasion I oppose the proposal of the member for Fremantle. With this measure we are trying to ensure that rehabilitation is carried as far as possible. We believe that one of the ways to achieve this is to keep a person mentally and physically occupied.

Unless this clause is included in the legislation, a number of people who are employed under industrial awards will be unable to take any sort of employment because of those awards. If a person is, say, 20 or 30 per cent incapacitated, we would like him to be employed up to the 70 or 80 per cent of his capacity, and compensate him for the balance until such time as he can return to full-time employment.

I have had discussions with people such as Sir George Bedbrook and others in the health field and it is considered by them that this provision will do a great deal of good for the individual concerned. Unless this clause remains, a number of people employed under certain industrial awards will not be able to take on part-time employment.

Mr Skidmore: The awards already provide for such an instance.

Mr O'CONNOR: Some of the awards preclude an individual from taking any sort of employment if he is handicapped at all.

Mr Parker: I am not aware of it.

Mr O'CONNOR: The information I have from the Parliamentary Draftsman is that that is the case.

Mr Parker: I am not sure there are any.

Mr Sidmore: Read the arbitration Act.

Mr O'CONNOR: The information I have is that this is so.

Mr Parker: I have not seen one.

Mr O'CONNOR: I will endeavour to obtain the details for the honourable member and provide it to him. We want to ensure that these people can be rehabilitated as quickly as possible in their own interests and in the interests of industry generally.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 85: Worker not to be prejudiced by resuming work—

Mr O'CONNOR: I wish to move some amendments to this clause. In order to have consistency, I wish to delete the word "injury" and substitute the word "disability" where it appears in lines 9 and 10. I move an amendment—

Page 58, lines 9 and 10—Delete the word "injury" where it appears in each line and substitute the word "disability" in each case.

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 86 to 95 put and passed.

Clause 96: Composition—

Mr PARKER: This clause refers to the composition of the Workers' Assistance Commission. If I can crave your indulgence for a moment, Mr Chairman, it would certainly save the time of the Committee if you would allow me to refer simultaneously to the composition of this commission as well as to the composition of the Workers' Compensation Board and the Premium Rates Committee. A very similar point applies to these other bodies, the composition of which is set out in clauses 113 and 145. It seems to me to be logical to deal with them all together.

The Workers' Assistance Commission is a new body, but the other two bodies are to have the method of the appointment of their membership changed substantially. In his reply to the second reading debate the Minister referred to the fact that under the Act the Minister already has the power to decide who is to be appointed to these bodies. With respect to the Minister's interpretation of the Act, it is not my view or the view of any of the legal advisers from whom I have sought advice, that the Minister is not required to accept the nominee of the Confederation of Western Australian Industry or the nominee of the TLC as the case may be. I believe the same thing applies with respect to the

Premium Rates Committee, but certainly it applies to the Workers' Compensation Board.

Under the proposals in this Bill the Minister will have absolute discretion to determine who will become the workers' representative on the Workers' Compensation Board or the other two bodies, and who becomes the employers' representative. This clause is worded so loosely that it might as well say the Minister shall have the power to appoint two additional members as well as the chairman of the board.

Subclause (1)(c)(ii) says that one shall be a person experienced in trade union affairs. The same precise provision appears in clauses 113 and 145. As I pointed out earlier, that could mean anybody. Many people in the community are experienced in trade union affairs, but they are not necessarily appropriate people to have as the workers' representative on the board. Two people who would fall into this category come very readily to mind. One is the former Secretary of the Australasian Society of Engineers (Mr Bob West), now the Industrial Regulations Manager of the SEC, and the Director of the Industrial Relations Bureau (Mr Bob Anderson). No-one could suggest that these people represent the trade union movement. There is nothing whatsoever in the Bill to preclude the Minister from appointing those two people to be members of the Workers' Compensation Board, the Premium Rates Committee, or the Workers' Assistance Commission.

As the member for Katgoorlie pointed out, some people who have never been on the trade union side of the fence can claim that they have a lot of experience in union affairs. For instance, the Minister's friend, Mr Rick New, has had a lot of experience in union affairs.

Mr MacKinnon: That is not a bad suggestion, actually. We might even take that one up.

Mr PARKER: He falls within the ambit of subclause (1)(c)(ii), and the same thing applies to the other bodies.

The same situation prevails in respect of who shall be the employer representative on these organisations. Clause 96(1)(c)(i) provides that the Minister may appoint "a person experienced in management affairs in commerce or industry, or both". Many people could be said to have had experience in that area, but they may not be people the Confederation of WA Industry or the Chamber of Mines would want representing them on these organisations.

For example, a Government influenced by the Trades and Labor Council might decide that Mr Bonney, who currently is manager of the Trades

and Labor Council building society and a number of other building societies is a person who falls within this category, but he might not be a person the employer organisations would want representing them.

I do not think it is appropriate that the Minister should be able to appoint whomever he chooses to represent either employer or employee organisations. The Opposition believes employer and employee organisations have the right to put forward their nominees without interference from the Minister, whichever political party he may represent.

After all, the Minister already has the power to appoint the Chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board without reference to anybody. That has always been the case, and we support it.

Clause 96 provides that the Minister "may" have consultation with employer and employee organisations; he is not required to so consult. Further, if the Minister does decide to consult with these bodies, he is not required to accept any decision arrived at in those consultations. He can consult until the cows come home and then appoint whomever he likes.

Clause 96(3) provides that the Minister "may" request employer and employee organisations to submit the names of persons willing to act as members of these boards. In other words, he may select from a panel of names submitted to him. The Minister could be faced with a panel of 10 names and then choose a person whom the particular organisation does not want to represent it. This trend has been evident in other States, particularly Queensland, but hitherto it has been unknown in this State with regard to the Workers' Compensation Act.

Not only may the Minister appoint whomever he likes to these bodies, but also he may dismiss anyone for a variety of reasons. The Minister may decide he does not like someone, and may dismiss him.

Mr O'Connor: I think that is an unfair statement.

Mr PARKER: It depends on our interpretation of "do not like"; it might be a person the Minister does not think should be on this body.

Mr O'Connor: Or someone you do not think should be there.

Mr PARKER: That is quite correct.

Mr Chairman, the dismissal provisions appear in clause 97; I hope you will allow me to discuss both clauses together, because they contain

similar provisions, and time will be saved in this way.

Clause 97(4) provides that the Governor—effectively, the Minister—may terminate the appointment of a nominee member for a mental or physical disability. These terms are not defined in the legislation, and could mean anything. It is extraordinary in the International Year of Disabled Persons that the Government is seeking to give itself the power to terminate the appointment of people for reason of physical disability.

A nominee member may be dismissed for inefficiency, whatever that may mean. From my understanding of the way the board has been operating over recent years, they all need to be sacked for that reason.

A member may be dismissed for misbehaviour. The Opposition believes "misconduct" to be a better term because its legal meaning is clearly defined and understood by most people operating in this area.

Clause 97(4)(b) goes on to provide that the Minister may terminate the appointment of a nominee member "for other good cause, whether the events or circumstances giving rise to that good cause occurred before, on, or after the date on which the appointment took effect". Talk about rehabilitation! A person may have committed a wrongdoing 20 or 30 years previously. The Minister may suddenly decide it is opportune or politically wise to terminate his employment and something can be raked up from the past and for which that person has paid the penalty, and be used as an excuse to dismiss him.

The Opposition is sympathetic with some of the Minister's concerns. With the TLC, we share the Minister's concern relating to the termination of the appointment of a certain member to the Workers' Compensation Board. There is no doubt authority should be available to the Minister to suspend the appointment of people, pending an inquiry—just as it is available to the Commissioner of Police or the Public Service Board—to enable the Government to deal with misconduct, or some other situation.

However, the Minister is creating an overkill situation where he can appoint anyone he likes without consultation; or, if out of the goodness of his heart he agrees to consult with employer or employee organisations, he is not required to accept the results of that consultation; then, after appointing whom-ever he likes to these bodies, he can terminate their appointment, again without consultation. I regard such provisions as draconian, and I strongly oppose them.

The provisions contained in these clauses are above and beyond what is necessary to deal with an immediate or any foreseeable problem. The Minister should give serious consideration to rewriting clauses 96, 97, 113, and 145 to enable employer and employee organisations to nominate the people they want representing them on these boards. If that is not to be the situation, we might as well scrap the tripartite nature of these boards, as has been done in other States. I support the tripartite nature of these boards, but that situation is rendered meaningless by the Minister's being able to appoint whom-ever he likes.

Sitting suspended from 3.00 to 4.00 p.m.

Mr O'CONNOR: The member for Fremantle made comments regarding the appointment of people to the three boards. He said that at the moment the Minister did not have control over the membership, but the independent parties did. This is not the case, and I refer to section 25(6)(a) of the Workers' Compensation Act. Under these conditions, the Minister has the control because "prescribed manner" allows the Minister to do it in the way he wants.

Mr Parker: That is not my legal advice. It is restricted, and it relates only to forms and procedures, and not to such things as rejecting a nominee or a panel of names.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is not the advice I have.

Mr Parker: With all due respect, your Crown Law advice is often wrong.

Mr O'CONNOR: In connection with the appointments, the member knows some of the difficulties we have had with recent appointments. As far as I can, I will make sure that the bodies represented on the boards have the necessary representatives.

In the past, the Confederation of WA Industry has always given us three names. This is an advantage because, irrespective of whom or what we are, if the confederation put on a radical member and the member from the TLC was the reverse, it could be a disadvantage to the board. The board has to work in harmony and to the advantage of all concerned. It is not unreasonable to have a list of names so that the Minister has some control.

In connection with the power of dismissal, this has been included because at the moment the TLC has a representative on the Workers' Compensation Board who, because of certain circumstances, is not operating in that capacity. The member for Fremantle knows the position as well as I do.

We have tried to ensure that if one organisation is precluded from having a representative on the board, we have ways in which that can be arranged.

The three boards suggested are reasonable. They are not unlike many other boards that we have established. I hope members will leave the position as it is.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 23

Mr Blaikie	Mr O'Connor
Mrs Craig	Mr Old
Mr Crane	Mr Rushton
Dr Dadour	Mr Sodeman
Mr Grewar	Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr McKinnon	Mr Young
Mr Mensaros	Mr Shalders
Mr Nanovich	

(Teller)

Noes 19

Mr Barnett	Mr Harman
Mr Bertram	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr McIver
Mr Bryce	Mr Parker
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr Wilson
Mr Evans	Mr Bateman
Mr Grill	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Grayden	Mr Jamieson
Sir Charles Court	Mr Tonkin
Mr Sibson	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Coyne	Mr T. H. Jones

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 97 to 113 put and passed.

Clause 114: Power to constitute and appoint Supplementary Board—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 85, line 24—Insert after the word "Board" the word "and".

This is to identify the fact that the chairman of the board assigns matters, and the chairman of the supplementary board shall perform such duties as are assigned. I think the Opposition agrees with this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr O'CONNOR: For the same reasons, I move an amendment—

Page 86, lines 2 and 4—Insert after the word "Board" where twice occurring the words "or its Chairman".

Amendments put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 115 to 123 put and passed.

Clause 124: Orders relating to payment of compensation in respect of persons under legal disability or who are dependants—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 90, line 32—Add after the word “applied” the passage—

, and after it is so paid there shall be liberty to apply to the Board by or on behalf of the person entitled in respect of the manner in which it is applied.

This amendment is to enable the dependants of deceased workers to apply to the board for payment out of moneys paid into general funds for the benefit of those dependants.

Mr PARKER: We support the amendment. At a later stage, to help silicotic miners, my colleague, the member for Kalgoorlie, will be moving a similar amendment which we understand the Government is agreeable to have incorporated in the Bill.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 125 to 127 put and passed.

Clause 128: Board may hold inquiries—

Mr PARKER: The way the clause is worded at the moment it states that the inquiry boards into the conduct of medical practitioners, dentists, chiropractors, and physiotherapists are to be constituted—besides the representatives of the Workers' Compensation Assistance Commission—by representatives of the profession concerned in the complaint, but the manner of appointment of those representatives allows these professional people to be represented by a professional association, except that chiropractors are to be represented by their registration board. This was one subject on which I and other members received representations from chiropractors, amongst other people.

It seems to me that rather than change the situation so that chiropractors are represented by their association, it would be better if all the professions had their professions represented by the bodies which are constituted to look after them. Thus the amendments I will move will have the effect of substituting, in the case of subclause (2), the Medical Board for the AMA; in subclause (3), the Dental Board for the Australian Dental Association; and, in subclause (5), the Physiotherapists' Registration Board for the Physiotherapists Association. The boards enumerated in my amendments have been taken

from the precise wording of the relevant Acts. Therefore, I move an amendment—

Page 92, lines 26 to 29—Delete all words after the word “who” down to and including the word “Governor” and substitute the following passage—

nominated by the Medical Board constituted under the Medical Act 1894, and appointed by the Governor.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr PARKER: I move an amendment—

Page 92, lines 33 to 36—Delete all the words after the word “who” down to and including the word “Governor” and substitute the following passage—

nominated by the Dental Board of Western Australia constituted under the Dental Act of 1939, and appointed by the Governor.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr PARKER: I move an amendment—

Page 93, lines 4 to 6—Delete all the words after the word “Western” down to and including the word “Association” and substitute the following passage—

Physiotherapists' Registration Board constituted under the Physiotherapists Act of 1950, and appointed by the Governor.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 129 and 130 put and passed.

Clause 131: Requirements for taking proceedings—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 97, line 13—Delete the words “accident happened” and substitute the words “disability occurred”.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 132 and 133 put and passed.

Clause 134: Appeal—

Mr PARKER: This clause provides the extent to which appeals are possible from the Workers' Compensation Board to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. I dealt with this subject in the second reading stage and the Minister's reply indicated he had not fully grasped the situation. He referred to the fact that if there were frivolous appeals he was sure the Supreme Court would

award costs against any person involved in such appeals.

The current position is that a person can appeal against a decision of the Workers' Compensation Board only on a matter of law. However, before that matter of law is submitted to the Supreme Court, the Workers' Compensation Board has to state a case. It states a case based on the facts which it has determined and which are not reviewable by the Supreme Court or a higher authority. This clause will allow any person to appeal against any matter which has been determined by the Workers' Compensation Board to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. Irrespective of against whom the costs are awarded, increased costs will accrue to the workers' compensation system. This will result in increased premiums to employers and will bring further demands to lessen benefits to workers on workers' compensation. There is no doubt that lawyers stand to gain a lot more out of this change than any other group.

The provision of the case stated manner of dealing with these matters has applied for a number of years. As far as I am aware, any complaints which have arisen have resulted from people being restricted from going to the Full Court and the Supreme Court. It may well be an employee has been awarded an amount of \$150 a week and someone may feel the employee should have been awarded only \$120 a week. At the present time that is not appealable to the Supreme Court and under this clause it will be possible for people to appeal against those sorts of things.

The Minister may say this is frivolous and costs can be awarded; but the point is the costs will be incurred anyway.

Mr O'Connor: You are suggesting they should not have an appeal?

Mr PARKER: I am saying the current provision for appeal, which is the case stated method, is perfectly adequate and it has dealt with situations where interpretations are required as to what an award means. Such matters have been appealable to the Supreme Court and, on a couple of occasions, they have gone to the High Court and the Privy Council.

The provisions in the Act are perfectly adequate. I do not see any reason for them to be broadened, except to increase the income potential of certain members of the legal profession.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 135 to 152 put and passed.

Clause 153: Notification of period of incapacity exceeding 12 weeks—

Mr PARKER: I have been given a copy of a letter which has been sent also to the Minister for Health, the Minister for Labour and Industry, the member for Melville, and others. It is from Sir George Bedbrook of the Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital and it relates to the Bill.

Mr O'Connor: I have not seen a copy of it.

Mr Young: It was only handed to me at a meeting I had with Sir George before lunch.

Mr PARKER: Perhaps I can read the relevant points as we go through and the Minister can take them into consideration between now and the time that the Bill is dealt with in the other place.

In relation to this clause Sir George had this to say—

If this section is followed as indicated in the Act, i.e. 12 weeks before notification plus 3 weeks grace time—up to about 15 weeks could elapse before consultation regarding rehabilitation needs are determined—will occur. These rehabilitation needs may be medical, social, vocational or educational. With administrative time added on of up to about 4 weeks, some 19 weeks will thus elapse and it will mean that rehabilitation activities will still start too late.

This is particularly applicable perhaps to back injuries in industry and thus the importance of this in the health context. I would suggest that the 12 be reduced to 8, to overcome what could be a very serious delay.

I have only just received this letter, but it seems to make some very sensible points. One of the major ideas in the Bill is to encourage successful rehabilitation. We are all aware of Sir George Bedbrook's role in this regard. Perhaps the Minister could give consideration to the points made by him between now and the time the matter is debated in the other place.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am rather surprised I have not received a copy of the letter from Sir George Bedbrook on this matter, because we have conferred with him substantially on this Bill over a long period.

Mr Parker: He has indicated he will send you a copy.

Mr O'CONNOR: When I left my office prior to lunch, I had not received a copy of the letter on my desk. However, I shall have a look at it in due course and, if necessary, do something about the points he makes. We are anxious to ensure successful rehabilitation occurs.

Mr SKIDMORE: I appreciate that, at long last, the Government has seen fit to take into consideration the rehabilitation of workers. Consistently throughout the years I have been a member, I have maintained that all the Workers' Compensation Act seemed to do was to compensate injured workers for work lost, without making any allowance for their rehabilitation. It is gratifying to see that, at long last, something is being done in this area.

Previously when I have referred to this matter in the Chamber, I have been informed by the Government that it did not believe rehabilitation should be part of the Workers' Compensation Act, because it was a separate issue and should be dealt with in that way.

It appears to me that the first step we should take is to prevent industrial accidents and, when they occur, we should provide adequate compensation and successful rehabilitation.

I am pleased the Government is moving towards assisting in rehabilitation, but there is plenty of room for improvement. For those reasons, I support the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 154 and 155 put and passed.

Clause 156: Rehabilitation programme—

Mr PARKER: I wish to point out to the Chamber and, in particular, to the Minister the further points Sir George Bedbrook makes in this letter with regard to this clause. He says as follows—

Rehabilitation is a continuous process of medical, social, vocation (including occupational) and educational. I therefore suggest that the words "Occupational and Vocational" be deleted and substituted with Social, Vocational and Educational.

Furthermore, I cannot really understand why a limit of \$2 000 has been set despite item 2B of this section. It would be much wiser to give the Commission the right to be very flexible in relationship to Rehabilitation activities, for they embrace the above aspects.

I am also concerned about the still arbitrary division between what is regarded as being Medical and Rehabilitation—in fact, after 28 years I really don't know that there is a division and I believe that if we go on being so arbitrary, we are making it more

difficult to rehabilitate and to prevent the loss of days off work, for so many people injured in the work force.

Perhaps the Minister can answer some of these points. Sir George goes on to say—

I could not find how the Rehabilitation funds will be generated. It was suggested that a small percentage of the premium dollar should be put aside.

His Hon. Judge Meares in Sydney, Chairman of the National Advisory Council for the Handicapped, estimated that this would be the best way of generating such a fund.

Perhaps the Minister can indicate what plans the Government has in mind for generating funds for rehabilitation purposes. To continue—

I am concerned about the apparent division between what is Hospital treatment and what is Rehabilitation Treatment. I believe, as I have said above, that they are continuous. The wording of the Bill at the present time will not overcome this division.

Under item 5 of the Bill and item 127, 128 and 174—I find no mention of Occupational Therapy as a method of management of the injured worker. I believe that the Bill should be changed to include a physical therapist, who might be a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist or even a chiroprapist, for all of these people are physical therapists and I strongly urge that the Bill should be amended at this stage. Occupational Therapy is playing a much bigger part in Workers Compensation activities. I understand that the Occupational Therapy Association has already approached the Deputy Premier, who is in charge of the Bill.

In his reply to the second reading debate, the Minister referred to occupational therapy, but I do not believe he covered it fully. My colleague in the other place (the Hon. Howard Olney) has some ideas as to the way in which occupational therapists could be covered in the Bill in the same way as physiotherapists and that could be achieved very simply. Perhaps the Minister and his advisers could consider that matter, bearing in mind the remarks made by Sir George Bedbrook.

To include occupational therapists in the same way as physiotherapists are included is very simple, and it does not go against the thrust of anything the Government has intended with the Bill.

Mr O'CONNOR: In connection with the early points made by the member for Fremantle that the commission is to extend it to \$2 000, which it has the authority to do, it is not limited to \$2 000 as indicated in Sir George's letter. It will have the power to extend it past that point if it deems it necessary. I think it is rather important that it has that power in certain circumstances. It will be provided to the commission and it is up to it one way or the other. I am at a disadvantage in not having received the letter but, as I pointed out, I will have a look at the points, as I did in connection with the ones received earlier, prior to it, being handled in another place.

Mr Parker: Perhaps you could say something about that in the third reading tomorrow?

Mr O'CONNOR: It is possible. If I have the information, I will.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 157 to 171 put and passed.

Clause 172: Payment to worker from General Fund—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 120, line 31—Insert after the word "award" the passage "and any award for costs in respect thereof,".

This is an effort to enable the worker to be able to obtain any costs involved in connection with these particular hearings and to overcome areas of uncertainty in connection with that aspect.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 173 to 201 put and passed.

Schedule 1—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 141, clause 6 of schedule 1, line 5—Add after the word "Board" the following passage—

, and after the amount is so paid there shall be liberty to apply to the Board by or on behalf of any one of those entitled in respect of the manner in which that amount or any part of it is applied .

This is necessary to make the wording consistent with a change of clause 124 and is aimed at enabling widows of a deceased worker to apply to the board to vary the manner in which moneys paid into the commission are apportioned.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 141, clause 7(2) of schedule 1, line 1—Delete the word "Where" and substitute the passage "Subject to section 57 and subclause (3), where".

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule as amended, put and passed.

Schedules 2 to 4 put and passed.

Schedule 5—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 155, clause 6(h), of schedule 5—Delete paragraph (b).

