

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 2nd August, 1978

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

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (12): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Death Duty Act Amendment Bill.
2. Death Duty Assessment Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

3. Land Valuers Licensing Bill.
4. Acts Amendment (Land Valuers) Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary), and read a first time.

5. Firearms Act Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Minister for Police and Traffic), and read a first time.

6. Suitors' Fund Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

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

7. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
8. Wheat Marketing Act Amendment and Continuance Bill.
9. Abattoirs Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.

10. Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill.

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

11. Youth, Sport and Recreation Bill.

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

12. Teachers' Registration Act Repeal Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr P. V.

Jones (Minister for Education), and read a first time.

BILLS (2): THIRD READING

1. Health Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Ridge (Minister for Health), and transmitted to the Council.

2. Security Agents Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Minister for Police and Traffic), and transmitted to the Council.

CENSORSHIP OF FILMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary), and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (4): THIRD READING

1. Suitors' Fund Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary), and transmitted to the Council.

2. Land Drainage Act Amendment Bill.
3. Water Boards Act Amendment Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Water Supplies), and transmitted to the Council.

4. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

PORT AUTHORITY REGULATIONS: DISALLOWANCE

Motion: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): It has come to my notice that an appeal currently lies before the Full Court which deals, in some respects, with the validity of the regulations the subject of the notice of motion standing in the name of the member for Avon.

As this is the case, I am not willing to risk infringement of the rule and practice in this

House in connection with matters *sub judice* and I therefore direct that the notice of motion be placed at the bottom of the notice paper until the appeal has been determined.

CYCLONE "ALBY"

Relief for Orchardists and Farmers: Motion

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [5.18 p.m.]: I move—

In the opinion of the House the Government should—

- (a) make a comprehensive statement on the disbursement of funds to farmers and orchardists who made application for assistance following cyclone Alby; and
- (b) should re-examine the needs of applicants and the criteria under which it was granted.

Members will recall when cyclone "Alby" struck I drew to the attention of the House a number of matters which required consideration by the Government. I was criticised very strongly, mainly by the Premier and the Deputy Premier and I hope to deal with that criticism a little later in my speech.

The necessity for my motion is very clear. I am not introducing it on my own initiative, but as a result of a request by several orchardists, farmers, and businessmen in my electorate, and a similar request to the member for Warren by a number of people who have been affected in his electorate. I am not moving the motion in order to criticise the emergency relief operations and it is not my intention to gain any advantage as a result of my motion. I have moved it in all honesty because of a very real need which I will prove by the evidence I will submit. The Government should re-examine the amounts of money paid out and the basis on which each application was dealt with.

Many orchardists and farmers are still not happy with the level of help provided and the criteria on which the money was made available during the tragedy. In my view the aftermath of cyclone "Alby" has revealed many deficiencies in natural disaster relief and it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that those who are affected, and will be affected by the cyclone for some years to come, have some redress so that they can be assisted in their financial obligations. I am sure the Minister for Agriculture would be fully aware of those financial obligations following his discussions with local authorities and the inspections he made which were similar to the ones I made.

I am simply asking the Government to review the situation. Government officials should visit the areas involved to ascertain at first hand what occurred. They should talk to the people who have been affected. That is all I am asking the Government to do. I am not here to criticise what has been done, because everyone involved in the emergency relief acted speedily and responsibly.

However, there are certain grey areas which must be considered. Many farmers are heavily involved financially and their situation must be studied in order that some relief might be extended to them.

I do not want it to be said that I am speaking with any intention of gaining political advantage. I am simply trying to ensure that those people who are still in dire straits as a result of cyclone "Alby" are afforded some relief.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable member please resume his seat? I ask members to keep the level of their casual conversation down in order that the *Hansard* reporters, the Speaker, and the Clerks can at least hear the member who is on his feet.

Mr T. H. JONES: I would like to congratulate those who were associated with the emergency relief. From the investigations I have made I have ascertained that everyone concerned acted as humanely as possible within the limits of the provisions applying to the relief organisation generally. However, there are a number of shortcomings to which I wish to draw attention, and I hope that the Government will re-examine them.

The impact of cyclone "Alby" is still being felt by farmers, orchardists, and business people throughout the south-west of the State. As the Deputy Premier would know, the local authorities are in dire straits because the roads in their areas suffered substantial damage. Those shires which are responsible for seaside resorts were hard hit because of the damage the cyclone created on the beachfronts. In addition, further damage was caused by falling trees.