The provision of this clause extends a choice to workers to have a supplementary payment. Clause 7(3) limits payment to the level of a prescribed amount which is contrary to the contents of this provision and should be deleted. I move accordingly.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr I. F. TAYLOR: I move an amendment—

Page 155, clause 6(c)(i) of schedule 5, last line—Insert after the word "years" the following passage—

, and after the amount is so paid there shall be liberty to apply to the Commission by or on behalf of the dependent spouse in respect of the manner in which that amount or any part of it is applied;

That amendment is in line with one previously moved by the Minister. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that the dependent spouse—or the widow—in this case, has the opportunity to request the commission to pay the lump sum, which will be paid under that clause, to her rather than to pay the money directly to the Public Trustee as is presently the case. This will ensure that the widow is able to use the funds as she sees fit, or she may see fit also to have the Public Trustee look after the funds on their behalf. The reason I move this amendment is that this year for the first time widows have received a note from the Workers' Compensation Board detailing the amount of interest earned on their behalf by the Public Trustee for the lump sum invested on their behalf and they have been obliged to pay income tax on interest earned. This amendment will give widows the opportunity to minimise their income tax liability by investing

the sums themselves rather than having the money invested on their behalf by the Public Trustee.

Mr O'CONNOR: As I have indicated to the member for Kalgoorlie, we support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 155, clause 6(c)(ii) of schedule 5, line 2—Insert after the word "receive" the passage " , and the employer is liable to pay, ".

This amendment is necessary to ensure that the onus is placed on the employer to pay what the worker's widow is entitled to.

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule, as amended, put and passed.

Schedule 6 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal

Bill recommitted, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry), for the further consideration of clause 4.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4: General application—

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 5—Delete the passage " , but in the case of an accident which occurred before that date only if that injury was an injury under the Second Schedule of the repealed Act ".

Mr PARKER: I do not have any objection to this amendment. If members refer to *Hansard* they will find I advised the Minister that the original amendment to this clause did not read properly. However, the amendment was carried. I am pleased that the Minister has recognised my point and has moved this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr O'CONNOR: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 13—Insert after the word "date" the passage " , but in the case of an accident which occurred before that date only if that injury was an injury under the Second Schedule of the repealed Act ".

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as further amended, put and passed.

Report

Bill again reported, with further amendments, and the report adopted.

METROPOLITAN MARKET AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 October.

MR NANOVICH (Whitford) [4.45 p.m.]: I would like to comment briefly on this Bill which will give the Metropolitan Market Trust the power to control the wholesale marketing of fruit and vegetables within a 70-kilometre radius of the Perth GPO. The Minister in his second reading speech said—

For some time the trust has been concerned that if another wholesale market is established in the metropolitan region there would be difficulty in maintaining that new market and the existing metropolitan market as viable operations.

I agree entirely with the Minister's remarks. He went on to say that in other States a population of 700 000 is necessary to ensure that a market is a viable proposition.

In 1953 an attempt was made to establish a new market in the Fremantle area simply because some people thought there was scope for another market and the growers would patronise it due to the promise of higher prices. This, of course, failed dismally because it could not attract bidding powers in the area. Another market, if established within a radius of 70 kilometres of the GPO, would certainly fail again.

The 1974-76 study prepared by WAIT-Aid clearly indicated the problems that would confront the industry if a further market was established or even if the present markets were removed to another place. I believe that the

markets are ideally situated at the moment, taking into consideration the new freeway system which is developing very rapidly. The markets are very convenient for the producers, as they are in a central position. I do not mean that this is an advantage to the people living in Manjimup, Geraldton, or Carnarvon, but in general terms the majority of the produce is grown on the fringes of the metropolitan area. That is why I claim that the markets are certainly in a central position.

At the moment the markets have five major agents of whom two sell produce five days a week. Other markets would probably have that number of sales per week if they were getting the produce on their floors. However, that has not been the case and they are generally restricted to the three day sales per week. Avenues are open for growers to patronise them and deliver produce to private treaty. Some exporters have a tremendous draw on the growers who probably deliver their entire produce under contract through those channels.

There are some very good changes in the Bill, particularly those changes dealing with penalties, which no doubt had to be increased. I think this is an excellent move and one that has been needed for a long time.

In relation to the representation by the Perth City Council on the trust the move whereby that representative—who is a councillor—automatically surrenders his position on the trust when he ceases to be a councillor and is an excellent move. This created a great deal of animosity in the past.

The Carnarvon growers have expressed an entirely different concern. In leading for the Opposition on this Bill, the member for Warren made the following remarks—

I would like to touch on the reasons put forward by the Carnarvon growers. They have said that they are dissatisfied with their representatives. In the newspaper report, the following appears—

They said that three of the five members of the Trust were agents who dominated it.

There is the basic reason for some feeling of distrust in the operation of the trust.

I assure the member for Warren that the growers are well represented on the Metropolitan Market Trust by Mr William Rupert Stevens.

Mr Evans: They let me know I was spot on in my remarks.

Mr NANOVIK: I listened to their arguments only a week ago and came to the conclusion they were incorrect, and that the Carnarvon growers opposed the Bill simply because they wished to create a market of their own in the hope of securing better prices.

I believe the Carnarvon growers should employ a person full time at the Metropolitan Markets to safeguard their interests. They cannot expect to grow produce 600 miles from Perth and send it by road to the markets and automatically receive a high price at all times. The member for Geraldton would recall the occasions I visited Geraldton and Carnarvon on business ventures on behalf of the Market Gardeners Association, and spoke to many growers. I still maintain Geraldton is one of the finest tomato-growing areas in Western Australia.

Mr Carr: The finest.

Mr NANOVIK: The complaint I received was that in Geraldton, where the weather was nice and warm, the prices were high, but that the price received for tomatoes on the auction floor in Perth was too low. They believed that all they had to do was grow their tomatoes and send them by road to Perth, and people would pay prime prices whether or not they wanted to buy tomatoes. They failed to realise that the vegetable industry is controlled by supply and demand; that is the principle by which growers must survive. Therefore, their gripe about the legislation is entirely unfounded.

The Carnarvon growers also have criticised the Metropolitan Market Trust in failing to prevent agents increasing ripening room facilities. There is nothing to stop their providing such rooms, although it is doubtful whether sufficient space is available at the markets. I would like a little more room provided.

In my opinion, the standard of packing of the Carnarvon growers could be upgraded. It is debatable whether this would justify their employing a person to inspect their produce before it is transported to the Metropolitan Markets. However, they should take a little more interest in the procedures adopted in the running of the markets so that they are better able to judge the supply and demand situation which governs the price they receive for their produce.

They have complained agents have not advised them of increases in charges for the holding of bananas for ripening; that is a matter for liaison between the growers and their agents; it has nothing to do with the trust.

I believe the Bill is a good one; it is not selfish legislation. It provides that the Metropolitan Market Trust, as the landlord, will continue to lease the premises, but is not responsible for prices paid at auction.

The Vegetable Growers Association and the Market Gardeners Association are happy with the legislation; they believe it will continue to protect the industry. If we began to diminish that concentration of control which presently is vested in the trust, tremendous damage would be caused to the industry; many walkouts would occur from market gardens simply because the ability to achieve a better price for the product would be undermined. This Bill has to do with the Metropolitan Market Trust, but the trust could not continue to operate without producers.

The Government should look seriously at providing facilities to cater for the export of our product. Packing and cool storage facilities could be provided at airports and on the wharfs. The situation existing at the moment is not conducive to increased exports. We know the demand is there, and we should be looking towards this area as another avenue of income to growers. I hope the Minister gives consideration to my suggestion because it is vital to the industry and the people of Western Australia that as much of our product as possible is sold overseas.

I support the Bill.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Herzfeld.

RAILWAYS

Electrification: Motion

MR McIVER (Avon) [4.58 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House—the Collie/Bunbury railway line be electrified, that the Midland to Perth railway line be electrified by Westrail for the initial purpose of testing and evaluating electric locomotives and suburban rail cars; that construction and erection of the overhead wiring system is to be carried out by Westrail's Midland Workshop, and that the work is to be completed within the next 12 months.

I move my motion in all sincerity in an appeal to the Government to get its transport policy in order. We in Western Australia are lagging behind other States and other countries in the transport field and particularly in regard to the electrification of our railways.

As I put forward reasons for my motion I trust that although Government members may not vote for it—because that is what usually happens to

Opposition motions in this place—they will at least listen and absorb those reasons, and the specific details I will provide to the House.

Irrespective of some of the reports we hear from around the world about energy, there is no doubt that there is a very pressing need to conserve our energy supplies. Learned people all over the world have warned us that this is necessary. Certain people have said there is no reason at all to be concerned and that there will always be plenty of fuel, but when we read authoritative reports it is obvious we need to consider our use of energy and its conservation. I will not bore members by referring to all these reports. It is obvious we have to look at alternatives to our present sources of energy. One alternative in Western Australia is before us like a neon sign, and this is particularly so in relation to the Government instrumentality of Westrail. In this case the neon sign spells out the word "electrification".

For some unknown reason the commissioner and his senior officers will not have a bar of electrification. I firmly believe they have not examined the situation sufficiently and there has not been sufficient research into this matter.

My motion is in three parts: the first deals with the electrification of the Midland-Perth section of rail; the second deals with the construction and erection of an overhead wiring system to be carried out by Westrail's Midland Workshops so that we have a full utilisation of that workshop; and the third deals with the electrification of the Collie-Bunbury section of rail.

Mr Rushton: Are you going to develop your theme to prove that we need to do it now in relation to the conservation of fuel? Can you identify the amount of fuel that Westrail uses, as the commissioner does?

Mr McIVER: No, I am not. I feel that is irrelevant to the motion and I do not think the Speaker would allow me to carry on in that vein. I have covered it with the use of the expression "conservation of energy".

In the long term these lines have to be electrified, because fuel costs are rising.

Mr Rushton: It would be detrimental to your motion to show what the energy position is.

Mr McIVER: The Minister will recall that at the outset I said the need for the conservation of energy has been stated by learned men throughout the world. If the Minister wishes to contradict them it is up to him to take it up with them individually. I do not intend to argue about their respective abilities. As a layman I take what they say as being pretty spot-on. If the Minister

reads reports such as those in the *National Geographic* magazine he will understand what I am saying. In making these statements I firmly believe I am on safe ground. We should conserve our energy, and this is particularly so in dealing with Government instrumentalities such as Westrail. I firmly believe that anyone who objects in principle to the electrification of the line from Midland to Claisebrook, and ultimately on to Perth, indicates he is not prepared to electrify this line for a very long time. It will also imply there is little interest on the part of those responsible for this service for making the railway more efficient and for containing increasing annual losses.

From the Government's point of view there can be only two points of opposition to this motion. One is the paramount question of cost and the other is the question of whether the Midland Workshops can be utilised to foot the bill for the work mentioned in my motion.

Let us consider the subject of cost. I point out to the Minister that I have done a lot of homework on this. I have had expert advice to guide me on this matter and I shall quote figures from the Government's own report, and I refer to the El-rail report which the Government commissioned when deciding on the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway, a move to which the Opposition strongly objected. The Government sought the services of El-rail to provide costs for the electrification of suburban rail services. I emphasise that these are not my figures.

Mr Rushton: They are El-rail figures; they are not Government figures.

Mr McIVER: They were consultants employed by the Government. Surely the Minister is not complaining about their work. These were specialists in the costing of electrification. It is most important that the figures are recorded in *Hansard*. I quote as follows—

S.E.C. 132kV Grid Substation and transmission costs (as indicated by S.E.C.)—\$650

132kV/25kV one-transformer Westrail substation—\$500

25kV Feeder Station and Track Sectioning Cabins—\$530

Supervisory Control Equipment—\$250

Total—\$1 930

Overhead Equipment

31 single track km of overhead equipment at \$70 000 per km (includes 2 kilometres for stabling roads)—\$9 870

38 Booster Transformers—\$380

Total \$10 250

Rolling stock—\$36 000

Signalling—\$8 150

Communications—\$3 890

Mr Rushton: You are missing the noughts from the end.

Mr McIVER: No, I am not. The Minister already has a line established with the signalling and everything else there. There is a need only for transformers and so on to be added. The Government does not have to build a brand new section of rail.

Mr Rushton: The biggest cost is insulation.

Mr McIVER: I tabulated these figures from El-rail's report for my own convenience.

Mr Herzfeld: Will you table them?

Mr McIVER: Certainly. I had intended to do just that. To continue—

	\$
Provision for Telecom Australia immunisation works.....	1 000
Total.....	13 040
Civil engineering costs including lowering of track.....	6 400
Vertical clearing adjustment.....	1 750
Additional cross-conversion to be wired to single line working.....	210
Over-bridge protection screening.....	250
Fencing.....	400
Track centering and service sheds and maintenance.....	1 000

Mr Herzfeld: Is that related to the whole job?

Mr McIVER: It is in thousands.

Mr Rushton: Is it per metre or what?

Mr McIVER: These figures are from the El-rail report which was presented to the Government.

Mr Rushton: Is it related to the whole job?

Mr McIVER: The report is divided into categories such as signalling and communications. It is self-explanatory.

Mr Rushton: What is the total cost?

Mr McIVER: I have not got to that yet. I have given the figure for the different categories. The total cost runs into several millions of dollars. It is most important the Minister understands what I am saying.

Mr Herzfeld: Are you talking about "per metre" or "per mile"?

Mr McIVER: Things are a little difficult when dealing with a complex subject. I thought that the member for Mundaring, being a civil engineer, would be able to understand what I am saying. It

is not a case of "per metre" or "per mile". Members should keep in mind that we are dealing with the Midland-Perth section of rail. These figures appertain to the cost of electrification.

Mr Herzfeld: One of the items you gave was \$325 for signalling.

Mr McIVER: No, the figure I gave was \$8 150.

For the guidance of the member, I suggest it would be better for him not to interject, and to wait until I complete my remarks and table the information as he has asked me to do. He will be able to peruse it thoroughly. Perhaps if he conferred with the Minister he would be in a better position to question me on the matter.

Mr Tonkin: That is a fair answer.

Mr Rushton: Fair enough.

Mr Brian Burke: He seems to have agreed about that.

Mr McIVER: I know some Government members are thick and we must put pressure on them in order that they might understand the economics of certain matters.

Mr Brian Burke: They understand about pre-schools.

Mr Herzfeld: I hope it doesn't prove—

Mr Brian Burke: You said a moment ago you wouldn't interject.

Mr Crane: He didn't say that.

Mr Old: He didn't.

Mr Herzfeld: All I am trying to do is understand what the member is talking about.

Mr Brian Burke: That says something about you, not him.

Mr McIVER: I am not responsible for the member's lack of understanding. I do not think he will have a great say in whether the rail service between Midland and Perth will be electrified.

Mr Crane: He will have a whole lot more say than you will.

Mr McIVER: I am trying to get my point across to the high echelon on the other side. I am trying to put a case in the hope that it will be at least examined, and I hope the Government will give some consideration to the submission I am making.

From the remarks I have made members can understand that a great cost would not be involved in my suggestion. Perth is not the only city in the world which faces complex transport problems. Brisbane faces similar problems; however, the Queensland Government did something positive about them. It spent millions of dollars upgrading the Brisbane transport

system, and particularly the suburban transport services. The main theme of that upgrading was the electrification of rail services. The Queensland Government opted for electrification of its rail services.

For the benefit of the Minister I must say that in regard to the new railcars presently on order—I understand they will be received late in October or early or mid-November—it is not too late to modify them for electrification.

Unfortunately some people are ignorant about railway electrification. Some members may believe that with electrification of our rail services we will have huge pillars beside our rail lines and massive wires overhead. That situation may have applied years ago, but it is not the case at present. Pylons can be placed several hundred feet apart and have on them only two wires. The same system was used recently when the Metro Transport System, as it is known, in Newcastle, Great Britain, electrified its rail services. The Metro Transport System faced many problems, similar to those which face us and the City of Brisbane. Newcastle, Brisbane, and Perth have about the same population and problems. The same questions arise, such as, "How do we tackle the problems? What will we do?"

I will refer to tangible evidence and certain illustrations. The City of Newcastle found that after the completion of the electrification of its railways and the provision of modern, comfortable facilities—not with a great flurry of expense; but just with light railcars—the patronage of its transport system increased threefold. That is what would happen in Western Australia if we grasped the nettle and did that which I have suggested.

I have no quarrel with the Government's concept of a co-ordinated transport system—the integration of bus and rail services. However, that system could be improved; it would be more attractive to daily patrons if we carried out the suggestion in the motion before the House.

Mr Herzfeld: Do you mean to say if we have an electric locomotive on a train instead of a diesel one we will have three times the patronage we are getting now?

Mr McIVER: I want to put the member for Mundaring on the right course, but I do not have time.

Mr Sodeman: You have unlimited time.

Mr McIVER: I do not want to bore other members. With electrification there would not be an electric diesel pulling railcars. The electrification system is built into the railcar as is the case with our present suburban system. There is not a locomotive pulling railcars. In fact, we

have a diesel-electric powered railcar with trailers being pulled behind it. The member is confusing the suburban system with the country system.

Mr Herzfeld interjected.

Mr McIVER: I say to the member for Mundaring that, before he shows his complete ignorance of these matters, he should be quiet because, as the motion unfolds he will be able to understand the situation.

Mr Herzfeld interjected.

Mr McIVER: Perhaps other members believe that we will have electric locomotives pulling railcars.

Mr Herzfeld: We know all about this.

Mr McIVER: The member does not.

Mr Herzfeld: Tell me why an electric car will attract three times as many passengers as the existing railcars.

Mr McIVER: I will explain the situation to him. He travels down to Perth from the hills in that Statesman of his which bellows out smoke. I think the rings need adjusting. Sometimes I travel behind him.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: If I were he I would have the car checked. Probably it is the third cylinder bellowing the smoke!

With the system I have suggested we would have modern air-conditioned railcars, similar to those which the Government has ordered. I will refer to those cars later, but the ones I propose would have facilities for disabled people and good seating. To save time, I can show members a photograph of the type of railcar used in Newcastle. A lengthy inquiry was held into matters relating to the Newcastle transport system, and later millions of dollars were spent to provide the people of Newcastle with excellent railcars. The patronage was increased threefold, and that is happening between Gosford and Sydney and in the suburbs of Brisbane because the authorities have understood they must provide proper transport.

Not everybody in Western Australia wants to travel by motor vehicle. When I go through business areas people say to me, "If you provide a good transport service, Mac, we will use it, but the present service we can't use".

Mr Crane: Can you hold that up so that *Hansard* can sketch it?

Mr McIVER: We must not go from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Mr Pearce: In this place we get to the ridiculous fairly quickly now.

Mr McIVER: If patronage is increased by a better transport system, as has been evidenced in other parts of the world, I cannot see why it would not occur in Western Australia—of course, it would. The matters I have proposed would be one way of resolving our public transport problems. I am certain the Minister and the Government are interested in reducing the deficit of our public transport system.

Mr Brian Burke: He doesn't know how to go about it properly.

Mr McIVER: Again for the benefit of the member for Mundaring—I do not want to grind him into the dirt—I say to him—

Mr Wilson: It is a good idea.

Mr McIVER: I will give the member some idea of what other States are doing in regard to their transport systems. The New South Wales Government recently brought out a special brochure showing its future transport plans. The brochure covers the next five years.

Mr Rushton: They have just had an election.

Mr McIVER: That is right, but this brochure was brought out after the election. I do not think many Liberals are left over there now. I understand that from what I have read in the Press.

Mr O'Connor: There aren't many Labor people left over there either.

Mr McIVER: I beg the Minister's pardon.

Mr O'Connor: It doesn't matter.

Mr McIVER: I think 85 per cent of the members in the New South Wales Parliament are Labor. During the next five years the New South Wales Government will spend \$140 million on improvements to every facet of its transport system.

Mr Rushton: It spends over half a billion dollars a year.

Mr McIVER: During the last five years the New South Wales Government spent \$125 million on suburban passenger carriages for the Sydney metropolitan area. I concede that Sydney's population is much larger than that of Perth, but the fact that the New South Wales Government is providing large sums of money cannot be disputed. During the next five years \$230 million will be spent on suburban passenger carriages.

Mr Rushton: It's not hard to spend money.

Mr Herzfeld: Can you tell us how much they are losing each year?

Mr McIVER: That would be irrelevant; no public transport system in the world shows a profit.

Mr Herzfeld: You are lauding the Minister for cutting down over here.

Mr McIVER: I am running out of patience with the member.

Mr Carr: We all are.

Mr McIVER: I have been fairly tolerant of his interjections, but now he is close to the borderline. The remarks I have made show the amount of money expended on the New South Wales transport system during the last five years in comparison with the amount which will be spent during the next five years. Those figures show that the people of New South Wales want more money spent on their transport system. The people want these improvements. After all, is that not the thing that matters most—what the people want? All people want a modern transport system. We must change our ideas; we must keep up with modern trends. This State is a wonderful place, but we cannot continue with the run-down transport system we presently have. We all must have regard for budgetary restraints; we all know how expensive the improvements will be, but they will not be less expensive next year or the year after.

As the Premier often tells us, at some time, we must bite the bullet, and that is what this Government must do. The electrification of the Midland to Claisebrook rail line would be a starting point. It would provide not only modern transport, but, also a testing ground for further expansion of such an electrification system into other rail lines in Western Australia. We would have a track to test loads and be able to consider electric locomotives for freight transport. We would be able to test carriages and many other things appertaining to the electrification of a rail system, as has been done in England.

I would like the Minister to interject to answer a question I will pose to him. When he recently went to the United Kingdom and Germany—I was interested to read the Press reports he sent back—I wonder whether he went to the Metro Transport System works at Newcastle. I wonder whether Newcastle was on his itinerary so that he could see the testing ground Newcastle has and how the rail system has been electrified to the benefit of ordinary passengers.

Mr Rushton: I have received reports on it, but I only went to the testing station for light rail.

Mr Brian Burke: Did you go or not?

Mr McIVER: I would like the Minister to say whether he went to Newcastle to see the rail system provided there.

Mr Rushton: No, I didn't.

Mr McIVER: The Newcastle testing ground should have been one of the first places he, as the State Minister for Transport, visited while in the United Kingdom.

Mr Brian Burke: Why didn't you go?

Mr McIVER: That was a disaster. If the Minister does go again then I suggest that it should be the first place he visits. Western Australia is many years behind with rail electrification. For example the latest project in Australia is the electrification of the Brisbane suburban network with 144 route kilometres more than half of which is completed. It is double the size of Perth's suburban network, which covers the Midland, Armadale, and Fremantle lines. I have included Fremantle in order to put the matter in perspective.

It is interesting to note that Brisbane has a metropolitan population ratio the same as Perth. No doubt, the Minister has seen the Queensland network.

Mr Rushton: I have travelled on that line and they have told me that they would not have started that now, but they had to go back to a commitment made by a previous Government.

Mr Brian Burke: They would not build the pipeline to Kalgoorlie for water, either.

Mr McIVER: That is a very poor argument because I have already stated that the increased patronage has proven the action they took was correct.

Mr Rushton: They have not even done the tracks yet. They cannot travel over 40 kilometres an hour in some places.

Mr McIVER: For the year ended 30 June 1980 rail journeys in Queensland increased by 2.2 million. The Queensland system has had 28 million passenger journeys per year as opposed to Perth's patronage which has decreased and which was 7.1 million in 1980.

Mr Rushton: It decreased last year, but the population growth rose.

Mr McIVER: If the Minister's argument is valid and if what Queensland has done is wrong then I say to the Minister: Why has the State continued with main line electrification? Western Australia has reached the stage where electrification is needed. In Queensland electrification has been extended to Gladstone and there is design work for the Blackwater area also which is due for completion in December this year.

That decision must have been made when the Minister conferred with his colleagues in Queensland. Irrespective of what the Minister

may have been told, Queensland Cabinet has now decided to increase the electrification concept and extend it to Gladstone.

Mr Rushton: Obviously freight is very attractive to them, as it is to us.

Mr McIVER: Electrification of the Midland line is important to our State. No member of this Parliament should oppose that, irrespective of his party politics. This move would enable us to keep pace with other States in Australia and other parts of the world.

I went to the Perth station the other day to witness the clearance of the suburban service underneath the Beaufort Street bridge. There would be no use my moving a motion of this nature if it could not be implemented because of physical obstructions. Therefore, I sat there for half an hour and I noticed that there would be adequate clearance if an electrified system were constructed. I am referring to the system which has been constructed in Newcastle in the United Kingdom.

While I was there the Bunbury passenger train was departing. I had a good look at it and here we are, in 1981, with an old "X"-class locomotive which we obtained from the UK in 1954. It has been added to at least three times and exhaust fumes and oil leaks were streaming all over the locomotive. I thought to myself that if I had been a visitor from Texas in the United States or South America and observed this Bunbury passenger train, this diesel locomotive, our only country passenger train—

Mr Rushton: That is not our only country passenger train; we have the *Prospector*.

Mr McIVER: That is not diesel.

Mr Rushton: It is a country train.

Mr McIVER: The Minister is becoming like the member for Mundaring—soon we will not be able to tell the difference.

There it was at the station, waiting to depart with oil belching all over it; and this was occurring in 1981!

I happen to know how many times the train has been overhauled. So, that is the condition of the locomotive which is pulling one of our most important trains to the south-west of the State. I thought just how I would feel if I were a visitor to this State. I would have thought, "Good heavens, what a backward State this is when it cannot provide modern transport for people to travel 115 miles!" That must be the impression one would gain and I appeal to members to correct me if my impression is wrong.

Mr Rushton: Did you notice whether the wheels were round or square? In Canada they have square wheels.

Mr McIVER: I did not notice the wheels. All I was hoping to see was that the wheels would turn and take the people to their destination.

Mr Crane: Do you think it would be any good to take the nurses to the dance?

Mr McIVER: They would be on a better loco than that.

Our suburban services are absolutely shocking. It is said that a coat of paint hides a multitude of sins, and it does. One has only to scrape some of the paint work to find one is looking into the dark ages.

The Government must realise it has to do something positive about our transport in this State. It must provide adequate transport in order to induce people to use it. There is no point in our labouring the fact that rail and bus should co-ordinate, etc. We must do something to attract people to use this transport. If we can attract people to our suburban services the deficit will be reduced. It will not be reduced by an increase in bus and rail fares. Governments have tried this for many years and it has not induced people to travel on trains. People have returned to their private modes of transport, especially the motorcar.

Everyone in Western Australia is concerned about the deficit caused by public transport, but the Government has the matter in its own hands. I listened very carefully to the presentation of the Budget speech by the Treasurer in order to ascertain the amount of money allocated for the electrification of our suburban services. He did mention the amount that would be spent, but it had been committed for a number of years and there was no mention of electrification.

Mr Rushton: That would not reduce our deficit.

Mr McIVER: Well the Minister has his views and I have mine. I say that with the electrification of the suburban services patronage would be trebled. That should include the Perth-Fremantle section.

Dr Dadour: Good!

Mr McIVER: The closure of that line was the greatest blunder ever. If that decision could be made again, that line would not be closed. There has been a great deal of flak as a result of the closure of this line. This line should continue.

Dr Dadour: Good sense.

Mr Rushton: We have a modern transport system for Perth.

Mr McIVER: A great deal of money has been spent on inquiries and committees on this subject. The Travers Morgan report was a smoke screen thrown by the people who were involved in the study. I bet London to a brick I know what will be said now in relation to the Perth to Fremantle situation. It will be said that the railway service is not necessary and we must continue with the bus fleet. Of course the Government got into so much hot water over the closure of that line it has to justify its action. There is no doubt that Cabinet members realised that it was a political blunder and it could well be their undoing.

Mr Rushton: The service now is a result of the most advanced decision taken towards the development of an urban transport system.

Mr McIVER: Do not try to fool me with that nonsense. The Minister knows and I know so he should not put up a further smoke screen.

Apparently I did not make the costing situation clear for some members and there are two points in my motion which require clarification. The first is the very important factor of cost, and the second relates to the Midland Workshops. Apparently the Minister said that there were two facets which should be considered with the cost. He emphasised that because of the cost my proposal could not be implemented in a practical way, especially with regard to the Midland Workshops. I was not present so I cannot say word for word what took place; however, I will assume what has taken place. When one has been in this place for as long as I have, one has some knowledge of what takes place in regard to a private member's motion.

Mr Herzfeld: You are wrong again.

Mr McIVER: If I am wrong, the honourable member will have an opportunity to state his views when he speaks. I hope that he makes a better hash of it—

Mr Herzfeld: —than you do!

Mr McIVER: —than when he spoke to the motion about the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway line. I hope that his knowledge has improved since then.

I want to come back to the three stages I have referred to, with particular emphasis on the cost factor. Stage 1 is the most important part. The Perth to Claisebrook route is only 14.3 route kilometres or 29 single track kilometres, based on the EI-rail report, and for the edification of the Minister, I am referring to pages 31 and 32. The assessed costs are as follows—

	\$
Grid substation transmission	650 000
Transform Westrail substation	300 000
Feeder station and track section in cabins	100 000
Supervisory control equipment	50 000
Total	1 100 000

A lousy \$1.1 million! Good heavens, some punters spend that at a race meeting! The Premier has just come back from York. I do not know how much he spent there.

Mr Crane: He went by train.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr McIVER: I seek leave of the House to continue my speech at a later stage of the sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

RAILWAYS

Electrification: Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR McIVER (Avon) [7.30 p.m.]: Prior to the tea suspension I emphasised the cost aspect of the electrification of the Midland to Perth railway line. Of course, the whole crux of the motion relates to costs, because whenever a proposal is put forward, the Government asks what it will cost.

I shall now quote the Government's own figures for the cost involved in electrifying the line to which I have just referred. I mentioned earlier that the cost of a grid substation and transmission was \$650 000 and I went on to say the transformer, feeder stations, and supervisory control equipment would amount to a total of \$1 100 000. The overhead equipment for 31 kilometres of single track would amount to \$70 000 a kilometre.

The member for Mundaring interjected previously and referred to the cost per kilometre of electrification. At that time I asked him to be patient, and I have now given him the figure for which he asked.

The eight booster transformers at \$280 000 each would cost \$2 240 000 and the cost of signalling, communications, and the provision for Telecom immunisation works is \$2 608 000.

We come now to the civil engineering costs. Additional crossovers for single line work would amount to \$42 000 and over bridge protection

screening would cost \$50 000. Those two figures produce a total cost of \$92 000, bringing the construction cost to \$6 050 000. In State Budget terms, that figure is not great and it is important members realise the figures I have quoted are the Government's own estimate of the costs involved.

One shudders when one considers purchasing electrical appliances for one's home and the same situation applies when one considers the costs involved in railway electrification.

Mr Herzfeld: Do those figures include the cost of the railcars? They would be over and above the costs to which you have referred, wouldn't they?

Mr McIVER: That interjection shows the ignorance of the member for Mundaring. If he reads the motion, he will see we are talking about electrifying the Perth to Midland section of the railway line. It has nothing to do with railcars.

Mr Herzfeld: You have to provide railcars, if you are going to electrify it.

Mr McIVER: The Government has just purchased railcars and they will be here in a couple of months' time. It takes nothing to modify those railcars for electrification purposes. All one needs to do is take off the top and install the electrics.

Mr Herzfeld: I do not agree.

Mr McIVER: The member for Mundaring does not agree, because he is ignorant and does not know the position.

Mr Herzfeld: I do not agree it costs nothing, but those railcars are over and above the ones you have already.

Mr McIVER: No, I am talking about the railcars the Government has purchased already.

Mr Herzfeld: But they have not arrived yet.

Mr McIVER: No, they have not arrived yet.

Mr Herzfeld: They will be used on the other lines also. What will you do about that?

Mr McIVER: Those railcars do not have to be utilised on the other lines.

Mr Herzfeld: You will have to order extra railcars for the other lines.

Mr McIVER: No, that is not the case. The only reason the Government ordered the new railcars was that the old ones were so antiquated that they had to be taken out of the fleet. I am told the member for Mundaring will follow me in this debate. That brightens me more than ever!

Mr O'Connor: So it should.

Mr McIVER: That brightens me more than a consideration of the antiquated situation of our transport system!

Mr Herzfeld: Personal abuse does not help your argument at all.

Mr McIVER: The member for Mundaring is talking about something with which he is not familiar. I am referring to the electrification of the Perth to Midland section of the railway line. I am not talking about railcars. If the member for Mundaring intends to make a contribution, he should read the motion.

I referred previously to a figure of just over \$6 million. The provision of contingency and other charges would bring the total cost to \$6.92 million. It should be noted the costing was based on experience and the work was to be carried out on contract. It was not to be done by Westrail.

I have referred to the Government's own figures, but I cannot get that through to the member for Mundaring. If he has any complaints about the matter, he should refer them to the Minister for Transport, because I have quoted the Government's own figures.

Earlier I referred to the position in Queensland and I made a valid point about the work which is being done there. The electrification of the Darra to Ipswich suburban line in Brisbane which was opened on 22 September 1980 resulted in a cost of \$9 million for 23 route kilometres.

Therefore, even if electrification were to cost \$9 million, one does not need to do it in one bite. It could be done in two bites, but as long as the operation is started and the concept is agreed to, progress will be made in this direction. In State Budget terms, a figure of \$9 million is peanuts.

Mr Young: You reckon Joh is doing a good job, do you?

Mr McIVER: In answer to the interjection of the Minister for Health, I say the Queensland Government is doing a fantastic job as far as the transport system is concerned, because it realises it is essential to electrify the railway line if a reduction in the deficit created by public transport is to be achieved. Every other State in Australia is taking steps in this direction also. We are so far behind the other States that we should be ashamed of ourselves.

Mr Young: I will write to Joh and tell him that.

Mr McIVER: I had the privilege to meet with Joh and I told him that a while ago. He thought I was a wonderful man.

Sir Charles Court: Be careful!

Mr McIVER: The figure I have just quoted for the electrification of the Darra to Ipswich line included a number of items which will not be necessary on the Perth to Midland line. Those items included the construction of two road

overbridges and the installation of the colour light signalling which was necessary in Brisbane. We do not need to do that, because we have CCE control already. Items of track improvements were necessary in Brisbane also, but they will not be required here.

In addition, power supplies came from the next section of track and transformer costs were not included in that figure. On a similar basis, therefore, the cost for the electrification of the Perth to Midland line would be only \$5.48 million. If that sum of money were allocated to transport, we would have electrification of the Perth to Midland line. We would have a testing track for locomotives of various types.

We should face the fact that we will have to go into electrification sooner or later. The Government made a blunder when it purchased the "N"-class locomotives at a cost of millions of dollars. Even today those locomotives cannot pull a maximum load. They were purchased as bulk locomotives to carry huge tonnages of freight, but they have not given that sort of service. Half the time they are broken down and are being serviced in the workshops, but the Government spent several million dollars on them.

Had the Government put the sum of money it spent on "N"-class locomotives into electrification, it would have been much further ahead. However, it listened to the people who are saying now, "Do not go in for electrification". I ask members: Are the people who cost the Government millions of dollars in the purchase of these locomotives the right sort of people to whom to listen in regard to electrification? It would be more sensible if the Government were to give electrification a trial.

I hope this matter is debated in the Cabinet room. It is clear that a motion such as this, which has been moved by an Opposition member, will not be carried in the Parliament. It would be too much to ask the Government to give an Opposition member a little kudos by accepting a motion such as this. However, at least the Government should consider this matter and take advice from people other than those who provided information on the "N"-class locomotives which have been nothing but an embarrassment and have resulted in extra cost to the Government.

Members should realise—I am sure the member for Mundaring does not—that 151 of Westrail's locomotives which haul 21.4 million tonnes a year in Western Australia are electrically driven. These figures are accurate and I challenge any member of the House to say they are not. Of necessity each of these locomotives

suffers the disadvantage of having a small power house mounted on top, with the associated diesel motors, generators, control gear, fuelling, wider radiators, fans, etc. Had the member for Mundaring been patient, he need not have interjected, because I intended to explain the difference between the two types of locomotives.

The complexity of these locomotives has resulted in the staff of Westrail gaining much expertise in this area. No-one can deny that skill in electric traction is available at the Midland Workshops. There is expertise also in power distribution and structural work as can be seen from an examination of the bridges built and the rolling stock produced. No-one can deny the expertise which is available at the Midland Workshops.

A few members may feel the staff at Midland Workshops have limited ability and may not be able to do the job. They may say that the work should be done by a private contractor at great cost. That is utter nonsense. We should put the record straight and look at the matter in the correct perspective from the outset.

If the Midland Workshops are utilised it will save at least 25 per cent of the cost. Let us see why. For the benefit of members of this Chamber, I indicate the Midland Workshops are the largest engineering workshops in the State and employ over 2 000 people. They have a staff of design engineers including electrical chemists, metallurgists, etc. They melt steel and iron and most alloys, hot forges, heavy steel, and produce most of the rail crossings, welded rails, and steel railway bridges in the whole of the State. There is only one bridge in Western Australia that was not constructed by the Midland Workshops and that was the North Fremantle rail bridge. Every other rail bridge in Western Australia has been constructed by our own design engineers at the Midland Workshops. Material and maintenance and virtually everything that moves on rails is constructed or rebuilt at Midland as is heavy lifting equipment like cranes, forklifts, trucks, etc.

Sir Charles Court: I am trying to follow your remarks about every railway bridge being built at the Midland Workshops.

Mr McIVER: I am talking about the steel that was provided for that bridge—the actual material.

Sir Charles Court: I do not think it applied in the standard gauge project which was all done by outside contractors.

Mr McIVER: Most of it was constructed at Midland. The orders for those bridges came through Midland. The only one that was not

constructed by the Midland Workshops was the North Fremantle railway bridge.

Sir Charles Court: I would be surprised about that.

Mr McIVER: I am not talking about north of the 26th parallel which does not concern Westrail. There are private companies up there such as Mt. Newman, Goldsworthy, and Robe River which have their own private railways and many of the materials are ordered from Midland. This is a very important part of the motion. Remember the war days with the Americans based here and the steam-run flotillas that left Fremantle? When the propellers were damaged, where were they repaired and new ones constructed? Can anybody tell me that? Can I give a clue? The Midland Workshops!

Mr Davies: You surprise us!

Mr McIVER: The "S"-class locomotives are made at the Midland Workshops, as are the wildflower rail class diesels which go to the country stations, east, west, north, and south. Even the Speaker worked there at one time and exercised his knowledge. I am open to correction there, but I understand he worked there at some time.

The SPEAKER: The member is wrong. I sold newspapers there.

Mr McIVER: No doubt the Speaker picked up some knowledge there.

Mr Old: Did you have a good clientele?

Mr McIVER: I could go on and bore everybody to death and give a lot of detail regarding the workshops, but this is one of the most important factors. Those workshops are not being utilised enough and have not been since the Liberal Government came into power in Western Australia. They have been allowed to run down and deteriorate.

Mr Herzfeld: The Government has just spent \$5 million on updating them.

Mr McIVER: Do not get carried away with all that rubbish.

Sir Charles Court: Are you correct in making that statement? It is not like Mr McIver to be unfair because the Government has not only brought in at the request of Westrail some expert advice on the reorganisation of the Government side, but is also committed to a programme of considerable magnitude.

Mr McIVER: I appreciate that, but to get the return for all that money the Government has allocated to the Midland Workshops, it should be given greater priority and more productivity should be created. The Premier knows that when

an apprentice goes through the Midland Workshops he may be in a school of 10 but not all of them get a job. The cream remain and the rest must seek employment elsewhere. Only the cream is kept.

This is an instrumentality that is not being utilised to its fullest, but, as my motion suggests, it will have to construct the stanchions and the overhead apparatus, and the overall costs will be reduced by a further 25 per cent. I am talking about electrification. The electrical side of it is very important—the large transformers, the high voltage lines, cable, and switch gear. Most electrical equipment including that at Forrestfield is constructed by electrical designers. The rewinding of motors, large and small, is done through electrical design.

I want to remind the Deputy Premier, who is not here now, that several years ago he drove an electrically-controlled locomotive from the trackside at Midland. It was fully electric, so he is one who knows the capacities of our Midland Workshops. The Government always highlights them in brochures when it has something to do with Westrail. I will get to that in a moment. One of the main aspects which is highlighted in brochures is the Midland Workshops and the apprentices they employ and the opportunities and inducements that are provided, but when the Government comes to something of great magnitude where the workshops can be of benefit the Government sidesteps the workshops and the work goes to a private contractor at double the cost. That is a very valid point in relation to the motion I am moving in this House tonight.

Let us have a look at our fleet. In Western Australia we have 72 suburban railcars. Of those, 22 were produced in England, 10 were built at Bassendean by Commonwealth Engineering, and the remaining 40, including 10 ADX power cars, were designed and built at Midland Junction, going back to the steam days and to what was known then as the *Westland Express*. With the advance of time and technology and the introduction of the standard gauge we now have the *Indian Pacific*. Every one of the *Westland* coaches was constructed at Midland Workshops. Can any member tell me he has the knowledge and knowhow to construct items of that nature? What would it be to them to construct stanchions for electrification of the Perth to Midland line? It would be chicken feed. They would be turned out like meat being put through a mincer. I trust that when this motion is replied to whoever is replying does not tell me that because of the cost we cannot have this proposal in our State as that would be ridiculous and would mean that the

Government is not even interested in the facts that have been presented and that it does not know the actual situation, nor does it want to know.

I feel I have covered quite clearly and succinctly the point that the Midland Workshops have the capacity, expertise, and the men to do the job. With a contract such as I have mentioned, it would need more employees so that then greater employment would be provided for apprentices as well as for new recruits. Something would then be done in a positive way to help the unemployment situation of this State. If the Government does not want to do that and does not want to look at the problem, let it continue in the present manner. We are floating along from day to day, month to month, and year to year, getting behind every other State in Australia and every other country in the world. Speaking as a true Western Australian and with the privilege of standing in this Parliament, I will not be a part of that. I want to be a part of something where Western Australia can go forward in greater strides and provide something really positive for its people.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr McIVER: I conclude on that point about the Midland Workshops. It must be noted that because it does not work on profit margins or pay sales or company tax Westrail could do the job for 25 per cent less than could private contractors. It would be false economy to pay \$5 million when in fact the job could be done for \$4 million or \$4.5 million under the conditions I have strongly outlined to this House.

What I have covered so far in support of my motion is what I would refer to as stage one. Let us take it further and examine stage two. This applies to the actual railcars themselves which would run on this line and would be utilised by passengers and for testing purposes to determine the requirements of future generations.

This matter is of such basic importance that I wish I could get through to the Government how necessary it is. The Government must take these two factors into account. No doubt the Government plans to put the Perth railway station underground during the next 20 years, and therefore, Westrail should purchase railcars which will be suitable for an underground system. It is no good purchasing railcars which will be redundant within 10 years' time because they do not meet our requirements.

We have physical obstacles to consider, such as the Beaufort Street bridge. There is no such obstacle at the entrance to the cities of Adelaide,

Melbourne, or Sydney. However, we are saddled with the bridge and, although we must have regard for it, it is not an insurmountable problem.

The El-rail report recommended two systems which would be suitable for Perth. I come back to my point that these systems were not recommended by me; they were recommended by the people who prepared the El-rail report and who were paid thousands of dollars by the Government to do so.

In Brisbane EMU trains, with a top speed of 100 kilometres an hour, are used. The cost for a three-car set is \$1.8 million. We would need seven sets for the Midland to Perth service, so the total cost would be \$12.6 million.

I do not want members to become confused with these figures. Earlier I referred to a cost of \$5 million for electrification, and I am now speaking about the purchase of railcars to run on that electrified section, and I repeat that the railcars would cost \$12.6 million.

I return to my earlier remarks. Newcastle in Great Britain was in a situation similar to ours. That city purchased Tyne and Wear electric railcars. I have here a document showing these units, and I will table it if members wish.