Homes, properties, and fences were damaged. Stock, crops, and fruit trees were lost, and hundreds of fruit trees were blown over. In addition, vehicles and farm equipment were damaged or destroyed. Apart from the orchardists and farmers, potato growers were seriously affected because their crops were destroyed.

The aspect which is of concern to the people of Donnybrook and me is whether the appeal funds will be actually spent for the purpose for which they were raised. It is quite evident no decision has been made in this regard, but I hope that in

view of the plight of these people and the concern expressed by farmers and orchardists—in the main, to me—the fund will not be left with a surplus while the unfortunate victims remain in a bad financial position.

This situation has occurred previously. Some members will recall the Collie floods of 1964. I was the President of the Flood Committee and on behalf of the Collie community I had to appeal to the Lord Mayor, and ask him to re-examine the criteria established for the disbursement of the appeal funds. Jack Gabbedy, the Chairman of the Flood Relief Appeal, agreed with the submission and the matter was re-examined, resulting in a number of applicants in the Collie district—mainly pensioners—receiving extra money.

However, I understand a great deal of money raised during that appeal was not used. I hope the same situation will not prevail on this occasion.

On the 27th July an article appeared in the *South Western Times*. I wish to quote portion of it to give members an appreciation of my concern regarding the subject. The article reads—

SOME 'ALBY' MONEY MAY BE SET ASIDE

SOME of the money raised for the Lord Mayor's appeal for cyclone Alby relief may be set aside for another "rainy day".

But that doesn't mean that people who suffered severe losses in last April's storm should give up hoping for extra financial help.

The appeal, which officially closed at the end of last month, raised about \$800,000. So far \$540,000 has been distributed.

The secretary-treasurer of the appeal management committee, Mr Reg Dawson, says that a decision has yet to be made on whether all of the balance will be distributed.

Government help to the farmers was mostly concessional loans.

This is where the problem lies. Government help to farmers was provided only by way of concessional loans. Very few direct grants were made to farmers in financial difficulties, and this is one of the main complaints of those for whom I am making representations today. The article continues—

Grants to the farmers have nearly all come from private donations gathered by the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

I ask the question: What have the State and Federal Governments done to help? Why are they not coming to the party by giving some financial assistance to those so desperately in need of it? The people of Western Australia have had to find the money in order that direct grants might be made to farmers, orchardists, and businessmen. Why has there been no specific Government funding on a State and Federal basis?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation.

Mr T. H. JONES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Apparently there is very little interest in this matter. I can assure members there is as far as I am concerned. If members opposite would visit Donnybrook to see for themselves the bankrupt state in which many of the orchardists and farmers have found themselves, they would understand why I am making this plea tonight. I am sure the member for Vasse would agree it is easy to gloss over this matter.

Mr Blaikie: I can assure the member for Collie I was in Donnybrook on Sunday, but the people there were in rather high spirits because of the football match.

Mr T. H. JONES: The member for Vasse can speak on the subject of football, but his time would be better spent if he looked at the situation of the farmers in the district. He would then be in a position to support me tonight in my plea for the orchardists and farmers in Western Australia who were hit by cyclone "Alby". However, that is his decision. I can assure the honourable member that there is concern for a number of bankrupt farmers.

Many farmers took out loans to pay off properties, and they are still paying off those loans. They were struck heavily by cyclone "Alby". They were granted concessional loans, but there is the question of their viability, and their ability to service those loans in a two-year period. That is a big question. The member for Vasse can talk about football but those farmers are in a serious situation.

We all know that the farmers who were affected were granted concessional loans with two years to pay the first instalment. However, many farmers will not be in a position to meet their commitments within the prescribed time. I hope that as a result of what I am saying tonight a firm approach will be made to the Federal Government. Surely the Federal Government has some responsibility to the orchardists, businessmen, and farmers generally.

The replies to questions asked in this House show that the Federal Government has done

nothing at all. I will stand corrected if I can be proved wrong, but as far as I am aware the Federal Government has done nothing at all to alleviate the distress caused by cyclone "Alby".