Newcastle has a population similar to that of Perth, and its transport system now co-ordinates all methods. Unlike the tinpot study which was conducted into our transport system by Travers Morgan Pty. Ltd.—and we all know what the conclusion of the Travers Morgan report will be—the study into the transport problems of Newcastle was a wide-ranging one. I ask members to look at the size of the railway station depicted in this pamphlet. The system has been implemented for about 12 months only. Here we see a man kissing his wife; he is so excited to get on the train.

Mr Old: He is so excited about getting away, I should say!

Mr McIVER: No, he is so pleased about getting on the train, he is giving his wife a farewell kiss! We could create even better relations between men and their wives if we instituted such a system!

Mr Herzfeld: That is Newcastle in England, is it?

Mr McIVER: It is certainly not Newcastle, New South Wales.

Mr Herzfeld: Do the people live on quarter-acre blocks there?

Mr McIVER: I am amazed at the member for Mundaring. He must believe that the English people have the lovely wide open spaces that are

enjoyed by the residents of the Darling Range. The residents of Newcastle, England, would be lucky to be able to plant a few cabbages in their backyards.

Mr Herzfeld: What is the population?

Mr McIVER: The population of Newcastle is practically the same as is the population of Perth.

Mr Herzfeld: But does it have the same density?

Mr McIVER: We want to accept that the Government is trying to resolve the problem. The Opposition is as keen as the Government to reduce the deficit on public transport and to provide a good service. I believe the Government is trying to do its best, but its best will not be good enough if it decides to continue with our present antiquated system.

When the Western Australian Government introduced the bus-to-rail system, I mentioned the Tyne and Wear unit which is shown in this pamphlet. Businessmen now utilise the Newcastle service, and it is operating at full capacity. It has very modern stations, and the disabled do not have steps with which to contend. Our Government is undertaking tests at the moment in an endeavour to help the disabled. The idea is to take a few seats out of a bus so that wheelchairs can be accommodated. Such a problem does not arise with railcars. Seats are provided for the disabled, as well as room for a folded-up wheelchair. Disabled people can travel in comfort. Unfortunately that does not happen here. Many disabled people do not attend functions they would like to attend because of their fear of using the buses. They do not like to cause inconvenience to other people because of their disability.

The Government's idea of taking out a few seats here and there is a waste of time and money. Every other State seems to understand the problems of the disabled and they are coping with them.

I say to members that the time to go forward is now—not in next year's Budget or in the Budget of the year after that, but now.

I would like to refer to the situation in other States. Victoria has a Liberal Party Government, although I do not know for how long that situation will remain. From all reports it will change at the next election.

Mr Nanovich: It has not been there for very long, has it?

Mr McIVER: Although temporary, it is in charge of the Treasury bench.

Mr Clarko: It has been in office for only 26 years!

Mr McIVER: It has been in office long enough to see the folly of its way. It realises that public transport is a very important issue. Does the member for Karrinyup realise that the Victorian Government is providing free transport for every man, woman, and child over the Christmas period?

Mr Clarko: Do you think there is an election coming?

Mr McIVER: The honourable member said it—not I. The Liberal Government is hanging on with two hands, and like a man hanging onto a cliff, its fingers are slipping.

I would like members to look at the pamphlet which is put out by Vicrail and which is called "New Generation". In its wisdom the Victorian Government is providing the people of Victoria with modern cars and an electrified suburban system. If members look at the illustrations they will see that the railcars and the stations are a great improvement on our antiquated facilities. I realise that our old equipment is doing a wonderful job, but surely the people of the State deserve something better.

Mr Clarko: Do you realise that there are three times as many people in the metropolitan area of Melbourne, which I gather is smaller than the metropolitan area of Perth?

Mr McIVER: I am talking about what should be done. I am helping the Government. I am giving it ideas that could salvage it. Government members should commend me. We know there will be a landslide—

Sir Charles Court: Be careful! Big Brother will have a talk to you!

Mr McIVER: I have referred already to Queensland and the system in New South Wales which was implemented at a cost of \$140 million. I have also referred members to the latest brochure put out by Vicrail. I am too ashamed to show members the brochure put out by Westrail. However, I will show members a brochure which is strong support for the motion I have moved tonight. It is headed "Progress and Achievement" and it illustrates that there has been progress and achievement.

This brochure was prepared for the inauguration of the *Indian Pacific* service, the standard gauge railway from Sydney to Perth. This service was a wonderful achievement for everyone concerned with the project, and a great step forward for our State. It means not only that we have for our freight a standard gauge railway connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but also that we have a similar service for passengers. I am sure members can all recall the old days

when passengers travelling to Sydney had to change trains at Kalgoorlie, again at Port Pirie, and then again at Adelaide. The passengers were giddy with all this changing. The *Indian Pacific* was certainly an achievement, and the title of the pamphlet is fitting.

Sir Charles Court: You missed out one little bit though. Magnificent as the service is, it is magnificent only when it runs. There has been a fair bit of industrial trouble, and I imagine that you, as an old railway man, would be worried stiff about the present experience of the travelling public on this line.

Mr McIVER: The Premier has raised a pertinent point, and I will not duck from the question he posed. He is 100 per cent correct. The railway workers must realise that they must consider seriously the whole matter if the service is to continue. It seems to me that the problems arise in the Eastern States. The Premier is right; I am very concerned about the industrial situation, and the fact that the service could be curtailed or even eliminated. The cost of running such a magnificent service is very high, but as I do not know the real basis of the problem, I cannot comment. However, I have noted the Premier's remarks and I agree with him wholeheartedly. Sensible discussions must take place. It stands out like a neon sign that if the service is to continue something will have to be done.

Mr Bertram: The scheme was nearly aborted because this Government did not provide proper arbitration procedures.

Sir Charles Court: In fairness to Westrail employees, I indicate that in my experience practically all the stoppages have originated either in the South Australian sector or in New South Wales.

Mr McIVER: That is so.

Sir Charles Court: There seems to be some cankerous growth there. I would like to feel the local people are working on them because the whole system will fail if they continue as they are.

Mr McIVER: I agree that there must be much closer liaison between the Western Australian union and the unions in other States.

Western Australian people will be affected adversely if the service is curtailed. That applies not only in regard to the *Indian Pacific* service, but also in regard to the new container ship-to-rail system to the Eastern States.

Mr Speaker, if you will allow me to digress for a moment, I would like to make a most important point. We must do something about better liaison.

This is vital not only for our people, but also for the economy of Western Australia.

Mr Davies: Is not the South Australian railway under Commonwealth control?

Mr McIVER: It comes under the national railways system, but there also has been a great deal of industrial trouble in New South Wales.

The Government always has been very proud of its stainless steel railcars. We must remember the stainless steel component of those cars was designed and built in the Midland Workshops. In addition, the wagons operating throughout Western Australia, whether they be carrying wheat, minerals, or other commodities were all designed and constructed at the Midland Workshops. All the heavy electrical equipment so necessary in an instrumentality such as Westrail was completed at the Midland Workshops.

My motion seeks to allow the Midland Workshops to design the equipment necessary to electrify the Midland-Claisebrook section of the line. I am sure the workshops will supply the goods at far less cost than any outside firm could charge.

In presenting arguments in support of my motion, I have strongly emphasised the cost factor. If we consider the matter overall, and in depth, we see the electrification of our system will not cost a great deal of money. When we add together the cost of all the inquiries, and the money which the Government has loaned to various people and which has gone down the drain—I know Governments must be involved in such activities—we realise we could have commenced electrification of the line two years ago, and it would have been in operation today.

I appreciate the Minister for Transport is not here tonight; I know he has ministerial commitments.

Mr Herzfeld: He was here before the suspension of the sitting for tea.

Mr McIVER: I realise that; we had a cross-Chamber conversation on several points.

Mr Hodge: He is probably out closing another line!

Mr McIVER: I hope the Minister examines the report of my speech in *Hansard* and makes an appropriate reply.

I have presented the cost aspect of the electrification of our system in three stages: Firstly, the cost of construction; secondly, the cost of railcars running over the section; and, thirdly, the actual cost of the electricity. It is estimated the cost of electricity on the Midland-Claisebrook line would be about \$700 000. Members opposite no doubt will say, "Where is the money coming

from? How can we afford it when we have requirements for water and power in other areas?" We must make a start. If a person wants to build a trellis on his property and his budget does not allow him to do it in one year, he puts it off until the following year. If he is unable to afford it the following year, he puts it off again. However, there comes a time when he must make a firm decision. There comes a time when he must, to use the Premier's own phrase, "bite the bullet". We are talking now about public transport. It may cost the Government money initially, but it will have the effect of reducing Westrail's deficit. Therefore the allocation of budgetary funds is fully warranted and justifiable. I do not think the taxpayers of Western Australia would oppose such a scheme if they knew in the long term that after the expenditure of the money they would be provided with a modern and comfortable transport system.

Over the past five years, New South Wales has spent \$1 000 million on its public transport system, and plans to spend a further \$1 400 million over the next five to 10 years. This public transport investment programme has been approved by the New South Wales Government for the State rail authority and the Urban Transit Authority of New South Wales.

In the absence of the Minister for Transport, I ask the Premier: What transport plan does his Government have over the next five years, having full regard for the budgetary restraints forced upon this State by the Federal Government? I can answer that question for the Premier: We do not have such a plan.

Sir Charles Court: I do not think you are right there.

Mr McIVER: I heard the Premier's Budget speech. I accept that he mentioned Koolyanobbing, but that project has been planned for several years. His Government does not have a comprehensive and decisive five-year plan designed to improve the transport system of Western Australia.

Sir Charles Court: You are quite wrong there. In fact, for the first time in 50 years a Government of Western Australia has a comprehensive transport policy which includes a very important role for Westrail. I think you would appreciate the role we have given Westrail is the logical one which will enable it to perform best as part of a total transport system. Although you, like myself, have an affection for the railways, we must consider the matter as part of a total transport complex.

Mr McIVER: I appreciate the points made by the Premier. However, he omitted the important word "electrification".

Sir Charles Court: We have a programme for electrification.

Mr McIVER: I will be on the pension by then!

Sir Charles Court: That will not be very long, either; you are an old soldier.

Mr McIVER: I am talking not about the parliamentary pension, but about the Department of Social Security pension.

Sir Charles Court: I do not want to get personal, but your colleagues seem to think you are getting a little old.

Mr McIVER: That may be so, but sometimes one must try to prove people wrong.

Mr Laurance: There is life in the old dog yet!

Mr Watt: There are not many of the young Turks here tonight.

Mr McIVER: I would hate to see this State falling further behind in the field of transport. I do not believe our State Minister has been given the correct advice; insufficient attention has been given to the possibility of electrifying our rail system. I firmly believe the very word frightens the Government; it thinks it will cost millions of dollars. In actual fact, of course, I have proved tonight that the cost will be minimal.

My motion also seeks to electrify the Collie-Bunbury railway line. I have chosen that line for a particular reason. It is quite apparent that the Bunbury region is set to expand; even the member for Bunbury would agree with me on that point. A power house is to be constructed at Bunbury, and will consume enormous quantities of coal.

Mr P. V. Jones: You are aware we are looking at a slurry pipeline for that project, are you not?

Mr McIVER: I understood from answers to questions I asked in this House that the coal would be railed from Collie to Bunbury, and that contracts had already been entered into to that effect.

Mr P. V. Jones: Let me assure you it has not been decided, and no contracts have been let.

Mr McIVER: Then the Government has been misleading Parliament, which does not surprise me.

Mr P. V. Jones: Some work has been done which has caused a slight delay to the line and the pipeline; however, it is an option which is being studied.

Mr McIVER: So, what the Minister is telling me is that his answers to my questions contain deliberate lies. This is very interesting. All the

correspondence I have on this matter and the answers I have received from the Minister have pointed to the fact that the coal would be carried by Westrail from Collie to Bunbury. It is in *Hansard*. Members will appreciate that the member for Collie gave me a few nudges to ask questions on this matter to have the situation clarified.

I appreciate that the Minister for Mines may not be aware of the transportation factor. However, I feel Parliament has been misled, and I ask the Minister to check the matter.

Mr Carr: It is nothing unusual for Parliament to be misled.

Mr McIVER: This is a serious situation, involving as it does a mammoth project, and the Opposition would be failing in its responsibility if it did not investigate the matter.

As I say, my motion seeks the electrification of the Collie-Bunbury line because we believed massive amounts of coal would be transported from Collie to Bunbury. It is of no use our talking about a direct Kwinana to Bunbury line, because it would involve the expenditure of millions of dollars. The electrification of the Perth-Bunbury line would include the East Perth bridge, which is due to fall down in a few years, and the Government would be looking at millions of dollars in constructing bridges and so on. That would be looking years ahead. We could electrify the Collie-Bunbury line at far less cost and obtain an almost immediate return on capital because of the tonnages involved. I am amazed at the situation the Minister for Mines has revealed tonight.

I first mentioned the electrification of the Midland-Perth line in order to provide access to the Midland Workshops for the preliminary test run on the assembly and to prepare the programmes and it can be seen that here we have the two situations incorporated. We have the test line so we can order and purchase the right locomotives for the job of carrying large tonnages.

It is no use anyone taking someone else's opinion as happened when the Government purchased the "N"-class locomotives, a move which cost the State thousands of dollars and which was a complete failure. This also happened with the ASG's. The Queensland Government did not want them. We accepted them, and on that occasion a Labor Government was involved. What a catastrophe that was. Then we purchased the "X"-class locomotives. They had a marine engine, not a locomotive engine. They cost us millions of dollars and the people had to pay for this mistake.

With this short section of track we would have the right traction and the right locomotives from the beginning. The money normally set aside for diesel locomotive replacements could be channelled into the construction of proven electric locomotives. Those diesel locomotives now being used could be used as replacements elsewhere. When the farmers have very heavy harvests—which we hope will continue—these locomotives could be used to haul the extra grain. This would provide greater income to the transport industry. We should replace those with our electric locomotives. I shall continue quoting from this document as follows—

There is therefore little if any additional money involved in the provision of locomotives. The present Government has provided for \$16m for additions and replacement locomotives in its 1980 Land Freight Transport Policy—part of these are on order in South Australia.

We know that. In addition to that the Government would have to electrify some sections of the line. There would be no better place to start than the line between Collie and Bunbury, especially considering its gradient and the tonnages involved. To continue—

Additional capital cost of the overhead wires, transformers, switching stations and signal systems where necessary would in reality be recovered by savings in fuel oil and reduced operating costs.

While we use electric locomotives we continue to reduce costs. This is what we should be trying to do all the time. To continue—

To this must be added the shipments materials from production and operation of the Worsley Alumina Refinery now under construction.

The opportunity to significantly reduce the transport cost of coal will contribute to a more stabilised electricity tariff.

That is also very vital and something to which the people planning the Government's transport policies have not given one iota of consideration. To continue—

Steps will be taken to ensure that locomotives are easily convertible at a later stage for Standard Gauge use.

When the Government purchases these for the Collie-Bunbury line on the future standard gauge—it is inevitable this will come to our State because of our continued growth—they can be converted when we want to extend the line to the

agricultural areas, which are very vital areas of the State.

I will take this opportunity to mention Westrail's 1980 annual report. I point out to the Premier that it is a very glossy document produced each year. However, it contains very little information whilst obviously costing a lot of money to produce. If we compare it with the report of Queensland's Commissioner for Railways we find there is a marked difference between the two. The Queensland report is just a few pages of plain printing, which is all that is necessary. It contains all the information one would want without the need of a glossy cover. It contains maps of the whole network of rail throughout that State. It uses just ordinary pieces of paper which our Government Printer could knock out in a couple of days. However, every year we have these glossy-covered reports from various departments. They look nice and they are good to give to children at schools so that they can use the pictures in them. However, they contain very little information. If the Government copied the Queensland report it could save thousands of dollars. I commend the Queensland Government for the production of this document. I shall continue quoting as follows—

In the 1980 Westrail Annual Report, which is intentionally lacking in detailed information of public spending, the total operating expenditure is \$203 767 518 per annum for a total train kilometres run of 11 758 516 i.e. \$17.33 per train kilometres.

This figure is sufficiently acceptable to show the financial savings per year on the Collie-Bunbury line.

British Railways who for many years have had experience with both diesel and electric railways, state that the savings due to electrification after allowing for the capital charges for electrification are 31% of diesel operation.

I am quoting from this document because I cannot recall all the figures involved and it is important I relate them accurately to the House. To continue—

Yearly there are approx. 3 000 trains between Bunbury and Brunswick and 5 400 trains between Brunswick and Collie.

The total train kilometres is 300 000 and the yearly saving is $300\,000 \times \$5.37 = \1.611 million on present traffic. Conservatively, \$1.5m after paying for everything.

With increase in traffic this would double to a \$3m advantage per year over the present system.

Every year that this line is not electrified is wasting a potential \$1.5m which has to be recovered in freight charges or from the taxpayer.

Would not our farmers love some of this money? Each year we have submissions from our rural people—and justly so—asking for help in the freight on grain. Here we have the Government's own figures which must surely be of interest to them. I cannot emphasise too strongly that these are the Government's figures. To continue—

The efficiency and growth of the service will be such that employment in the Bunbury area will not be reduced, but rather increased.

Electrification on this line will enable Westrail to fully evaluate different classes of locomotives under actual working conditions. This would ensure that the system chosen for the Perth-Bunbury line would be the best for W.A. conditions.

We have our test lines and our initial cost is taken care of. If the engines prove to be unsatisfactory the Government need not buy that type when it electrifies the line, which the Premier has indicated is part of the Government's future programme. To continue—

The overhead power system should be funded by the mining companies.

Perhaps they could contribute in some way. If the companies know they will have an efficient transport system they may well be prepared to contribute in a fashion similar to that of the companies in the Pilbara.

I have endeavoured to show why it is necessary for my motion to be agreed to. I have tried to demonstrate why it is necessary to electrify the Collie-Bunbury line. I know my motion will not be carried, but at least people responsible to the Government for transport in this State can study my remarks in depth through the courtesy of *Hansard*. I hope the Government takes steps very soon to electrify the Midland-Perth line and the Collie-Bunbury line.

I challenge any Government member to say the figures I have quoted are exaggerated and without foundation. They are Government figures and were provided by the EI-rail report.

If nothing else, I trust I have been able to give members of the Chamber an indication of the important factors illustrating why other States of this nation and other countries of the world are

electrifying their railway lines. I strongly recommend that the Government supports my motion.

Mr CARR: I formally second the motion.

Point of Order

Mr HERZFELD: I ask the member for Avon to table the documents from which he was quoting earlier.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nanovich): I ask the member to place on the table the documents involved.

The documents were placed on the Table of the House for the information of members.

Debate on Motion Resumed

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [8.44 p.m.]: At the outset I will remind the House of the contents of the motion, because it has been some time since the member who moved it started to speak. The motion contains three parts: the first asks the House to agree to the electrification of the Collie-Bunbury line; the second asks for the electrification of the Midland-Perth line, and for the House to acknowledge that the construction and electrification of the overhead wiring system should be carried out by the Midland Workshops; and the third is that the work should be completed in 12 months.

I do not intend to make many comments about the proposal for electrification of the Collie to Bunbury railway line. I do not know whether present economics would allow for the electrification of that line. I do not dispute with the member for Avon the capabilities of the workers and engineers at the Midland Workshops. I do not doubt the work to which he referred could be done by those people, but I do not know whether it would be done as economically as elsewhere. That matter will have to be decided. I want to comment upon the proposal to electrify the Perth to Midland railway line, and put another complexion on some of the figures the member quoted in justification of his call for that electrification.

As I understood the member, he gave three reasons for the line being electrified. The first reason was that it would conserve energy; the second that it would reduce the financial deficit of our urban railway system; and the third that it would increase patronage of that service. I will deal with each reason in turn.

The conservation of energy aspect is a matter which has been debated on a number of occasions at some length in this House. If the member had

referred to debates which took place in this House in 1979 he would have obtained ample evidence from the material provided by the Minister for Transport and others to show that if we are concerned to conserve energy the last thing we would want to do is to run more trains. If we want the best and most efficient use of our energy reserves, we should close our urban railway service and bring in buses.

Mr McIver: I want to interject and ask—

Mr HERZFELD: I should not allow you to.

Mr McIver:—why it is that every other State in Australia—and you must concede this point—is spending millions of dollars on the construction and expansion of electrification facilities.

Mr HERZFELD: Perth differs in many ways from other capital cities.

Mr McIver: That's rubbish!

Mr HERZFELD: It differs in many ways, such as population densities, total population, and commuting habits of the public. I have mentioned only some of the differences. I want to return to that matter later.

The member raised examples of railway electrification in Newcastle, England, and in Queensland, with the Blackwater to Gladstone railway line electrification. I will deal with those examples later.

In regard to the conservation of energy, I believe the House was conclusively persuaded at another time that if we wanted to conserve energy we should close down all urban railways. The necessary usage—the patronage—for the maintenance of those railways does not exist at present. I will not refer to the closure of the Fremantle to Perth railway line.

Mr McIver: You had better not start on that.

Mr HERZFELD: There was sufficient justification for that closure. I support the Government's forward-thinking policy which resulted in keeping open the lines to Midland and Armadale to allow for the potential for patronage growth. That policy was forward looking and wise. By referring to previous debates I can put to rest the proposition that electrification will conserve energy. Energy can be used efficiently or inefficiently. If we run large trains empty we will not save energy; it is better to run small vehicles in order to conserve energy.

Mr McIver: So you mean to say those learned men all over the world don't know what they are talking about?

Mr HERZFELD: I have said enough on the matter of energy conservation, because it is one of

the fringe matters. As was rightly pointed out by the member for Avon the main point in this debate is the cost of electrification. I was glad to hear that the ALP spokesman on transport matters is interested in reducing the financial deficit of Western Australia's public transport system. His attitude is commendable, and certainly it is the attitude of the Government and back-bench members on this side of the House. I found inconsistent some of the remarks the member made later. To illustrate that I refer to the Budget recently brought down by the Treasurer. At page 108 the Estimates deal with the metropolitan rail system, and laid out are the costs of and income from that system which is now only two-thirds the size it was two years ago. The figures are very revealing. The gross expenditure for operating the system last year was \$14.5 million, and that cost is expected to rise this year by \$2 million to \$16 million. Last year the income from fares was just over \$2 million, and this year it is expected to be \$2.4 million. While costs will rise by \$2 million the income will rise by only \$400 000, which indicates that the gap between income and expenditure will continue to increase despite the fact that in many ways economies were instituted, including the closure of the Fremantle to Perth line and its replacement by a much cheaper and efficient means of transport—buses.

Mr McIver: Why do you think people will not utilise the suburban rail services?

Mr HERZFELD: That is an important point which brings me to the third reason the member gave to justify electrification. I will refer to it in a moment. The member claimed that the electrification of the Midland to Perth line will increase its patronage threefold, and in a moment I will contest that point.

Mr McIver: I think I justified my point from the examples of other States. You are just talking.

Mr HERZFELD: The Estimates clearly show that there is a wide and increasing gap between revenue from fares and the cost of operating our urban rail transport system. The proposition the member put to the House tonight is that we should increase the cost by putting a large amount of capital into building a new system—an electrified rail system. The member said that in doing so we would increase the patronage threefold and therefore also the income received. I refer the House to the figures the member gave us. The total cost, which incidentally I do not accept—

Mr McIver: They were the Government's own figures.

Mr HERZFELD: They are not.

Mr McIver: I will debate that with you anywhere.

Mr HERZFELD: The figures are not the Government's, they are the consultants'.

Mr McIver: The Government employed the consultants, so the figures are the Government's. God help us if you are ever the Minister for Transport!

Mr HERZFELD: If we were to electrify the Midland to Perth line and provide railcars for that system, we would have to find \$20 million in loan funds. The member said that \$6.9 million would be required for the electrification, and \$12.6 million for the railcars.

Mr McIver: That is nothing when you see what other States are spending.

Mr HERZFELD: It is not all that much, but at present we have problems in trying to obtain enough loan funds for all the other commitments the State has. Even if we say that the amount of \$20 million is minor, we must not forget the amount of interest that would be required to meet the capitalisation, and that amount would be in the order of \$3 million each year on present rates. On top of that amount we would have to find the money for depreciation, which amortised over 20 years would amount to an extra \$1 million a year. In all, the system would cost an extra \$4 million each year. The present income for all the suburban rail system is \$2.4 million. If half of that amount comes from the Midland line, we could say that if the patronage on that line was trebled we could expect from that line an income of \$3.6 million each year. As I have said, I would contest the contention that the patronage would increase threefold.

Mr McIver: Of course it would.

Mr HERZFELD: I indicated a moment ago that the ongoing cost each year would be \$4 million, which is in excess of that which the member said we could expect to receive in revenue. For two reasons I contest the figures provided by him. The estimates prepared in 1979 for electrification, including the ancillary costs for railcars and other things, of the total metropolitan system, totalled \$100 million. Admittedly, that is not the Government's figure, but it is the figure the member provided. One-third of that estimate is roughly \$30 million.

Another set of figures is interesting and revealing.

Mr McIver: Don't you think the advantages would outweigh the cost?

Mr HERZFELD: I ask the member to allow me to finish on the aspect of costs, because it is important. The whole of his argument was based on the cost of an electrification system.

Mr McIver: It wasn't based on cost.

Mr HERZFELD: If we had a threefold increase in revenue, we still would not be able to cover the additional costs involved. For a start, that fact puts the lie to the member's proposition that his main interest is to reduce the deficit of our transport system. With the very rough figures which I gave, the deficit could not be reduced.

I refer again to the capital cost. The member disputes that the capital cost would be \$100 million to electrify the whole urban system. In 1980 when he went to the polls his then leader gave some figures in relation to the Labor Party's policy on rail transport. He indicated the Opposition's policy, if in Government, would be to electrify the urban rail system and that the cost would be \$46 million. Of course, on top of that amount would be the cost of 57 new railcars. I do not know the actual amount for such railcars, but according to the figures given by the member for Avon, it would be in total in excess of \$25 million. With those figures the Labor Party is approaching a total cost of \$100 million.

I return to the calculations to which I just referred to show that even if we trebled the patronage, and therefore the revenue, we would still not be able to match revenue to costs, even on the very low estimate of \$20 million for construction of the Midland to Perth line.

A member interjected.

Mr HERZFELD: It still could not be done.

Mr McIver: What are the conditions in a testing situation?

Mr HERZFELD: I do not know what the member wishes to test. Electrified railcars are run all over the world.

Mr McIver: Do you think these people are mad?

Mr HERZFELD: There is nothing new or magical about electrified railcars.

Mr McIver: You have not been listening. We are faced with the same situation here. But the trouble is, you are a knocker. You would not allow a mother-in-law's return fare, if someone gave it to her.

Mr HERZFELD: The purpose of this place is to test logic against logic. I am putting forward a proposition which will be recorded by *Hansard* and it can be checked by anyone who wishes to read it. I am saying that the member for Avon's figures do not stand up to scrutiny. Perhaps there

are other reasons for the electrification of the system. Certainly, if that is the case the honourable member has not given us the tools.

The question of patronage is very important. The member's proposition is based on a threefold increase of patronage on the Midland to Perth line. I wonder how he reached that conclusion. We have an urban rail service from Midland to Perth which has a tremendous record for running to timetable and schedule. It has an expanding transfer station where people can park their cars and ride. Many, many people use this—

Mr McIver: Not enough.

Mr HERZFELD: —and it is a very good system. However, why do not people use it more? The reason is not because it is not electrified. It is because the people of Perth are different from the people of Newcastle in the UK.

Mr McIver: Rot!

Mr HERZFELD: They prefer the freedom of choice.

Mr McIver: All rubbish!

Mr HERZFELD: They prefer to use the motorcar and be able to travel from point A to point B when they wish. The member for Avon's party is out of touch with what the public want. The public have elected to use the motorcar.

Mr McIver: They don't want to travel in antiquated trains.

Mr HERZFELD: During the debates on the closure of the Perth to Fremantle line, it was clear that the Opposition wished to force people to use public transport. It did not wish to give them a choice.

Mr McIver: The closure was the Government's biggest political blunder.

Mr HERZFELD: It did not wish to give the public a choice—

Mr McIver: Go to the Chamber of Commerce in Fremantle and tell it that.

Mr HERZFELD: There is no way, in the foreseeable future, that there will be a threefold increase in the patronage of the rail service between Midland and Perth. It would be good if there were because it would do something about the present deficit which I referred to when I quoted the figures from the Budget.

The member for Avon presented a number of examples to justify his claim that everyone else was electrifying and therefore we were backward and behind the times.

Mr McIver: That is right.

Mr HERZFELD: When the member referred to the electrification of the Blackwater to

Gladstone line he failed to mention that it was not an urban rail service.

Mr McIver: It does not matter.

Mr HERZFELD: It is a bulk carriage line. If the economies of the exercise are important, it does matter a great deal.

Mr McIver: That is another red herring you are trying to draw.

Mr HERZFELD: It is not an urban rail service. It is a bulk carriage line which hauls huge tonnages.

Mr McIver: Why do you think it was electrified?

Mr HERZFELD: I suspect it was for a very good reason. I do not agree with the figures provided by the member for Avon. If the member cares to refer to *Hansard* tomorrow—

Mr McIver: I said at the conclusion of my speech that I would challenge any member to prove that those figures are wrong; thorough research was carried out on this matter.

Mr HERZFELD: The honourable member has an advantage over me because he has been to Newcastle in the UK. I was in the UK last year and I took interest in the urban public transport system there. I travelled on the underground system and one interesting fact was that while I was there London Transport announced the deficit for the year for its much lauded London underground railway service. The loss was £200 million for the year. It cost taxpayers £400 million a year to run that service which is electrified. It cost that much to run, despite the fact that the rates passengers are charged on that service are twice the rates we charge in Perth.

Mr McIver: It still could not be made to pay.

Mr HERZFELD: The member was saying that electrification would improve its economies.

Mr McIver: Of course it would.

Mr HERZFELD: There is no way it would. One must consider the whole picture and not one narrow section.

Mr McIver: It would reduce the deficit in running it.

Mr HERZFELD: I will support any move the Government may make to reduce the deficit for the urban public transport system because that deficit is money which is going down the drain. It is money which could be spent on capital works in the State to provide infrastructure for developing communities, or alternatively schools. Money spent to fund deficits, produces absolutely nothing.

I would have thought that the arguments put forward by the Opposition to this House and to the public were well and truly answered. A great deal of satisfaction has been expressed by the public about the urban public transport system in Perth. There has certainly been no outcry about it.

Mr McIver: What? Don't you read the newspaper?

Mr HERZFELD: The only outcry I have read about lately has been when children were left at school bus stops because the drivers of the buses were on strike.

We have this motion before us this evening because the Opposition found it necessary to do some posturing on the subject. The Opposition has been set up by the TLC bosses and the railway union bosses because nothing has been said about urban transport and it is about time something was said.

Mr McIver: What a little rat-faced reptile you are!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nanovich): Order! The member for Avon has made his comments and I think such remarks are not necessary. I ask him to refrain from making such comments.

Mr HERZFELD: The honourable member does himself a real disservice by using that sort of language. I am not concerned about those sorts of remarks. I think it is important to draw attention to the reasons for this motion. The Opposition has found itself in a situation where the Government has taken initiatives. When the Minister speaks to this motion I am sure he will be able to outline in much greater detail the initiatives which he has taken for urban public transport.

I suspect this matter has been drummed up for the benefit of the endorsed member for Swan. He has been talking as though he is the member for Swan. Even last week in *The Midland Reporter* he was reported as saying he was opposed to the closure of the Midland saleyards. Goodness, the Government had said ages ago that no such thing would happen.

Mr McIver: Stick to the motion.

Mr HERZFELD: So it would seem that the member for Avon has decided to put forward this motion so that the reasons for it could be reported in the Press.

Mr McIver: Who is the member for Swan?

Mr HERZFELD: I am talking about the endorsed candidate for Swan.

Mr McIver: I do not know him.

Mr HERZFELD: The member for Avon should because he is making statements on his behalf. In one issue of *The Midland Reporter* he said that the spokesman on transport would move a motion about the electrification of the Perth to Midland railway line.

The article mentioned that briefly and went on to say that the member for Avon could not be contacted, but that on his behalf the endorsed candidate for the seat of Swan had given a long spiel about what would happen.

Mr McIver: They are always keen and energetic in the Labor Party.

Mr HERZFELD: That may well be; I do not know the gentleman. The point I am making is that one of the reasons the motion was brought to this place was that the member for Avon wanted to create a nice piece of news on which this particular gentleman could go to Press. I do not mind; that is his prerogative and right. It is an ongoing matter, and I think the person involved is losing a lot of credibility in the community. Certainly, he is harming the member for Swan because he is speaking as though he were the member for Swan.

Mr McIver: I suggest you look after Mundaring, and not worry about Swan.

Mr HERZFELD: This motion is a true indication of the confusion which exists on the other side of the House on the question of urban public transport. It lacks credibility. It is consistent with the sort of impossible pronouncements we had from the Opposition during the last election. It is emotive nonsense which is supposed to grab the voter who has some sort of nostalgic attachment to trains. Never mind about the member's professed desire on behalf of his party to reduce Westrail's deficit and improve Government efficiency; it is nothing like that at all.

Less than 12 months ago, the Opposition promised that if elected to Government, within three years it would electrify the urban railway system and provide 57 new railcars. The Opposition went on to say it would run trains every 10 minutes between 6.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m.

Mr McIver: Who said that?

Mr HERZFELD: It is contained in the policy speech of the then Leader of the Opposition. Does the member for Avon want me to read it?

Mr McIver: No, we have heard enough from you. A train leaves Flinders Street station every 30 seconds.

Mr HERZFELD: The Opposition's proposal would increase threefold the number of trains running on our lines. If its suggestion were implemented, we certainly would not obtain comparable revenue in return. It is quite interesting when one examines Westrail's operational costs as revealed in the State Budget to find that the cost of manning and operating the Opposition's extra passenger services, even without the cost of electrification, would add another \$18 million to \$20 million to Westrail's deficit. Where are members opposite going to find that number of passengers to patronise the system to make it cost effective? The Opposition's policy speech contains a lot more along those lines which would turn a responsible Government's hair grey. It simply shows the irrationality, confusion, and extravagance of the sort of pronouncements made by the Opposition. I do not believe we have ever heard anything credible by way of a policy from the Opposition.

I listen with interest when the member for Avon speaks about transport matters, because I know he has a great deal of experience in this area. Certainly, when he provides details of the operation of railcars, and that sort of thing, I understand him to be very knowledgeable. However, that is not what we are all about in this place. We are about the proper and economic management of a public utility; that is the important thing. Certainly, the member for Avon did not convince me tonight that the proposition he put to the House was rational or economic, or in fact would benefit the urban rail transport users in Western Australia.

I conclude by saying the Opposition would need to be far more convincing if it wanted this House to accept the sort of motion moved tonight by the member for Avon. It is ludicrous to suggest we should electrify a line on a trial basis. Ample experience is available worldwide in many different systems as to how electric trains operate. I do not think we need to establish an expensive system simply to see if it works.

It is important we direct our energies to ensuring we continue to provide an adequate urban public transport system in which all aspects are integrated; that we continue to provide an economic urban public transport system; and, that we engage in sufficient forward planning to ensure that when the time comes when we need electrification or some other system, or some new technology arises, we are ready to jump in and utilise it.

For those reasons, I oppose the motion and call on other members to do likewise.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Shalders.

DAIRYING: PRODUCTS AND MARKET MILK

*Inquiry by Joint Select Committee: Council's
Concurrence, etc.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had considered the Assembly's resolution, and had resolved—

- (1) That it has agreed with the appointment of a Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in accordance with the terms of the Resolution transmitted to the Legislative Council by Message No. 80 from the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) That the Legislative Council be represented on the Committee by the Hons. N. McNeill and J. M. Brown.
- (3) That a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly acquainting it of this Resolution, and has further resolved.
- (4) That the Legislative Assembly be advised that the first meeting of the Joint Select Committee will be held in the Select Committee Room at Parliament House on Thursday, 22 October at 10.15 a.m.

BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Acts Amendment (Land Use Planning) Bill.
Bill returned from the Council with amendments.
2. Acts Amendment (Mining) Bill.
Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

SALT ENCROACHMENT

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

Debate resumed from 29 April.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [9.25 p.m.]: The motion moved by the member for Warren calls for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter of salt encroachment in Western Australia. During his speech, the member for Warren made certain assertions, some of which I will refute as I proceed. Some of his assertions were quite unfair and reflected on certain people who have done a good job in endeavouring to arrive at a suitable method of land release and on other people who have been engaged in the fight against salinity.

The Government clearly acknowledges that salinity in our rural areas is becoming more serious. This Government has given every indication of its intention to fight not only salinity, but also all soil degradation in Western Australia. However, as salinity is the prime concern of the motion, I shall concentrate my remarks on that problem.

It is a well-established fact that prior to settlement, and to any land clearing and agricultural pursuits in Western Australia there was upwards of one million acres of salt-affected land in Western Australia, which was confined mainly to creek beds, salt pans, etc. Since we have been engaged in agriculture, and certainly in the latter part of that era, there has been an increase in salinity in land cleared for agriculture. A total of 123 634 hectares existed in 1962 increasing to 167 294 hectares in 1974, and to 263 752 hectares in 1979.

The member for Warren alleged salinity had increased by 850 per cent over the past few years. I am unable to support those figures; I understand the source of the honourable member's claim was a newspaper article. I call upon him to sustain those figures, because it is quite evident the actual increase in salinity is nowhere near the vicinity of 850 per cent.

Mr Evans: It is the average rate of increase over that period.

Mr OLD: The gentleman who made the statement in the first place has admitted it is not correct.

Whilst the Government acknowledges the serious nature of degradation through salinity, it has to be borne in mind that the percentage increase in our agricultural land affected by salinity—although disturbing—is not large. It has risen from 0.7 per cent of our agricultural land in 1972 to 1.17 per cent in 1974 to 1.75 per cent in 1979. It can be demonstrated that since the war, of the nine million hectares of land thrown open to agriculture, 8 800 000 hectares are still under full production. This figure reveals the percentage of salt-affected land. Those figures would include the large amount of land development which we saw in the 1950s and the early 1960s.

It is well recognised there is a delay of between 10 years and 20 years between the clearing of land and the time the salinity problem manifests itself.

On Monday of this week I attended a seminar on trees in agriculture. One of the main items discussed was the effect of trees on salinity. It has been accepted scientifically that once land is cleared, certainly in the lower rainfall areas, some

problem from salinity will arise somewhere, but not necessarily at the point of clearing. If one took the business to the extreme, one would say that we should reforest all the land that has been put under agriculture, and then we would not have a salinity problem. Somewhere between that radical idea and total agriculture lies the answer. We do have a problem in that agriculture is the big breadwinner for Western Australia, and it will continue to be so. Another problem is that our population has a propensity to eat food, and we have to produce the food because we cannot afford to import it if we do not produce anything. So, we have to combine sensible agriculture with good husbandry of the land.

Every time the Government embarks on a land release programme, despite the fact that it may be well controlled, as land releases are today, a great amount of criticism is levelled at it. It is claimed that by releasing this land for agriculture, we are giving up the land to more degradation. That may well be true; but since the days of the great land releases in the 1950s and 1960s, quite a number of very sensible guidelines have been laid down.

Prior to the release of conditional purchase blocks now, the land has to be soil surveyed by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Lands. It has to be soil tested by the Department of Agriculture; and then the Department of Conservation and Environment has to give a report on the suitability of that land for agriculture. If necessary, an environmental impact study is undertaken. After that, the recommendation from the committee of those three departments goes to the Cabinet subcommittee, which, in turn, makes a recommendation to the Government before any land can be released.

It does not finish there, because following the release of a CP block now, the successful applicant is required to provide an initial development plan in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Agriculture and to the satisfaction of the Minister for Lands, in order to minimise environmental hazards consequent on clearing and cultivation. In other words, once the land has been allocated, a management programme has to be submitted by the successful applicant; and this management programme becomes part of the terms of his conditional purchase lease. It may involve such things as contour fencing. Certainly it would involve such things as restrictions on clearing.

The Government has proved its sincerity in its approach to land degradation and salinity. Various statements have been made as to the action that the Government is and will be taking

in the future. These are not empty statements. One of the first actions we took when the plan was evolved was to have a look at the Soil Conservation Act with a view to putting enough teeth into it to make it worth while. Amendments to that Act will enable the control of soil salinity and land degradation generally.

I was delighted when Dr Graham Robertson applied for and was appointed to the position of Commissioner of Soil Conservation. He is a young, enthusiastic, highly intelligent man who has a very good understanding of the land. He has demonstrated that very clearly since his appointment.

A tremendous amount of work has been undertaken on the restructuring of the Soil Conservation Act. Currently the amendments are with the Parliamentary Draftsman, being licked into shape. I will be introducing a Bill to amend that Act prior to the end of this session.

Some of the provisions in the Bill may not be terribly palatable to some sections of the community, but that will depend entirely on their sincerity in asking the Government to take remedial action against the problems currently being experienced. It will be a test of the rural community as to whether it is genuine in its desire to see this cankerous growth of salinity and land degradation arrested and corrected.

Only recently the Commissioner of Soil Conservation and the Premier undertook a visit to some of the WISALTS projects in Western Australia, at the invitation of the President of WISALTS. The commissioner prepared a report on that visit, and the report was publicised fairly widely.

Since then I have visited a project in the Narrogin area dealing with the provision of interceptor banks for the purpose of controlling lateral water flow. On the results I have seen, there is no doubt that the flow of lateral water is well controlled by the interceptor banks. That project has been designed, as were those seen by the Premier and the commissioner, not only as a deterrent to the flow of lateral water, but also for the harvesting of water. The project I saw was designed for the drainage of water away from the place where it lay into the creek system. On the evidence shown to me, and on the photographs and evidence observed by Mr Negus, the officer in charge of the Narrogin district office of the Department of Agriculture, there is no doubt that a very beneficial effect has been experienced on that farm.

These are the types of things that the Government is and has been monitoring.

Statements have been made that we were not taking any interest in interceptor banks. That is not true, because we have been monitoring three projects featuring interceptor banks. One of those is on the property of Mr Keast at Dangin, which was established at my instigation after discussions with Mr Whittington. He suggested we should have some sort of trial in tandem; and I agreed to that. We went to Keast's place, as Mr Whittington thought Dangin would be a good area in which to conduct the trial. We agreed on the location of the trial.

Since then, very detailed monitoring of that area has been carried out. I visited that farm last year, to see whether any change was apparent. While a lot of data has been gathered from that area, at this stage I do not believe anything terribly conclusive has been learned.

The second trial that has been monitored was established at East Meckering, and another one was at South Dangin. Apart from those official monitoring stations, Mr Negus has been watching all the experimental work into salinity throughout the great southern district.

Those trials do not include interceptor banks only, but also drainage, both with the mole plough and with other types of drainage on clay pans, and, of course, the planting of salt-tolerant vegetation—something which comes in for a certain amount of criticism from a certain section of the community which likes immediate results from the plantings.

It is unfortunate that many people who enter into programmes on salt-tolerant plantings jib at the idea of double fencing and protecting the plantings from stock. This is fairly necessary if the experimental work is to succeed—and it has succeeded in many cases.

On the property I visited in the Narrogin area last Saturday, I saw evidence of a tremendous amount of planting of salt-tolerant plants. All these areas have been fenced off very carefully, and all of them showed a remarkable recovery. That land has been grazed on a very deliberate pattern.

Apart from entering into these arrangements, and apart from the amendments to the Soil Conservation Act which will be introduced soon, the Government will undertake a fairly extensive study of experimental work in the Narrogin district on the control of salinity, both by mechanical means and by the planting of salt-tolerant trees and pasture plants. This experimental work will be applicable to most of the wheat belt areas. It is designed to be undertaken on land which would be typical of that

particular type of country. As I say, we would be looking for the results of that experimental work to be applicable to some of the more badly affected salt country.