Sir Charles Court: That is not fair comment, you know, because the Federal Government has provided a lot of money as part of the Commonwealth-State Disaster Relief Fund for those loans. You gave the impression that those people had to pay off their loans in two years. They do not have to pay anything for two years.

Mr T. H. JONES: If I created the wrong impression, I did not mean to. The first instalment is due in two years' time.

Sir Charles Court: That is right; they do not pay anything for two years.

Mr T. H. JONES: The point is they will not be in a position to start repayments in two years' time.

Sir Charles Court: There is a provision, as you would know, that if they cannot commence their repayments they can appeal and have their cases considered.

Mr T. H. JONES: What I want to stress is that there could have been more direct grants, loans, and assistance. It is all right to provide them with loans at 4 per cent interest, but they need greater assistance. They require direct grants to get them out of the unfortunate financial situation in which many of them find themselves.

Let us look at the situation of a number of orchardists. The Minister for Agriculture would be aware of their position. I have a copy of a letter which a group of 16 orchardists wrote to the chairman of the disaster relief committee, Mr Beeson. I will not name the orchardists involved because that would be wrong: The letter is dated the 28th April, of this year, and it was written on behalf of 16 orchardists mainly involved in stone fruit growing. It reads—

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the group of Donnybrook fruit growers whose orchards suffered fire damage during the storm of April 4. We believe we have a special case for consideration in relation to allocation of any relief funds.

In addition to losing a high proportion of this year's crop during the storm we have also had many trees destroyed by fire. These will have to be replaced and replacement trees will take at least five years to come into production.

We estimate that a total of 1 665 bearing and 214 nonbearing trees were destroyed.

These figures could be verified by the Department of Agriculture.

We trust our case receives due consideration,

The letter contains the names of 16 growers involved.

Mr Blaikie: Would you mind tabling that letter?

Mr T. H. JONES: Yes, I will table the letter at the conclusion of my remarks. I do not want the member for Vasse to think that I wrote it myself; he should not get that low. Surely he does not think I wrote the letter and manifested it myself.

Mr Blaikie: I did not say that.

Mr T. H. JONES: Certainly, I would not. The letter came from an orchardist. I could mention his name, but I do not want it published in the Press. It would be wrong to mention his name. The grower concerned asked me to read the letter to members in this Parliament, and I am sure I would be criticised if I named the grower. I am sorry the member concerned asked me to table the letter, but that is as a result of his suspicious mind at work.

Mr Bertram: It was an unfair question; he should stick to football.

Mr T. H. JONES: Having read the letter to members in this place, I will table it at the conclusion of my remarks.

I will now read to members the reply received from Mr Beeson. The reply is dated the 9th May, this year, and is addressed to the person concerned in Donnybrook. It reads—

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated April 28, 1978 which it is noted has also been signed by other farmers.

The losses suffered to orchard properties during recent storm are well known. Unfortunately at this time no provisions exist for payment on account of crop losses.

The only advice I can offer is that growers concerned approach their Banks who may be able to help with carry on funds or alternatively advise them on making application for concessional loans.

I would like members to note that the regional administrator referred to crop losses. However, the application was not to cover crop losses; the application from those 16 growers was for assistance to offset the loss of incomes and for the replanting of trees in place of those that had been destroyed. The grower who handed me the letter was in an unfortunate situation. In his particular case he lost 196 stone fruit trees. After planting,

trees take five years to bear fruit. Some of the trees were just reaching the stage of prime production, where the farmer would be in a position to benefit from the planting of the trees five years earlier.

Each tree bears an average of four cases of fruit each year returning \$2.50 per case. That means a loss of \$10 per year, which over a five-year period adds up to \$50 a tree. In the five-year period of rehabilitation that grower will suffer a loss of \$9 000. In addition to the loss of the 196 trees destroyed by fire, another 30 trees were blown over. The orchardist advised me that some trees were left in the hope that they will bear next season, but there is no guarantee that they will and they may have to be taken out. Any member with some knowledge of the fruit-growing industry will know that, in that situation, an orchardist has to do what he thinks is best in the circumstances. A number of orchardists have said that many of the stone fruit trees and the apple trees which were left in the ground may have to be taken out eventually.

Members will understand why I am asking the Government to do something by way of direct grants. I am not talking about crop losses. The cost of each new tree is \$2.50. The farmer to whom I have referred applied for a sum of \$6 000 but received only \$2 000. In addition, he received \$300 from the Lord Mayor's appeal, and he also received 40 fence posts for which he was grateful.