It was pleasing to receive support for this particular project from Westralian Farmers Co-op Ltd. which, unsolicited, offered the Department of Agriculture financial assistance for such a project. I acknowledge its interest in the rural industry, and its ability to demonstrate this interest by making available to the Department of Agriculture \$40 000 which will be of great assistance in the running of this project.

When the member for Warren was talking about the early monitoring of land releases, he made some allegations about some of the releases in the area around the 90-mile tank. He stated that the rainfall data from one centre, the 90-mile tank, was available for only two years and implied similar limited rainfall data for other centres in the region. This is patently untrue, as the rainfall records from the 90-mile tank, and the 90-mile tank east, were available from 1963 to 1978—a total of some 16 years—and the average rainfall at these centres was 332mm and 342mm respectively.

The implication was that the land release committee which was set up at my request under the auspices of the Rural and Allied Industries Council had brought down its findings on a false premise. I can assure the honourable member that the gentlemen who were concerned with that particular committee were not at all amused at the allegation that they had come down with very seriously considered recommendations based on data which was not recorded properly.

Mr Evans: What about the land release study group at Mt. Barker?

Mr OLD: I do not care about the land release study group at Mt. Barker. I am talking about the records which the Department of Agriculture collected over a period of 16 years—not two years. It is up to the member for Warren to apologise to those people who have undertaken a very difficult job in a very responsible way.

There still seems to be some reluctance on the part of certain groups to accept the fact that hydrological studies undertaken by CSIRO, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of WA demonstrate that the bulk of salinity is caused by saline water under pressure coming to the surface. There is no doubt that, with the removal of the timber, there is obviously a buildup of the ground water, and as the water table rises, it brings the salinity with it.

Some of the rates of salts per hectare are quite enormous. It is not such a serious matter in the higher rainfall areas in the coastal strip, because there is enough rain and water movement to flush the salinity away, but the problem starts to be apparent in the medium and lower rainfall areas. CSIRO, together with the PWD and the Department of Agriculture, in the Wellington catchment area have undertaken a great deal of experimental work on land which was cleared, paradoxically, after the clearing controls were applied, specifically to find out what effect certain density clearing had on that particular land.

They have come up with some very interesting figures, which to date, are not conclusive, but they have given a lot of hope to the fact that there can be quite a large percentage of usage of land in the forest areas of the catchments without necessarily having a deleterious effect on either land or stream salinity.

This has been rather well demonstrated in the Donnybrook area by Mr John Hearman, a former Speaker of this House, who has undertaken a project of clearing by burning the understorey, sowing with clover, and aerial top-dressing. Mr Hearman claims he is currently running three sheep to the acre in what is virtually forest country, because no trees have been removed. He burns it every second year and claims this is necessary for the successful regeneration of the pasture. It is a fascinating study and it is one which probably could be used more generally as we get to know more about it.

Such experiments have been carried out on Mr Ray Ward's place west of Cranbrook. Although the season when the pasture was sown was anything but satisfactory and the germination was low, I understand the standard of pasture now is very impressive.

The late Tom Smith—I know the House will join with me in expressing great regret at his early demise; he passed away at the weekend at the age of 59—did a tremendous amount of work in the catchment areas in this particular aspect. It was his desire to get down into the catchment areas and try various types of clearing. He wanted to try the concept of pasture in between the trees as had been demonstrated in Donnybrook. The results of his work are just starting to show and, I believe, will have quite an impact on future farming in that particular area.

It seems we have two major types of salinity, one being the lateral water under some conditions. Depending upon the topography of the country, there is certainly a movement of lateral water. It is the opinion not only of CSIRO, the Department

of Agriculture, and UWA, but also of experienced hydrologists throughout the world that the main cause of salinity is the upward movement of water under pressure. These together are the particular battle we have to fight. It is the battle this Government will fight and, as I mentioned before, we have undertaken a variety of programmes. There is some deep drainage in salt land at Esperance Downs and west of Katanning which has been undertaken by my department.

We are monitoring work being done by Mr Bental at Three Springs. There is an experiment with a Pederick land drainer at Corrigin. As I enumerated earlier, we are studying three sites with the WISALTS organisation and, last but not least, we are monitoring deep drainage at Scott Brothers' property at Watheroo. That in itself is quite a fascinating exercise.

The Scotts at Watheroo have spent a tremendous amount of money on deep drains and, when I say, "deep" I mean mighty deep drains. I have been there at all times of the year and there is always water running in them.

We have undertaken to monitor that experiment in conjunction with the Scotts and have positioned pizometers at various distances from the deep drains. The last time I was there it was becoming apparent that, although the water table was being lowered within a close proximity to the drains, as one got a little further out, the water table was apparently much higher. It may be that, in order to make deep drains work effectively, there has to be quite a network of them and this, of course, in itself would take up a tremendous amount of land.

However, given time, it could well be that it will reduce the water table over a fair area. Scotts have a particular set of circumstances which enable them to do this inasmuch as they have the right type of land and a very large lake into which to drain the water. If one does not have that, one could become quite an embarrassment to one's neighbours. In fact, I would suggest if somebody were to drain salt water onto your champion hay crop, Sir, you would not see it in a particularly humorous light.

Scotts are draining water from probably five or 10 miles into this particular area and it is a very fascinating subject. Apart from the test wells we are undertaking photography so that there is very definite pictorial evidence of what is going on.

I am convinced there is no need for a Select Committee to inquire into salinity, as has been suggested by the member for Warren. This Government has demonstrated its sensitivity; it has put its money where its mouth is, as has been

demonstrated amply in the Budget, and the amount of money which has been allocated to our land resources division is indicative of the sensitivity of purpose with which this Government will attack the problem of land degradation generally and one of our first onslaughts will certainly be in the area of salinity.

Under the land release programme which the Government has undertaken and will continue to undertake, approximately three million hectares of land were identified as being possibly suitable for agriculture. I use the word "possibly" deliberately, because when the announcement was made the matter was misconstrued entirely by the Opposition. It was alleged immediately that the Government was going to release three million hectares of land. Of course, this created quite a stir and a number of people were fearful—and understandably so. It would be a terribly irresponsible action on the part of any Government to undertake the release of land at the rate it was done in the 1950s.

One has only to go down to Jerramungup now to see the results of total clearing. It was held by agriculturalists to be a great thing when the big rollers went into Jerramungup and started to clout down the trees, roll the scrub, and burn it up. Out from the wooded areas came cleared broadacres and for a while this was fine. Today it is posing problems not only in regard to salinity, but also as far as sand blasting is concerned. This

has become a major problem to the agricultural industry in Western Australia.

It is being attacked with vigour by officers of the department and I am only sad some members of this House were not able or did not see fit to attend the seminar which has just been completed, because some of the papers delivered there were not only of great interest, but also indicated the amount of work which is being done by various Government departments in order to combat this very serious problem.

I contend the Government of Western Australia is undertaking its responsibility seriously and is attacking this particular problem. It is making a very sincere effort to talk to people engaged in the various types of salinity control. We are breaking down the barriers which existed and this is due in no small measure to the attitude of the Commissioner of Soil Conservation who spends most of his time at present going around Western Australia, inspecting numerous types of control methods, and talking to various groups. As such, he is creating a tremendous amount of goodwill which I am sure, in the not-too-distant future, will reflect in efficient control of this very serious problem.

Therefore, there is no way I could accept the necessity for such a Select Committee and I urge members of the House to vote against it.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Grewar.

House adjourned at 10.00 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

FIRES: FIRE BRIGADE BOARD

Press Liaison Officer

2240. Mr TONKIN, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Does the Fire Brigade Board of Western Australia employ a Press liaison officer?
- (2) If so, what is his or her salary?
- (3) Does the board employ a safety officer?
- (4) If so, what is his or her salary?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) and (2) No. The board from time to time uses the services of Mr Allen Newton on a fee for service basis.
- (3) and (4) No. In the opinion of the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades the safety of crews on the fire ground is an officer's responsibility and officers are particularly conscious of this requirement. Training programmes developed by fire officers place strong emphasis on safety at training and at the fire ground. Safety also depends on accepted and habitual discipline. It is currently a matter of grave concern that continuing industrial confrontation in the form of various work limitations is creating an atmosphere of ill-discipline, which may lead to safety being put at risk in a crisis.

ELECTORAL: DISTRICTS

Area

2268. Mr DAVIES, to the Chief Secretary:

Is he able to advise the area of each of the 57 proposed Legislative Assembly seats, please?

Mr HASSELL replied:

No. The details of the new districts will not be known until the commissioners have submitted their final report to the Governor and received his approval. Measurement of the districts will then be done as a matter of course.

LAND

Yallingup Beach Road

2269. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

With reference to the Minister's answer to question 2227 of 1981 relating to the Yallingup Beach Road, what area of land is involved in the section of the block referred to by the Minister as the "southern portion"?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

3.3951 hectares.

HOUSING: STATE HOUSING COMMISSION

Mr John W. Collins

2270. Mr BRYCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

With reference to the alleged breach of citizen's privacy by the State Housing Commission concerning Mr John W. Collins of 21 Callawa Street, Golden Bay, will he indicate how and from what source the commission obtained Mr Collins' name and address?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

A letter detailing the information that the member is seeking was forwarded on Monday, 19 October 1981.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Wages Staff

2271. Mr BRYCE, to the Speaker:

Further to my question 1435 of 1981 relating to employment at Parliament House, will he please table a copy of the terms and conditions of employment supplied to cleaner-stewards at the commencement of their employment at Parliament House?

The SPEAKER replied:

As this is a matter for consideration by the Joint House Committee I shall forward a copy of this question to the chairman of that committee and request that the information be provided direct to the member.

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

Four-year-olds

2272. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

(1) What is the Government's policy on four-year-old enrolments in—

(a) pre-primaries; and

(b) pre-schools;

in 1982?

(2) Is the Government planning to provide no funding for four-year-olds in pre-schools in 1982, and to staff centres purely on the basis of five-year-old enrolments, leading to closure or partial closure of units, and the placing of some teachers in part-time employment?

(3) If "No" to (2), what is the situation in this regard?

(4) How much does the Government expect to receive in 1981 from the levy on four-year-olds imposed on pre-schools?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1) to (3) The Government will give priority to children aged one year below normal primary school admission; that is, to children who are four years and one day or older at the beginning of the school year. Pre-school committees have been advised of three possible arrangements by which they may maintain early childhood services for children two years below school age—those three years and one day or older. Limited funding and assistance may be available depending upon the arrangements proposed locally and the number of enrolments. The Government is awaiting responses from the committees concerning the proposed arrangements.

(4) Approximately \$70 000. This is a token income in relation to the overall cost of making provision for all children two years below school age. This is in the order of \$16 million per annum running costs on top of a capital outlay of up to \$21 million.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

MTT: Services

2273. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it a fact that the last Metropolitan Transport Trust bus from Perth to Fremantle on a Sunday evening leaves Perth at 7.30 p.m.?

(2) If "Yes", is he aware that this curtailment of bus services on a Sunday is inconveniencing those people who require, through shift work and other reasons, to travel by bus at a later hour on Sundays?

(3) If "Yes" to (1) and (2), will he have a later service introduced?

(4) If not, why not?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) to (4) I am advised that MTT surveys show that average loading on buses after 7.30 p.m. on Sundays is four passengers per trip. With running costs of around \$32 per hour to operate buses as against average earnings of \$2 per hour on Sunday nights it was clear that possible amendments had to be examined.

The MTT has done this by a general rationalisation of Sunday operations, and it is expected that this will achieve annual savings in the order of \$500 000.

It is not planned to run a later service at this stage. However, the MTT is closely monitoring the situation.

2274. *This question was postponed.*

LAND: NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES

Funding

2275. Mr EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

What amount of finance will be allocated for the purchase of land for national parks and reserves in the 1981-82 year?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The answer to this question is contained in the Budget.

LAND: NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITY

Expenditure: Cutbacks

2276. Mr EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

In view of the fact that national parks budget has been reduced in real terms, what services and areas of expenditure will be reduced by the National Parks Authority?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

It is anticipated that the funds provided, together with income generated by the authority, will be sufficient to enable the authority to provide an adequate level of service in the State's national parks.

TRAFFIC: RTA

Manjimup

2277. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

(1) Is it intended to move any Road Traffic Authority personnel from the Manjimup centre?

(2) If "Yes"—

(a) how many officers are to be moved;
(b) from when will this transfer take effect?

(3) Is it intended to move any police officers from Manjimup?

(4) If "Yes" to (3)—

(a) how many officers are to be moved;
(b) from when will their transfer take effect?

Mr HASSELL replied:

(1) No.

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

(3) No.

(4) (a) and (b) Answered by (3).

TRAFFIC: RTA

Bridgetown

2278. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Is it intended to reduce the number of Road Traffic Authority or police officers at the Bridgetown police station; and if so—

(a) by what number will the strength of this station be reduced;

(b) from when will the reduction take effect?

Mr HASSELL replied:

At this time, neither the Road Traffic Authority nor the Police Department has intentions to reduce the number of officers stationed at Bridgetown.

(a) and (b) Not applicable.

TRAFFIC: RTA

Boyup Brook

2279. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Is it intended to reduce the police or Road Traffic Authority strength of the Boyup Brook station; and if so—

(a) by what number will the strength of the station be reduced;

(b) from when will the reduction take effect?

Mr HASSELL replied:

At this time, neither the Road Traffic Authority nor the Police Department has intentions to reduce the number of officers stationed at Boyup Brook.

(a) and (b) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

Centre: Pemberton

2280. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it intended to have five-year-old children attend the Pemberton School for pre-school education in 1982?

(2) If "Yes"—

(a) will the Pemberton pre-school centre receive staffing and/or financial assistance to enable it to provide an education facility for four-year-old pre-school children in 1982;

(b) what will be the extent of this assistance?

(3) How many pre-school children are expected to attend classes at Pemberton in 1982?

(4) How many four-year-old pre-school children are expected to be seeking pre-school training in Pemberton in 1982?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1) and (2) No. Five-year-olds will attend the Pemberton pre-school centre.

(3) 28 are currently enrolled for 1982.

(4) 24.

SWIMMING POOLS

Subsidies

2281. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) (a) Is it intended to abolish the swimming pool subsidy scheme from 1982-83 or earlier; and

(b) if so, from what date?

(2) What amount does each of the following shire councils receive at the present time under this scheme—

(a) Manjimup;

(b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes;

(c) Boyup Brook?

(3) What is the total payment to all shire councils under the swimming pool subsidy scheme expected to be in the 1981-82 year?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) to (3) I will seek leave to table a copy of a detailed Press statement made today by the Premier on this and a number of related local government matters. This will substantially answer the member's question, including a number of other questions he has on the notice paper.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 537).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Audit

2282. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Is it intended to transfer local government audit to the private sector next year?

(2) How many country shire councils have their audit carried out by the Auditor General's Department at the present time?

(3) What percentage of the cost of audit will be borne by each country shire council?

(4) What will be the expected total audit cost for each of the following shire councils in 1982:

(a) Manjimup;

(b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes;

(c) Boyup Brook;

(d) Nannup?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) to (4) See answer to question 2281.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: RATES

Revenue

2283. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) What was the amount of rates collected by each of the following shire councils in 1980-81:

(a) Manjimup;

(b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes;

(c) Boyup Brook;

(d) Nannup?

- (2) What percentage of total shire income did this rate collection represent in each case?
- (3) What is the expected rate collection in each of the above four shire councils expected to be in 1981-82?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| (1) (a) Manjimup | \$365 945 |
| (b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes | \$275 969 |
| (c) Boyup Brook | \$254 131 |
| (d) Nannup | \$39 089 |

- (2) The percentage of each shire's 1980-81 rate collections to its ordinary revenue was as follows—

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| (a) Manjimup | 28 per cent. |
| (b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes | 34 per cent. |
| (c) Boyup Brook | 41 per cent. |
| (d) Nannup | 11 per cent. |

- (3) The budgets adopted by these shires disclose the following aggregate rate assessments for 1981-82—

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| (a) Manjimup | \$420 496 |
| (b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes | \$295 380 |
| (c) Boyup Brook | \$277 419 |
| (d) Nannup | \$43 167 |

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Assistance Funds

2284. Mr EVANS, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the current allocation of the State Government to the local government assistance fund?
- (2) Is it intended to phase out the State Government allocation to the local government assistance fund?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2) over what period will the allocation be phased out?
- (4) (a) What is the percentage of Commonwealth funding involved in the local government assistance fund;
- (b) will the level of Commonwealth funding be maintained in 1982?

- (5) What amounts will the following shire councils receive as the State Government component to the local government assistance fund in the 1981-82 year:

- (a) Manjimup;
- (b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes;
- (c) Boyup Brook;
- (d) Nannup?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) \$1 150 000.
- (2) and (3) Discussions are taking place with local government bodies to phase out the allocation over three years commencing 1982-83.
- (4) (a) and (b) Under the tax sharing arrangements for local government, Western Australian local authorities received \$28 242 894 in 1980-81 and \$32 945 174 in 1981-82 as general purpose assistance grants. The Commonwealth did not reduce the percentage share of personal income tax collections paid to local authorities in 1981-82.
- (5) The formula for distribution of the State Government component for 1981-82 is still under consideration. However, grants paid in 1980-81 were as follows—
- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| (a) Manjimup | \$14 700 |
| (b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes | \$12 436 |
| (c) Boyup Brook | \$10 016 |
| (d) Nannup | \$6 100 |

SEWERAGE: COUNTRY AREAS

Subsidy

2285. Mr EVANS, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the maximum subsidy payable to country shire councils under the country towns sewerage scheme?
- (2) What is the maximum subsidy of sewerage loan servicing costs payable to country shire councils under the country towns sewerage scheme at the present time?

- (3) Is it intended to reduce this level of subsidy, and if so, by how much and from when? (c) Warren—26;
(d) Kent—18.
- (4) What amount of subsidy under the country towns sewerage scheme did the following shire councils receive in 1980-81 year:

	(2) Mundaring	(a) and (b) \$	(c) \$
		76 968	76 968
		68 055	68 055
(a) Manjimup;	Wellington	365 500	365 500
(b) Bridgetown-Greenbushes?		326 530	326 530
Sir CHARLES COURT replied:		60 000	60 000
(1) 85 per cent of the annual principal and interest repayment of a capital loan raised by a local authority for the construction of a sewerage scheme.		31 518	31 518
(2) Answered by (1).		300 000	300 000
(3) Yes. From 85 per cent to 75 per cent in 1982-83.		275 000	275 000
(4) (a) Nil; Manjimup is a departmental scheme;		118 000	118 000
(b) nil; no schemes.		220 000	220 000
		115 000	115 000
		575 000	600 000
		134 000	175 000
		31 000	45 000
		48 500	48 500
		126 600	224 060
		174 800	228 000
2286 and 2287. <i>These questions were postponed.</i>		130 000	130 000
		105 500	105 500
		372 000	415 600
		50 613	50 613
		31 570	31 570
		3 500	3 500

WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Clearing Bans: Compensation

2288. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

	Warren	103 500	113 000
(1) How many settlements for compensation in each of the following catchment areas have been finalised—		107 500	125 000
(a) Mundaring;		63 000	63 000
(b) Wellington;		151 500	151 500
(c) Warren;		98 000	103 500
(d) Kent?		111 000	111 000
(2) In each case, what was—		43 000	43 000
(a) the valuation placed on each property by the Valuer General's Department;		147 000	147 000
(b) the original offer made to the landholder;		51 000	51 750
(c) the final settlement figure for each property?		95 300	112 500
		39 250	45 000
		100 000	125 000
		25 000	25 000
		120 000	120 000
		56 000	56 000
		310 000	310 000
		40 000	40 000
		49 000	49 000
Mr MENSAROS replied:		213 000	213 000
Including settlement by cash compensation or cash purchase.		68 000	75 000
		16 500	28 000
(1) (a) Mundaring—two;		60 700	60 700
(b) Wellington—21;		292 500	305 000

	\$	\$
Warren—cont.	230 000	305 000
	65 000	65 000
	21 000	21 000
Kent	65 500	65 500
	164 910	164 910
	145 000	145 000
	119 000	119 000
	303 000	303 000
	27 800	27 800
	60 000	100 000
	135 000	135 000
	39 500	39 500
	149 000	149 000
	24 000	24 000
	71 500	102 000
	22 200	22 200
	98 300	100 300
	58 400	85 200
	53 000	53 000
	37 000	39 500
	35 000	35 000

ELECTORAL

Non-British Subjects

2289. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Immigration:

- (1) Is it proposed to introduce legislation to require British subjects to become nationalised Australian citizens before being eligible to vote in State elections?
- (2) When is it proposed to introduce such legislation?
- (3) What is the reason for introducing such legislation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) Commonwealth and State Ministers for Immigration have been considering the matter on the initiative of the Commonwealth. Initial consultations have been undertaken here with relevant Ministers. No policy decision has been made by the State.

RAILWAYS: CROSSINGS

Geraldton

2290. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

What consideration has been given to installing boom gates at railway

crossings in Geraldton, particularly those at Utakarra and Place Roads where the lights face east-west and are therefore very ineffective at early morning and late afternoon?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Half boom gates are planned to be installed at the Utakarra crossing early in 1982.

Place Road crossing is currently protected by flashing light signals and while there is no proposal to install half boom gates at this stage, the situation will be reviewed by the level crossing protection committee.

RADIOACTIVITY: MATERIAL

Importation

2291. Mr CARR to the Minister for Transport:

Which port will be utilised for the importation of radioactive material presently in Singapore, which is to be stored near Kambalda?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The Minister for Resources Development advises that no decision has been made on this matter as yet.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: GERALDTON CULTURAL TRUST

Railway Museum

2292. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) Does the Budget allocation to the WA Museum include funds to enable the establishment of permanent displays at the railway station museum in Geraldton?
- (2) If "Yes", will he please provide details?
- (3) If not—
 - (a) why not;
 - (b) when are permanent displays likely to be funded?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a) The establishment of permanent displays at the railway station museum was not of a sufficiently high priority to be included in the 1981-82 Budget;
- (b) the proposal will be kept under review in keeping with the availability of funds.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Northampton

2293. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

How does the Government justify its apparent failure to provide funds to upgrade the Northampton District High School, especially following his recent visit, when he promised an immediate decision on the future of the school?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The matter of the condition of the buildings and the works required to effect improvements, are at present being assessed. When a report is received, it will receive due consideration.

TRAFFIC: RTA

Roadblock Campaigns

2294. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has the Road Traffic Authority prepared any written report—however preliminary—of its monitoring of the results of the “roadblock” campaigns?
- (2) If “Yes”, will he please table a copy of any such report?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Road block operation is part of the overall enforcement strategy and no separate records are kept.
- (2) Not applicable.

POLICE AND RTA

Amalgamation: Decision

2295. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

On what date did Cabinet decide that the Road Traffic Authority would be merged with the Police Force?

Mr HASSELL replied:

As previously stated, all Cabinet discussions and deliberations are confidential. However, the member may refer to pages 22 and 23 of the Premier's Budget speech presented to this House on Tuesday, 13 October 1981 where he announced the Government's intention to amalgamate the Road Traffic Authority and the Police Department.

HOUSING

Geraldton

2296. Mr CARR, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

Will he please provide details of the State Housing Commission building programme for Geraldton for the current financial year?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

A contract for 12 pensioner units programmed in 1980-81 has been let and a further nine pensioner units will be constructed in the current financial year.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Geraldton

2297. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many patients with hospital only insurance have attended the casualty section of the Geraldton Regional Hospital since the introduction of the new health insurance arrangements?
- (2) How many of these were treated by private doctors as hospital patients?

- (3) Were any refused treatment by private doctors as hospital patients?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Statistics are not maintained in respect of patients attending the casualty section of the Geraldton Regional Hospital with hospital only insurance.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) None to the knowledge of the administration of the Geraldton Regional Hospital.
- (3) An application from Albany Town Council was refused as not conforming to the guidelines of the scheme. This project is, however, still under discussion.
- (4) 1979-80—\$750 000;
1980-81—\$750 000.
- (5) An allocation of \$400 000 was considered appropriate in view of an uncommitted balance of \$125 000 held in the trust fund at 30 June.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Regional Cultural Facilities Fund

2298. Mr CARR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Will he please detail all projects assisted under the regional cultural facilities fund since its introduction, including—
 - (a) total cost of each project;
 - (b) Government assistance to each; and
 - (c) the year in which the funds were committed to each project?
- (2) How many applications have been made to the above scheme for assistance, since it was first introduced?
- (3) Will he please list all unsuccessful applications?
- (4) What has been the value of the contribution to the trust fund in each year since its introduction?
- (5) Why has the allocation for 1981-82 been reduced to \$400 000?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Cultural facilities at Geraldton and Esperance have been assisted—
Geraldton
 - (a) Estimated \$3 251 000;
 - (b) one-third of the cost to a maximum of \$1 million;
 - (c) 1979-80.
 Esperance
 - (a) Estimated \$1 127 600;
 - (b) \$375 000;
 - (c) 1979-80.
- (2) Although there have been a number of inquiries there have been only two other specific applications.

HEALTH

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

2299. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is research being undertaken into benign myalgic encephalomyelitis?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) where is research being undertaken, and what communities are the subject of such research;
 - (b) is this research examining any possible relationship with the chemical, 2,4-D?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Inquiries have been made, but I am unable to confirm this. Further inquiries will be made and the member advised in due course.
- (2) Not applicable.

RAILWAYS: BUSES

Perth-Geraldton: Stopping Points

2300. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has Westrail received complaints as to the adequacy of toilet facilities at Chittering, used as a stopping point for Westrail buses travelling between Perth and Geraldton?
- (2) If "Yes", what action is being taken?
- (3) If "No" to (1), will he please have the situation examined?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes, but there have been no complaints made this year.

- (2) Westrail inspectorial staff visit road houses regularly and also bring any complaints to the notice of proprietors. On each occasion improvements have been evident on subsequent visits to the area concerned.

The great majority of Westrail road coaches on this route have toilet facilities.

- (3) Answered by (1).

RAILWAYS: BUSES

Perth-Geraldton: Stopping Points

2301. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of criticisms by passengers travelling by Westrail bus between Perth and Geraldton at the number of stops made en route?
- (2) To how many points between Perth and Geraldton is Westrail contracted to deliver mail by bus?
- (3) What are those places served by the bus mail service?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No, and the Commissioner for Railways advises me he is not aware of any criticism.
- (2) Three.
- (3) Bindoon, New Norcia, and Eneabba.

RAILWAYS: MARSHALLING YARDS

Meru

2302. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has he had the opportunity to examine the dispute between the Greenough Shire Council and Westrail concerning the future of the proposed marshalling yards site at Meru, as reported in the *Geraldton Guardian* of 30 September and raised by me in questions without notice on 1 October?
- (2) If "Yes", what progress is he able to report towards a solution to this problem?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) I am presently examining this matter and expect to be able to let the member have my advice shortly.

ROADS

Geraldton

2303. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) With reference to the Main Roads Department proposal for a "spine road" through Geraldton—

- (a) what arrangements have been made to acquire the necessary land;
- (b) what arrangements have been made with the Geraldton Town Council or other bodies concerning the funding of land acquisition;
- (c) what is the proposed timetable to construct such a "spine road";
- (d) what is the proposed timetable for land acquisition?

- (2) Specifically, what advice does he offer to the owner of a lot which has been earmarked as needed for the Place Road intersection and who is a young person, about to be married, who wishes to either build on the land or to sell it to put towards a block elsewhere?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) (a) to (d) No firm arrangements have been made. The proposal involves both the Geraldton Town Council and the Main Roads Department and there have been several discussions of the proposal over recent years without an agreement having been reached. Until a firm agreement has been reached, it is not possible to be specific in regard to the details requested.
- (2) Any owner with a specific problem should be advised to approach the main roads divisional engineer Geraldton for further information.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

In-course Seminars

2304. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

What is the current Education Department policy regarding leave for teachers attending education seminars and/or conferences in school time?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Professional organisations have been asked by the directors general in all States to arrange seminars and conferences on weekends or vacations and the majority do so. If a conference is held in school time each teacher's application is considered independently and leave may be granted if the conference or seminar is considered to have significant value both for the teacher and the department and if arrangements for the release of the teacher concerned can be made without disadvantaging students. Attendance is usually restricted to one or perhaps two teachers.

EDUCATION: REGIONAL OFFICE

Geraldton

2305. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 1617 of 1981—on the subject of the Geraldton regional education office—is he now able to advise whether a decision has been made concerning the future location of that office?

- (2) If "Yes", will he please advise the details?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) No. However, the subject is under close consideration and a decision is anticipated in the near future.

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Geraldton

2306. Mr CARR, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Regional Administration and the North West:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 538 of 1981 concerning the possibility of changing the title of the Greenough regional administration office to either Geraldton or Geraldton Mid-West to more easily identify the region served, has a decision yet been made?
- (2) If "Yes", what is the nature of that decision?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2) A decision on this matter has not yet been made.

DECENTRALISATION

Government Purchases

2307. Mr CARR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 540 of 1981 in which he advised that a report into Government Stores procurement was being submitted to Cabinet, is he now able to advise whether Cabinet has decided on a course of action?
- (2) If "Yes", what action is to be taken, especially in so far as decentralisation of Government Stores is concerned?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) A report on stores procurement by Government departments and authorities has been received by the Government and is under consideration. However, as substantial changes have been proposed that could affect instrumentalities which currently have authority to operate independently of Tender Board and the Government Stores system, the full implications of the recommendations will need to be carefully examined before any final decisions are made.

SEWERAGE: COUNTRY AREAS

Subsidy

2308. Mr TUBBY, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Since local authorities have been informed that the maximum subsidy under the country towns sewerage scheme is to be reduced from 85 per cent to 75 per cent of debt servicing costs from 1982-83, does the reduction apply to schemes now in operation or for new schemes?
- (2) If applying to schemes now in operation, what would the average additional costs be to residents now connected in the electorate of Greenough?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The proposed reduction applies to all subsidised sewerage schemes operated by local authorities.
- (2) The Morawa sewerage scheme is the only local authority controlled scheme within the Greenough electorate. The current intention is that the subsidy reduction will not apply until 1982-83 at which stage the Morawa residents will already be rated at the current maximum of 15c in the dollar.

HOSPITAL

Nickol Bay

2309. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that in December 1980 a contract for \$6.3 million was awarded to Concrete Constructions (WA) Pty Ltd for the construction of the Nickol Bay Hospital at Karratha?
- (2) Is it a fact that the cost of the project has increased significantly since the contract was awarded?
- (3) If any escalation in cost outside of the normal rise and fall variations has occurred, what is the reason for it?
- (4) What is the estimated total cost now of completing the project?
- (5) How much has the Woodside Petroleum Development Company contributed to the project to date and what will be their total contribution?
- (6) (a) Has Woodside agreed to contribute to the hospital's operating cost—
and
(b) if so, please provide details?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes. The figure of \$6.3m. included design and construction of the Nickol Bay Regional Hospital. Associated costs not included in the building contract are—

	\$
*land service charge	506 000
*furniture and equipment	750 000
*staff housing	360 000
supervision fees	281 000
contingency	175 000
fees to unsuccessful consortium	57 000
	<u>\$2 129 000</u>

*estimates—not expected to be exceeded

- (2) To date net variations to the original contract price have, in fact, resulted in a slight reduction on the \$6.3m. contract figure. No variations have occurred or are expected in associated costs listed in (1) above.
- (3) Other than normal rise and fall, the only cost increases have resulted from two Industrial Commission decisions—
 - (i) the granting of a site allowance to be effective from 15 April 1981; and
 - (ii) increase in location allowance — formerly district allowance — effective from 23 June 1981.

The estimated cost of these decisions over the contract period is \$170 000.

- (4) The estimated final cost of completing the total project, including rise and fall, award increases to date and associated costs as listed in (1) above is—

	\$
(i) contract price	6 300 000
normal rise and fall— est.	<u>795 000</u>
subtotal	7 095 000
(ii) award increases since contract awarded—est.	<u>170 000</u>
estimated building cost	7 265 000
(iii) associated costs— as in (1) above	<u>2 129 000</u>
project cost—	<u>\$9 394 000</u>

as at 30 September, 1981

- (5) The total agreed figure to be contributed by Woodside was \$5 373 000 which amount has been paid.

(6) (a) Yes;

- (b) the contribution by Woodside is made up of \$2 428 500 to cover a proportion of capital works outlay and \$2 944 500 to cover the estimated cost of providing hospital services during the construction phase.

HOSPITAL: ROYAL PERTH

North Block

2310. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Who is the consultant chosen to assist in reassessing plans for the Royal Perth Hospital north block?
- (2) When is the reassessment due to commence and has a date been set for its completion?
- (3) If the reassessment results in a recommendation to the Government to proceed forthwith with construction, has any money been put aside in the Budget for this purpose?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Charles M. Campbell and Associates Pty. Ltd.
- (2) The reassessment has already commenced. Anticipated date of completion of phase 1 of reassessment—the master plan—end of January 1982. Anticipated date of completion of functional design and brief—end of April 1982.
- (3) Irrespective of the recommendation of the consultant, in view of the anticipated date of completion of the functional design and brief, no funds for construction will be required in 1981-82.

HEALTH

Irrabeen Centre

2311. Mr HODGE, to the Treasurer:

With reference to Item 14, Mental Health Service, in the Estimates of Expenditure, General Loan Fund for the year ending 30 June 1982, can he provide details of the expenditure on improvements to Irrabeen—amounting to \$76 661—during 1980-81?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

	\$
Erection and construction costs	36 237
Professional fees	33
Furniture and equipment	36 280
Landscaping	60
Roads, parking areas, fencing	580
Miscellaneous	3 471
	<hr/>
1980-81 expenditure total	\$76 661

PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

Federal Inquiry

2312. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has his attention been drawn to an article in the *Daily News* of 13 October which states that the Federal Government intends to appoint a Senate Select Committee of inquiry into private hospitals and nursing homes?
- (2) Can he confirm if the details of the article are accurate?
- (3) If the committee of inquiry is appointed and does hold hearings in Western Australia, will he ensure that all departments and officers under his control co-operate fully with the inquiry?
- (4) Will he give an undertaking that if the committee finds deficiencies in the administration or operation of private nursing homes and/or private hospitals in this State, he will take action to see that the deficiencies are eliminated?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes, although State Government has received no official information.
- (3) It is our normal practice to co-operate with such committees of inquiry. When the terms of reference are known, a decision will be made as to how we can co-operate.
- (4) The findings of the committee will be considered and any action deemed necessary will be taken.

HEALTH: MENTAL

Saint Committee

2313. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When is it expected that the Saint committee of inquiry into the treatment of mental illness will be completed?
- (2) Has the committee sought or invited submissions from the public or from groups or individuals with a special interest in the treatment of mental illness?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) I have not given the committee a date by which the inquiry should be completed.
The completion date will be dependent upon the number of submissions received. I understand the committee will attempt to report to me in March 1982.
- (2) The committee will be making public, in the very near future, that submissions are invited from interested parties.

HOSPITALS: TEACHING

Budgets

2314. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the budgets or operating deficits for each of the teaching hospitals for the 1981-82 financial year?
- (2) What is the percentage increase or decrease as the case may be for each hospital compared to last year's allocation?

- (3) How much, is it anticipated, will each of the teaching hospitals raise in the financial year from fees and charges?
- (4) On what date was each teaching hospital advised of its Budget allocation?
- (5) (a) Did any of the teaching hospitals exceed their budget last year;
(b) if so, please provide details?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) The budgeted operating deficits are—

Fremantle Hospital	\$25 356 000
King Edward Memorial Hospital.....	\$14 415 000
Princess Margaret Hospital.....	\$21 511 000
Royal Perth Hospital	\$69 143 000
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.....	\$39 252 000
(2) Fremantle Hospital... (—)	6.2 per cent
King Edward Memorial Hospital..... (—)	2.2 per cent
Princess Margaret Hospital..... (—)	1.6 per cent
Royal Perth Hospital..... (—)	3.7 per cent
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital..... (—)	6.6 per cent

The decrease in the allocation indicated above between 1980-81 and 1981-82 is the result of—

- (a) the additional income expected to be received from new and increased charges from 1 September 1981; and
- (b) the fact that the allocation for 1981-82 does not include an allowance for wage increases during this period. Such additional costs will be added to the above allocations up to the limit of the funds available to the department for this purpose in 1981-82,

- (3) Fremantle Hospital \$ 5 251 000 || King Edward Memorial Hospital..... | \$ 4 753 000 |
| Princess Margaret Hospital..... | \$ 4 353 000 |
| Royal Perth Hospital | \$18 496 000 |
| Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital | \$12 064 000 |
- (4) 13 and 14 October 1981.

- (5) (a) No;
(b) not applicable.

HEALTH

Quo Vadis Centre

2315. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he guarantee that no vacant positions within Government employment will be filled unless they have first been offered to suitably qualified persons being retrenched from Quo Vadis?
- (2) Will he give an assurance that adequate compensation will be paid to any worker unable to be placed in alternative Government employment?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Every endeavour is made through the Public Service Board to find suitable alternative employment, but the Government cannot give an absolute guarantee that a suitable placement will be available.
- (2) Workers who are not placed in alternative Government employment will receive their award entitlements. The Government's present policy precludes the payment of severance pay.

STATE FINANCE

Loan Estimates

2316. Dr DADOUR, to the Treasurer:

In his Loan Estimate speech—page 5—he referred to a total works programme of \$672.1 million for 1981-82. Would he kindly itemise the source of the funds and the utilisation of those funds of—

- (a) internal funds of Government authorities—\$101.4 million; and
- (b) other funds—\$126.2 million?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) and (b) Internal funds of Government authorities comprise depreciation provisions, operating surpluses, if any, and unexpended balances carried forward from the previous year.

The category "other funds" embraces all other sources of funds including private borrowings and contributions by other bodies.

All of these funds form part of the pool of funds employed to finance the works programme and cannot be identified with specific works.

If the member studies the General Loan Fund Estimates he will see that the sources of funds in addition to the proposed General Loan Fund appropriation are identified for each item which itself embraces a number of works.

Following that examination, which could well provide the explanation he is seeking, he may wish to follow up his point with a more specific question.

AGRICULTURAL LICE

Properties

2317. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many properties were quarantined in Western Australia for lice in each of the past three years?
- (2) How many are quarantined at present?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 1978—781.
1979—775.
1980—857.
1981—until 30 September—508.
- (2) 723.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Lake Coogee

2318. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Are the waters of Lake Coogee monitored?
- (2) If "Yes", what is the frequency and when were they last monitored?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) It is understood by the Minister for Conservation and the Environment that monitoring in respect of both level and quality is or has been undertaken by the Metropolitan Water Board and the Public Health Department.

WATER RESOURCES

Lake Coogee

2319. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Are the waters of Lake Coogee monitored?
- (2) If "Yes", what is the frequency and when were they last monitored?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Lake Coogee is monitored both for level and for total dissolved salts.
- (2) Since 1972 lake levels have been taken on a regular monthly basis and since 1970 testing for total dissolved solids has been carried out at the end of summer and the end of winter. Both actions have been more frequent over the last two and a half months. The last lake level was taken on 20 October and the last salinity test on 16 October.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Yangebup

2320. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Transport:

With respect to the new urban development at Lake Yangebup, is there

any intention to increase Metropolitan Transport Trust bus services to and from the area in the immediate future?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I am advised that there are no plans to operate a bus service to this area in the immediate future, but the situation is being kept under review.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Jandakot and Yangebup

2321. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

What will be the status of the present Jandakot School, Beenyup Road, when the new Yangebup Primary School is opened?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Jandakot Primary School, currently a Class III Primary School, will be reclassified to a Class II Primary School as from the beginning of the 1982 school year.

ROADS

Coolbellup

2322. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Transport:

With respect to the southern extension of North Lake Road, Coolbellup when is the section through to Forrest Road, Hope Road, expected to be open to traffic?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

This road is under the control of the City of Cockburn. From inquiries that have been made, it is understood that council will have completed the construction by about May 1982.

EDUCATION: FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Policy

2323. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many of the 29 pre-primary centres in the metropolitan area made available earlier this year for use by

play groups for four-year-olds, are currently being used for this purpose?

- (2) How many play groups are operating in each centre and what is the estimated number of children involved?
- (3) What level of assistance will the Government offer to community based pre-school centres which decide to continue offering pre-school education to four-year-olds?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) 13.
- (2) Two centres have two groups, the other 11 centres have one group. 218 "four-year-olds" are involved.
In addition to the play groups in the 29 nominated centres, a further 69 play groups catering for 910 four-year-olds operate in other metropolitan pre-school centres or pre-primary centres.
Several thousand four-year-olds are enrolled in 380 venues other than pre-school centres or pre-primary centres.
- (3) Within very strict limits imposed by the Budget, a measure of assistance such as part funding may be available. The amount will depend upon the number of centres deciding to follow this option.

HOUSING: ABORIGINES

Aboriginal Housing Board: Rental

2324. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission process applications from Aborigines for rental accommodation or are such applications referred automatically to the Aboriginal Housing Board?
- (2) If the referral is not automatic, on what basis are—
 - (a) some applicants referred to the Aboriginal Housing Board;
 - (b) other applicants allocated accommodation by the commission?

- (3) Why are applicants continuing to be referred to the Aboriginal Housing Board when it must be known in advance that it is quite likely that there will be lengthy delays in allocating houses even in urgent cases due to a waiting list in excess of 700, as opposed to vacancies awaiting allocation in the order of 10?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) The State Housing Commission processes all applications for Rental Housing Assistance regardless of the applicants' ethnic origin.
- (2) (a) and (b) Answered in question 2257.
- (3) There are waiting lists both in the Commonwealth-State rental scheme and the Aboriginal housing scheme. The limits in Commonwealth funding do not permit a building programme to satisfy immediate demand. This Government has repeatedly asked the Commonwealth Government for additional funds. There is however an emergency housing scheme to cater for extreme cases of hardship.
The 10 vacancies referred to are relevant to the metropolitan area and the waiting list in the metropolitan area is 131 applications.

HOUSING: STATE HOUSING COMMISSION

Mirraboopa Office

2325. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that the Mirrabooka regional office of the State Housing Commission is refusing to co-operate with the Distressed Persons Relief Trust and the Department for Community Welfare in arranging urgent inspections on the basis of funds pre-allocated or held in trust to substantially or completely clear outstanding arrears for applicants with critical accommodation problems?

- (2) Is it the practice of the commission to mark files "No inspection until full amount paid" in such cases even when a relief agency has indicated a willingness to provide substantial or complete financial assistance?
- (3) Is he also aware that in cases where children are in the temporary care of the Department for Community Welfare due to their parents' inability to provide an adequate home, the commission requires the Department for Community Welfare to commit itself about the return of children to the care of their parents prior to any firm indication from the commission of any firm offer of adequate accommodation to the parents?
- (4) Will he undertake to investigate these bureaucratic practices and have them humanised?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) Where there is an outstanding debt from a previous tenancy, the commission will accept an undertaking from the distressed persons relief trust and the Department for Community Welfare, that a payment will be made to reduce substantial arrears, but may pend the application and inspection until such time that the applicant shows by consistent personal endeavour, within his means, that his attitude and intent to honour commitments has changed. If the payment clears the arrears, inspection and application acceptance is immediate.
- (2) No. File and application may be pended in some cases until the applicant shows the intent described in (1) above. If severe medical circumstances exist the inspection will be made irrespective of arrears.
- (3) Yes, it is necessary to take this step to have a clear indication of the size of the family to be housed.
- (4) No, I am quite satisfied with current policies and practices which are kept under review by the executive officers of the commission.