The fruit growers need direct financial grants, in addition to the other assistance they have received, in order to get back into business. They will be without the income which would normally have been available to them.

I know the Minister for Agriculture is aware of the situation; he has been down and inspected the burnt trees. It is not only a case of the loss of the crops over a period of six years, but also the fact that the growers want to get back into production. Surely no member will complain about my motion, and everyone will support me in my efforts to get something done for the growers whose income has been taken away from them for the next five years.

This is why I say the Federal Government or the State Government should be coming to the party, not by way of providing loans but by way of making direct grants so that these people can become viable.

The farmer I mentioned did not conceal anything from me. He had to borrow a considerable amount to buy his orchard, and in addition to trying to service a subsequent loan he is still trying to service the original loan he

obtained to purchase the property. This situation does not relate only to one orchardist. How will the orchardists fare? This particular orchardist has had to get his wife to find work so that they could have some food in the house. That is how serious the situation is, and that is why I am here tonight saying, on behalf of these farmers, that the Government should look at the criteria and do something to help them.

Another unfortunate set of circumstances exists particularly in the apple-growing areas where most of the crop was ruined by hail or pit. Many farmers and orchardists employ their sons on the property. Of course, their income has gone and the jobs for the sons have gone. In the Donnybrook district particularly, which is the largest fruit-growing area in Western Australia, these lads are out of work and because of the recession no jobs are available for them in the district.

It is true the Government has made \$32 000 available to the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire so that some people could be employed on the most labour-intensive work, but that money will not last forever. On farms where the sons relied on income from the farming operations, those wage packets have disappeared. This is the unfortunate story I have to tell the Parliament tonight.

This afternoon I received the following telegram from a farmer named W. A. Jones of Brookhampton, who is no relation of mine—

Imperative we receive Government assistance immediately for fertilisers and sprays and carryons orchardist.

I do not know what Mr Jones' situation is as I did not visit his farm but he is so concerned that he has asked me to raise this matter in the House. I know from my experience in the area that Mr Jones has a number of sons who worked on his property and who are now unemployed, because there is no work available for them. I hope that after hearing what I have to say the Government will look again at the question of overall assistance, particularly in the area I am speaking about.

In this House on the 13th April this year the Deputy Premier and the Premier took me to task, claiming that what I had said was untrue. A letter which Mr Tuia, the shire president, has written to the Deputy Premier indicates that what I said in the Parliament was correct. Mr Tuia has given me a copy of the letter he wrote to the Deputy Premier and he has given me permission to read the letter to the Parliament.

On the 13th April awful things were said about me. The Premier and the Deputy Premier implied

that I was telling lies. They told me to keep out of Donnybrook because I was not wanted there, and they accused me of all sorts of things. On page 773 of *Hansard* the Deputy Premier said—

The member for Collie will be ashamed to show his face in Donnybrook.

I think an apology from both of those honourable gentlemen would be in order because the letter from Mr Tuia, which I will read, clearly vindicates my stand and he says I am welcome at Donnybrook at any time. I hope this situation will be cleared up for the record.

On page 772 the Deputy Premier said—

Mr Tuia has expressed his disgust at the accusations you made about him.

I said that Mr Tuia had asked me to raise the matter in Parliament and I went on to state the reasons. The Deputy Premier said that all I was saying was hogwash and could not be substantiated. I told the Deputy Premier—

I am prepared to go outside this place when I have completed my speech and make the same statements.

Mr Tuia was so concerned about the matter that he wrote to the Deputy Premier on the 28th June—not at my request—because he felt I had been unjustly treated and he disagreed with the accusations levelled against me. This is what the President of the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire wrote to the Deputy Premier on the 28th June—

After reading from *Hansard* of April, 13th re the address in reply by T. H. Jones, M.L.A. for Collie, I feel I must clarify my position, as I am under the impression my name was used rather loosely. I was concerned that politics came into a debate that was discussing a tragedy that affected most people in the South West. I gave permission to Mr. T. H. Jones, to quote two subjects in Parliament:—

That is different from what the Deputy Premier had to say when he castigated me for raising the question. He said I had no authority. I am pleased Mr Tuia has had the decency to protect me and state the situation which pertained at that time.

Mr Skidmore: A shameful performance by the Deputy Premier.

Sir Charles Court: Just read the letter.

Mr T. H. JONES: Mr Tuia went on to say—

- (a) The point I made to Mr T. Jones and also to the Parliamentary leader of the Country Party Mr R. Old, was that we did not want the same type of loan, which was available to the Thomsons Brook Fire victims in December, 1975, with the many stringent conditions, and after weeks of delay no funds were forthcoming. I also made this point to our South West Administrator Mr P. Beeson.

Mr Old did clarify this position on loans, when he met our Council and members of farmers Organisations in our Shire Chambers on Friday 7th April, 1978.

- (b) The other point I made to Mr T. Jones and also to yourself when you paid us a visit on Thursday 6th April, was that we wanted someone with Authority to immediately visit the area to assess and could make recommendations on relief to victims at a later date.

That is precisely the point I made when I spoke in this Parliament on Thursday, the 13th April, as can be seen from *Hansard*.

Now comes the main point, and I hope the Premier and the Deputy Premier are listening, because they will have to eat their words. Mr Tuia said—

With regard Mr T. Jones not being welcomed in Donnybrook, I can assure you he is always most obliging and keen to help our Shire—

What a rubbishing the Premier and the Deputy Premier dealt out to me!

Sir Charles Court: You were trying to take advantage of people's misfortune.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Deputy Premier is hiding. He is absent from the Chamber. The Premier is left squirming.

Sir Charles Court: I got a message from Donnybrook saying it was disgraceful.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is quite evident that the gutter politics they indulged in have not been proved.

Sir Charles Court: You should talk the way you went on.

Mr T. H. JONES: I proceeded in accordance with the wishes of the shire. I raised the question in this House following an inspection of the area, and at Mr Tuia's request, as he pointed out.

It is nonsense to say that I am not welcome back there. "Do not show your face in

Donnybrook again", said the Premier; "Keep out of Donnybrook", said the Deputy Premier. Thank goodness someone there knows me and has more respect for me than do the two gentlemen I have mentioned—

Sir Charles Court: After what the member for Collie did to that town and the district, he has a hide to speak like this.

Mr T. H. JONES: —and he says, in all sincerity, "Thank you for all you did for the area."

Mr B. T. Burke: I hope the Premier has the decency to apologise to Mr Tuia.

Sir Charles Court: He was here last night.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr T. H. JONES: It is quite evident that Government members are becoming vocal again. Any fair-minded person, a Justice of the Peace, or a judge, would have no alternative but to say, "Case dismissed", in such a situation.

Mr B. T. Burke: Mr Tuia was here last night complaining to the Premier.

Sir Charles Court: He was saying what a good job the Government had done.

Mr T. H. JONES: I feel I have made my case clear. The point I made on Thursday, the 13th April—

Sir Charles Court: You ask Mr Tuia.

Mr B. T. Burke: Mr Tuia was telling us what he said.

Mr T. H. JONES: Fortunately Mr Tuia has more confidence in me than has the Premier. Just recently he asked me to mention in the House the inadequacies of emergency control. This request was made by the shire president, and I will refer to his remarks in a moment. I am not critical of the overall operation—

Sir Charles Court: You could have fooled us.

Mr T. H. JONES: —but I am critical of the "gunna" politics the Government indulged in. Even the President of the Donnybrook Shire Council said there was room for improvement. I spoke to him last night and he expressed his concern about the rigidity of which I have spoken. What is the future of the State Emergency Services?

The President of the Donnybrook Shire Council has asked me to raise these matters in the House, and I hope Government members do not say that I am raising them of my own volition. After the experiences of the disaster, the shire president asked me to bring these matters to the attention of the House.

Mr B. T. Burke: Let us hope the Government accepts this in good faith.

Mr T. H. JONES: I hope so.

Mr Young: That is quite a duo over there.

Mr Blaikie: Where are the violins?

Mr B. T. Burke: You cannot fix the Busselton jetty. I cannot think which is the bigger tragedy—you or cyclone "Alby". Perhaps there should be disaster relief for Vasse.

Mr T. H. JONES: People in the area have expressed concern about the two-year loans and the requirements necessary to obtain them. The feeling is that there should be more flexibility in regard to the provision of these loans to allow the businessmen, the farmers, and the orchardists to get going again.