HOUSING: INTEREST RATES

Mortgage Assessment and Relief Committee: Review

2326. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware of a statement by the St. Vincent de Paul Society that they are now receiving many more calls for emergency assistance from suburbs such as Hillarys and other private housing areas, than from lower income areas, as a result of increased home mortgage repayments, due to spiralling interest rates?
- (2) In view of this information supplied by welfare workers in close touch with the actual situation confronting increasing numbers of established home buyers, is he prepared to review the basis of the Government's mortgage assessment and relief committee so that it is better able to cope with the full extent of hardship now being experienced?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) No, but home buyers experiencing genuine hardship as a result of higher interest rates regardless of location should be advised to make application through their lending authority for mortgage relief under the mortgage assessment and relief scheme.
- (2) As in the reply to question 2189 the guidelines are flexible and do not require alteration.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL BOOKS

Assistance Scheme

2327. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What was the expenditure on school book assistance to needy families in the 1980-81 financial year?
- (2) How many grants of assistance did this represent?
- (3) What increase did this represent in expenditure and numbers of grants over and above the corresponding figure for 1979-80?

- (4) With regard to the \$200 000 which has been allocated in the 1981-82 Budget for school book assistance to needy families, what income level and other considerations will be taken into account in deciding on eligibility for these grants?
- (5) How will parents be made aware of the availability of this assistance?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) \$200 558.
- (2) The scheme is administered by the schools which determine eligibility. The schools in turn make a block claim for recoup to the department and exact figures are not available—estimated at approximately 4 000.
- (3) Expenditure for 1979-80—\$208 344. The number of claims was approximately 4 100.
- (4) The total funds available will be approximately doubled. As a consequence the scheme will be available to an increased number of needy families. Details concerning the income level to be applied and the level of assistance to be provided are being finalised and will be advised to school principals during November.
- (5) Through the schools at the time of enrolment and through other welfare agencies.

HOUSING

Disabled Persons

2328. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What provisions are made for disabled persons in State Housing Commission guidelines?
- (2) Apart from a preparedness to modify houses for disabled persons, what is the commission's policy with regard to houses being designed and built with disabled persons in mind?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) The member is referred to the answer to question 531 in Legislative Council dated 22 September 1981.

- (2) Aged persons' units are designed and built specifically to provide for complete access to wheel chair bound tenants. The commission considers that the long-standing policy of modifying accommodation when and where the requirement arises, and to meet the specific needs of that particular disabled person, is the most effective. Building the accommodation designed for disabled persons generates social, location, design suitability, and tenancy problems.

EDUCATION

Endowment Grants

2329. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When will parents be able to apply for education endowment grants for 1982 and how will information on applying for these grants be made available to parents?
- (2) What will be the closing date for application for these grants?
- (3) What will be the total amount available for the allocation of such grants in 1983?
- (4) What body is responsible for allocating these grants and who is represented on this body?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Applications are now being received until the closing date of the 30 November 1981. Details of the grant were published in the October edition of the education circular which is forwarded to all efficient schools in the State.
- (2) 30 November 1981.
- (3) The amount will be determined at a meeting of the Education Endowment Trust towards the end of 1982.
- (4) The Education Endowment Trust selection committee. The committee comprises a member of the trust, a representative of the WA Council of State School Organisations, and a senior departmental officer.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Charges: Rebates

2330. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware of the statement in the report on the State Energy Commission action group proposal for rebated electricity and gas charges, that "Given present indications, it is likely that the number of bad domestic energy debts to the State Energy Commission and disconnections will continue to rise and that existing Department for Community Welfare emergency relief services will be placed under increased pressure"?
- (2) If "Yes", what extra provision has the Government made in the current Budget to meet this anticipated increased pressure?
- (3) What degree in the likely increase in demand for emergency relief did the Government have in mind in fixing the allocation of \$825 000 in the Budget?
- (4) In what circumstances is the Government prepared to subsequently review this allocation, if at all?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No specific increased allocation was made for emergency relief payments for unpaid State Energy Commission accounts; however, the total allocation for overall emergency relief has been increased from an actual \$756 279 in 1980-81 to \$825 000 in 1981-82.
- (3) The amount allocated represents an increase of over 9 per cent and is considered sufficient to meet the needs of those people who would qualify under the Welfare and Assistance Act for assistance.
- (4) All activities of the Government and its departments are kept under constant review.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

State Library: Hours

2331. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Are there proposals to change the hours when the State Library will be open to the public?
- (2) If so, what changes are proposed?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The Library Board of Western Australia is required under the provisions of the 1981-82 State Budget to economise on salary costs to the extent of \$40 000. The board believes that the only way to achieve this saving will be to reduce the hours of opening of the State Reference Library to the public. Details of the proposed changes are under urgent consideration, but these will be devised so as to minimise the inconvenience to users of the State Reference Library.
- (2) Details will be announced following the meeting of the Library Board on 5 November 1981.

ABATTOIR

Robb Jetty: Future

2332. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the future of the Robb Jetty abattoir?
- (2) Will there be any retrenchments or other job losses at the abattoir?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) It is Government policy to maintain a service abattoir in Western Australia.
- (2) Staff levels are under continuous review and are obviously related to throughput.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Fremantle Prison

2333. Mr PARKER, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Have there been any reported or suspected cases of—
 - (a) rape;
 - (b) other sexual assault; or
 - (c) any other assault;
 in Fremantle Prison in the last month?

- (2) If "Yes" to any of the above, what are they, and what action is the Government taking?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) (a) Yes;
(b) no;
(c) no.
- (2) On 28 September 1981 a prisoner alleged that he had been raped by another prisoner on 11 September 1981. The matter was reported to the Fremantle CIB, which investigated the incident. At the conclusion of investigations, the complainant was charged by the CIB for making a false complaint.
- On 29 September, 1981 the complainant appeared in the Fremantle Court of Petty Sessions and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment cumulative.

PRISON: FREMANTLE

Dysentery Outbreak

2334. Mr PARKER, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Has an outbreak of dysentery occurred at Fremantle Prison in the past month?
- (2) Is it still a problem?
- (3) What is its extent?
- (4) What is adjudged to be the cause, and what will the Government do to prevent further outbreaks?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) There has not been an outbreak of dysentery at Fremantle Prison in the last month. However, over the period of 2 to 4 September, a mild form of diarrhoea and vomiting occurred among a small group of prisoners, the majority of whom were working in the kitchen.
- (2) All cases were promptly identified and carriers were isolated. There is no longer any problem.

- (3) At the height of the outbreak, there was a total of 14 cases.

- (4) Salmonella contamination was the cause. It is suspected that contaminated chickens were the origin. New food handling and preparation procedures have been implemented. Random faecal tests are carried out on food handlers. All kitchen workers are now subject to medical checks prior to being employed.

ABATTOIR: ROBB JETTY

Freight Terminal

2335. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the future of the freight terminal at Robb Jetty?
- (2) Is there any proposal to relocate the terminal or people working there, and if so, what is it?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) No decision has been made on the future of Robb Jetty, at this stage. As indicated in response to question 2110 on 13 October the future of Westrail's "smalls" and parcels freight business is presently under consideration. Handling of this freight at Robb Jetty could be affected. Railway staff at Robb Jetty have been informed of the alternatives under consideration.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WATER RESOURCES: EFFLUENT

Woodman Point: Raw Sewage

643. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Some notice has been given of this question which is as follows—

Referring to the member for Rockingham's question without notice yesterday, and his utterances to the media, can the Minister now state that the malicious implication about the Metropolitan Water

Board emitting raw sewage to Cockburn Sound are absolutely false?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

I thank the member for Mundaring for some notice of the question, and I ask the member for Rockingham to accept the answer I am about to give as discharging the undertaking I gave him yesterday that I would examine the situation to which he referred. The reply is as follows—

It is absolutely untrue to claim that any untreated faeces encountered in Cockburn Sound some three weeks ago could have come from the metropolitan sewerage system. There is no way that untreated faeces could have passed through the Woodman Point waste water treatment plant, nor is there any chance that it was bypassed.

Detection of faeces is not an uncommon occurrence in enclosed or semi enclosed water such as Cockburn Sound which are heavily frequented by pleasure craft operating without toilet facilities and/or without holding tanks, and in summertime by thousands of bathers.

No solids of this kind could possibly be released, but in any event it can be categorically stated that there was no bypass operation by the board.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

Medical Practitioners: Financial Interest

644. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Health:

On 13 October last—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Rockingham wish to take a point of order?

Mr Barnett: No.

The SPEAKER: Then I ask him to desist from the practice he just followed then which seemed to indicate perhaps that I cannot see quite clearly. In my view, the member for Subiaco was the first to rise, and I gave him the call. The member for Subiaco.

Dr DADOUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On 13 October 1981, in reply to a question without notice of the member for Melville, the Minister for Health indicated that a recent conference of Health Ministers had recommended to the Federal Government that the details of ownership of private hospitals and nursing homes should be revealed before Government benefits are paid. The Minister indicated also that he would discuss the conference item with the Commissioner of Public Health. Is the Minister now in a position to reveal the result of that discussion?

Mr YOUNG replied:

I am now in a position to clarify the matter. The proposal was made by South Australia and it said in effect that the Commonwealth be asked to require clarification of the ownership of private hospitals and nursing homes and to consider a provision that benefits would not be paid to those in which doctors had a direct or indirect financial interest.

I am advised that there was some general discussion on the matter, but no firm recommendation was made and the Commonwealth Minister for Health indicated that he would prefer to await a report from the recently announced Senate inquiry into private hospitals and nursing homes. I do not have a firm view on the matter and I am also prepared to await the outcome of the inquiry.

RECREATION: OFFICERS

Local Government: Funding

645. Mr WILSON, to the Premier:

(1) Can he confirm that the Government is proposing to pay only 50 per cent of the

salary of recreation officers assigned by the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation to local government authorities as from next July?

- (2) If this is not the Government's intention, what changes, if any, are being considered to funding for recreation officers assigned to local authorities?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) I suggest that the member for Dianella take an early opportunity to look at the Press statement which was released today, and which I believe has been tabled by the Minister for Local Government. The statement sets out a number of areas in which discussions have taken place and about which further discussions will take place regarding arrangements between the State Government and local government in 1982-83.

The matter which the member has raised is one of those referred to in that statement, and it is one of those which was the subject of discussion.

I will amplify the statement by saying that a number of proposals were put forward by the expenditure review committee and it was felt that it would be unfair to talk to local government about implementing them during the 1981-82 year because in most cases the authorities had struck their budgets and their rates.

We do not want to do to local government what was done to us by the Commonwealth Government. So discussions took place on 2 October—if my memory is correct—and there has been correspondence between the Government and the local government associations in the meantime. There will be further correspondence.

I suggest to the member for Dianella that he look at the Press statement and he will see in it the range of areas which are the subject of discussion.

RECREATION: OFFICERS

Local Government: Funding

646. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

Not having had the benefit of the Press release to which the Premier referred, I would like to address another question to him, as follows—

In cases where recreation officers lose employment with local authorities due to the proposed 50 per cent reduction in the Government's contribution towards their salaries, will they be offered alternative employment in some other Public Service area?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The whole question of the basis on which any changes will take place is to be the subject of discussion. The general concept is that if the scheme is persisted with as from 1 July 1982 the officers concerned will be the employees of local government, and the Government will accept the responsibility for half their remuneration. In regard to the conditions that will operate—for instance, if a local authority did not want to go along with the scheme—the matter would have to be discussed.

I remind members that rather than present this to the local authorities as something of a *fait accompli*—a situation which the State Government unfortunately has experienced—we have given them a great deal of notice of what might be the new order in 1982-83. We have indicated our willingness to discuss any technical matters that arise, particularly in regard to employment.

Generally speaking local authorities have responded by expressing appreciation of the fact that the Government saw fit to confer with them. They seem to understand that they have received much better financial treatment than have the States.

Last year the allocation to local government from tax sharing was 36 per cent up on the year before. This year it has been increased by 16 per cent, and the expected increase next year will be not less than 18 per cent. It is in that context that initial discussions have taken place, but off the cuff I would not foreshadow the exact arrangements which will be decided upon until after discussions have taken place about the individuals concerned. In any case, I believe the discussions will get down to individual cases rather than generalities.

RECREATION: OFFICERS

Local Government: Funding

647. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is she aware of a letter which has gone out to all local authorities from the Local Government Association and the Country Shire Councils Association advising that the Government is proposing to reduce its contribution towards funding for recreation officers assigned by the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation by 50 per cent?
- (2) Was this letter sent at her request or that of her department or on the basis of information provided by her or her department?
- (3) Does she intend to communicate directly with local authorities on this matter and if not, why not?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) to (3) I am not aware of the particular letter to which the member referred, so obviously it was not sent at my direction or at

the direction of my department. I would assume that perhaps it was circularised by the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. However, as the Premier said, he has had discussions with executives of the Local Government Association, and the matters discussed at that time have been confirmed in writing. Since then, members of the Local Government Association, the Country Shire Councils Association, and the Country Urban Councils Association have all received copies of the letters setting out the six matters for future discussions. Recreation officers are referred to in that general letter, but I have not seen the specific letter to which the member refers.

LAND

Industrial Lands Development Authority

648. Mr TRETOWAN, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) Has any decision been made by the Industrial Lands Development Authority concerning a lease of lot 18, Jervoise Bay shipyards?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) to whom is the site to be leased;
 - (b) were other companies considered as possible lessees;
 - (c) what steps were taken to ensure that the interests of all companies wishing to lease the site were properly taken into account?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, the reply to which is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Lombardo Marine Group Pty. Ltd.;
- (b) yes;

(c) the secretary of the authority and the Deputy Director of the Department of Industrial Development and Commerce interviewed all interested companies, inspected their current operations and discussed their proposals for use of the site. The final decision by the authority to lease lot 18 to Lombardo Marine Group Pty. Ltd. was taken in the light of the subsequent report.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Strike Breakers

649. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Minister's attention been drawn to an article in *The Weekend Australian* of 17 and 18 October claiming that the Liberal Party of WA is attempting to create an emergency team of strike breakers?
- (2) Can the Minister confirm or deny the accuracy of this report?
- (3) Is the Minister aware of any current industrial dispute involving waterside workers and the export of wheat?
- (4) Does this activity have the support of the Government?
- (5) Does the Minister agree that any such provocative action to recruit strike breakers would do nothing but harm labour relations in this State?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The only information I have about this particular incident is what I saw in the Press.
- (2) and (3) No.
- (4) and (5) The matter has not come to the notice of the Government and no decision has been made on it at all.

Mr Parker: Do you support it or not?

Mr O'CONNOR: The member asked me the Government's view, and I said that it had not been brought to the notice of the Government.

Mr Parker: I have brought it to the Government's notice now, and I am asking the question.

Mr O'CONNOR: I know only what I have read in the paper, and I am not prepared to support or oppose something that has not been proved.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

MTT: Midland-Midvale

650. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the bus service from Midland bus terminal along Great Eastern Highway into Ferguson Street, Midvale Place, Wellaton Street, Hooley Road, Ferguson Street, Great Eastern Highway, and back to the terminal, been discontinued?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), what were the reasons for its cancellation?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Because of the lack of patronage and the close proximity of other services.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE BILL

Chiropractors

651. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Because of the ongoing concern about the role of chiropractors in the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Bill, will he indicate whether the proposed new Act will permit a worker, who has been signed off work by a medical practitioner for a back injury, to opt to receive treatment from a chiropractor and have such treatment paid for under workers' compensation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Yes, that can be done, and it is provided for under the Workers' Compensation Act. Contrary to the indication given in the Press this morning by the

chiropractors, when two lists of schedules were shown, I state that neither of those schedules is included in past, present, or, as far as I am concerned, future legislation on this matter. They are private certificates drawn up by arrangement between the chiropractors and the insurance companies. They have nothing to do with the Bill.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: STATE LIBRARY

Funding Cutbacks

652. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

In relation to library services, the Minister for Education advised me today that the hours of the State Reference Library are likely to be restricted because of the need to cut down on the money paid to staff. In view of that situation, and a separate situation in the City of Canning where one library cannot open because it has no books and it is unable to obtain a grant to equip it with books, can he make an urgent review of the Government's policy, with a view to making certain that adequate library services are provided throughout the whole State?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I understand some problems of a detailed nature have been experienced in connection with matters such as the ones to which the member is referring. However, I remind him that the Government has treated the library services of this State in a very generous way, and it will continue to do so.

I do not know the details of the Canning incident to which the member refers so I will not comment on it. No doubt, from time to time there will be cases where things do not click into the time scales available either to the local authority or to the library services.

The library services are a very good community service. They have to be catered for within the total budgetary

capacity of the Government. Anyone who said that the Government had not treated the library services reasonably over a period of years would be quite unfair and, in most cases, uninformed.

The Government is committed to proceeding with the library building although some people have said, "Why go on with that when we would like to have more money for books?" However, if one asked the people who are working in the library services, one would find they would be the first to admit that if they had the right premises, they would be able to give a better service, and to plan the future of library services on a proper basis. Therefore we made a decision to proceed with the capital works side of the library services by building the Alexander Library. Hopefully it will be finished in 1984.

We have treated that as quite separate from the running costs of the library services. I will have a look at the Canning situation to learn the facts; but in my experience in the past, when I have had a case similar to that, it has been a failure to co-ordinate the timetable for the availability of funds. I will give the matter consideration.

TRAFFIC: RTA

Roadblocks Campaign

653. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

I refer to his answer to question 2294 of today. How on earth does the Government expect to be able to assess adequately the effectiveness of the roadblocks campaign if it does not keep separate records of the campaigns as compared with other periods?

Mr HASSELL replied:

It seems to be overlooked in some of the comments made about the activities of the Road Traffic Authority that the RTA conducts continuing campaigns on the roads to ensure the enforcement of the law. Sometimes it is made out that

the RTA is doing nothing except when it conducts a blitz; and of course that is not accurate.

Mr Carr: No-one said that.

Mr HASSELL: From time to time the RTA conducts blitzes to raise the level of public awareness of the rules and regulations, and to bring home the likelihood of apprehension. That is what the blitzes are all about.

Prior to the last Christmas period and the last Easter period, the RTA made some analyses of the effect of these campaigns—

Mr McIver: Are you talking about the Road Traffic Authority or the police road traffic patrol?

Mr HASSELL: —conducted by the RTA, and the results of them. The results of the analyses have been publicised in various ways by me and by the RTA. However, since they were completed—

Mr Carr: Why would you not give them to the Parliament this afternoon?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: The specific question of the member for Geraldton was whether a separate record was kept in relation to the so-called roadblocks, which are not accurately described in that way because they are not blockages of the road. The officers call certain people off the road. There has been no separate analysis of those, because no benefit would be gained by our doing so. The information regarding those could not be separated from the overall RTA campaign, which involves a number of aspects.

It has never been a policy of the Road Traffic Authority purely and simply to conduct roadblocks.

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: If the member for Geraldton wants some generalised information about the effectiveness of the RTA's campaign, that can be made available to him; but from the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition and the

member for Geraldton, it appears that they do not take the matter very seriously, anyway.

Mr Brian Burke: You fop! You secretive fop!

The SPEAKER: Order!

MINING: DIAMONDS

Sorting

654. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Is he aware of the rip-off which occurs in some diamond-producing regions of the world where sorting is not carried out in the country of origin?
- (2) Can he inform the Parliament that the sorting of diamonds produced on the Ashton field in Western Australia will be carried out in Western Australia, under strict Government supervision?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) As the member would be aware, and in accordance with the statements which have been made from time to time, the Government has collected a considerable amount of information from officers of the Government and persons with knowledge of the industry who have travelled overseas, with a view to collecting information of a general statutory nature in relation to the control of the industry, and the monitoring in various parts of the world. All that advice and information have been made available to us.
- (2) This question will be answered when the member sees the terms of the agreement which has been finalised.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Refunds

655. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

I refer to the Minister's comment in *The West Australian* of 21 February 1979 in which he stated that there was

no specific legal obligation in the Trade Practices Act on sellers to provide a cash refund for defective goods and his reiteration in this House on 29 March 1979 that there was no legal requirement to refund money if goods were found to be defective and that notices denying this right were neither misleading nor illegal, and ask—

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the 1980-81 report of the Bureau of Consumer Affairs — rather belatedly, admittedly—stated that the prevalence of “no cash refund” signs was of concern to the bureau and that signs of this nature were apt to grossly mislead consumers?
- (2) Is he now prepared to admit his advice to the media and his later advice to this House was wrong, as indicated in this year’s report?

Mr O’CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

ABATTOIR: GERALDTON

Assistance

656. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Is the Minister now in a position to inform me of the amount and type of assistance afforded to the Geraldton abattoir in each of the past three years?

Mr OLD replied:

Assistance has been provided in the form of rail freight subsidies, interest subsidies, and pay-roll tax concessions under the Assistance to Decentralized Industry Act, as follows—

	\$
1978-79	11 130
1979-80	22 102
1980-81	34 462

In the first two years a virtual subsidy was paid to producers for the transport of lambs from north of Gidgegannup to Geraldton.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

North-West Shelf: Japanese Customers

657. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Would the Minister agree it is essential for the North-West Shelf partners to obtain a contract for the supply of liquefied natural gas to the Japanese for them to use as collateral to raise the funds necessary to pay for the facilities to provide that gas?
- (2) Would the Minister not agree that if a contract is not signed within the next six to eight months at the outside, this project could be jeopardised?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) I have already answered this question. To begin with, as I am sure the member would be aware, we are not dealing with the same joint venturers in relation to the LNG operation as we are with the first part of the domestic gas programme, and their funding arrangements and collateral requirements—which are their business—will be different, one from the other. As to the necessity of each of the partners to have a contract, that is their business; it is not my business, and it is not the member’s.
- (2) I do not think that is the question the member meant to ask. The question he is asking is, “Will there be a commitment to the construction of the LNG plant within the time frame required?” My information, received as late as this week, is that there will be such a commitment. I indicated to the member yesterday that the time frame given to me within which the LNG plant would be ready for the first shipment in 1986 would require a commitment on a set date. As the member may be aware, the joint venturers involved in this operation are proceeding down their critical path as to the time frame which will enable them to complete the project in time for the first shipment.