During the tragedy Donnybrook was cut off; there was no telephone communication between Donnybrook and other districts. The Donnybrook Shire Council has suggested that the Government should consider making available portable generating sets in the case of a disaster such as cyclone "Alby" and the resultant power failure.

Mr B. T. Burke: Good constructive stuff this is.

Mr T. H. JONES: The shire president suggested also the setting up of a national disaster fund. We should have learnt from the Dwellingup disaster, the Collie disaster, and the Karrinyup disaster. It is certainly clear today that such a fund is necessary.

Mr B. T. Burke: What happened at Karrinyup?

Mr T. H. JONES: Somebody must take the initiative. It is not good enough to try to establish a fund after a tragedy hits. Money should be available so that it can be disbursed in an emergency. I support Mr Tuia's suggestion on that matter.

In regard to general disaster relief, the Minister for Agriculture is aware that in some instances where cattle were destroyed, other cattle were made available free of charge to the farmers concerned. However, this general principle was not followed throughout. The Donnybrook Shire Council considers that more cattle should have been made available to the farmers who lost stock, and that these cattle should have been given as a gift.

Mr Blaikie: The same thing would apply to fishermen who lost their boats and equipment.

Mrs Craig: And also many sheep were lost.

Mr T. H. JONES: These are the points Mr Tuia asked me to raise. I am trying to do the best I can for a part of my electorate. If the member for Vasse has any other suggestions, he can put

them forward. I believe he has enough problems in regard to the Busselton jetty.

Mr Blaikie: We were talking about fishing.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is funny that Mr Tuia chose the member for Collie to put forward his views here. He gave this information to the member.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Donnybrook Shire Council considers that emergency operations should be organised on a shire basis. On the 13th April this year I raised this matter, but the idea did not have a good reception. The shire president feels that there should be more local autonomy with local shires on committees and also Government representatives.

What happened in the Collie disaster? I do not wish to use this example all the time, but it illustrates the point I am trying to get across. At that time Jack Gabbedy and Bert Hewitt from the Treasury Department had access to Government finance, and when money was needed to overcome a serious problem Bert Hewitt, on behalf of the Treasury Department, was able to make a decision without reference to the regional administrator. Messrs. Gabbedy and Hewitt had the authority, on behalf of the State Government, to take action on the spot. However, this procedure is lacking under the present setup. If at all possible some person in the area should have the authority to make money available where it is needed.

I will refer again to the Donnybrook Shire as an example. When the cyclone struck only one Government bulldozer was available. The shire was able to obtain the use of other equipment, but it then had a substantial payment to make for the hire of that equipment. What was needed at the time was a person with the authority to say, "Hire the equipment you need, and the Government will meet some, if not all, the cost of its hire." This is a serious matter. Donnybrook was engulfed by fire, and very few bulldozers were available to put in the firebreaks which would have helped the situation.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Deputy Premier is very quiet now.

Mr O'Neil: I have accepted the honourable member's apology.

Mr T. H. JONES: The last complaint made by the shire is about the lack of liaison between Government departments, and I remind members that these complaints are made by the Donnybrook Shire Council, and not by me. This is another matter which I ask the Government to consider.

Whilst cyclone "Alby" has gone and some

people might have forgotten about the tragedy, it has left an aftermath which will be felt for several years by those unfortunate people who were affected. Take Donnybrook as an example. In that area alone it is estimated, after consultation with the two bank managers in the town of Donnybrook, that the loss of revenue to the town as a result of the tragedy will be in excess of \$4 million. That clearly spells out the effect cyclone "Alby" has had in the area.

It has been necessary for the co-operative store to retrench staff; garages are not selling any cars; and the seasonal workers who normally come in during the fruit season have disappeared. The takings of one hotel are down \$1 000 a week. I could go on to list other effects.

Of course, the availability of finance to the people in the area has also been affected. The member for Warren and I have asked question after question seeking to ascertain what the State Government, in conjunction with the Federal Government, will do about the provision of some subsidy in respect of the loss of apple production. The answer given to the member for Warren this afternoon clearly demonstrated that the usual carry-on funds are available and that the State Government has been negotiating with the Commonwealth Government to use any surplus in the supplementary fund to supplement export prices.

This has been going on since last April; surely it is not unreasonable for us to ask when the Government is going to take positive action. Hundreds of bushels of good export apples were either thrown to the ground or damaged by hail or pith, and this has affected the income of most orchardists in the Donnybrook district.

Those orchardists have requested that a State and Federal Government subsidy be made available to recoup their loss of income. However, the answer given this afternoon was that the State Government is still talking to the Commonwealth Government about the matter. The Government has been talking since last April; when are the farmers and orchardists in the Donnybrook area going to be able to plan their operations? When will they get something positive in respect of the relief they will receive?

I think my criticism is fairly levelled. Is it not unreasonable that cyclone "Alby" occurred in April and yet in August we are still negotiating? We could have the situation of next season being upon us before a determination is made. It is up to the Prime Minister in conjunction with the Premier to take some positive step to inform the Donnybrook fruit growers what they can expect

by way of subsidies for the severe losses they incurred as a result of cyclone "Alby".

The potato industry is in a similar situation. The Minister for Agriculture would be well aware that last September potato growers had their whole crops wiped out by severe frost. They had just got over that tragedy only to find their next crop was destroyed by cyclone "Alby" in April; the destruction was caused by winds and fire. So potato growers have faced two tragedies, and all they can get is a Government loan. Government loans are not the answer to the problem of these growers, many of whom are only small operators. Direct subsidies and grants must be made available to assist those people who find themselves in this unfortunate situation.

Mr Blaikie: What are the average yields of the potato crop that has just been dug as a result of cyclone "Alby"?

Mr T. H. JONES: They are very poor. I cannot state the figures, but I have been asked to raise this matter. The member for Warren and the Minister for Agriculture would be aware of the yields. The Minister would not challenge me on this matter because he has inspected the crop and seen the damage for himself. The potato growers have suffered two disasters and carry-on finance is not the answer for them; they want direct grants to assist them in their overall operations.

What does the future hold for orchardists in the next season? Nobody knows, because the trees have blossomed twice in the one season—a most irregular circumstance, as the Minister would know. Having come from Donnybrook, I have lived in the apple growing district all my life, and I can tell members it has never been known before that trees blossomed twice in the one year. But it occurred following cyclone "Alby", and now growers are facing a big question mark regarding next year's fruit production.

Nobody knows what the production will be. The orchardists could be in a position similar to that in which they are at the moment. As I said earlier, they may find themselves in a position where many of the trees that have been retained will have to be pulled out because they are not fruit-bearing.

It will be seen that there are wide areas where assistance is needed, and I think the Government should re-evaluate the situation and consider the farmers, orchardists, and potato growers of whom I have spoken. The Government should examine the criteria for application and, more importantly, present a strong case to the Federal Government to obtain financial assistance. The assistance so

far has been only by arrangement between the Federal and State Governments.

In conclusion, I think all members would agree that what is needed is the establishment of a national disaster fund. We cannot call on the people of Western Australia—or of any other State for that matter—year after year. The establishment of such a fund would require only a small amount from the Commonwealth, and money could be made available to those in need at the appropriate time.

I do hope that members appreciate the reasons which motivated me to bring this motion to the House today. I did so because there is an urgent need in so many areas for the Government to reappraise the situation. If members care to go down and have a look for themselves, they will find that what I have said is spot on.

I plead with the Government to agree to my motion to have a re-examination of the whole situation, and to take immediate positive action to make the Commonwealth come to the party and help the people in distress in Western Australia. I commend my motion.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [6.07 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I am very happy to second the motion moved by the member for Collie—

The SPEAKER: You do not have to.

Mr H. D. EVANS: At the same time, there are some remarks I would like to make in addition to and complementing what the member for Collie has said.

I agree with him that in the initial stages of the disaster the actions taken by those responsible were timely, well taken and without delay. However, some statements were made at that time which were not subsequently honoured. I took the opportunity of raising this matter during the grievance debate at the end of last session, and my comments appear at page 1279 of *Hansard* for Wednesday, the 3rd May, 1978. The grievance debate gave me the opportunity to point out to the Premier the disparity between some of the remarks he made and what actually transpired.

It was given wide understanding that every sufferer from cyclone "Alby" would be eligible for a 4 per cent concessional loan. In fact, I sat in the office of a member from another place while he telephoned the Premier at my behest to verify this point; he came back with the reply that every farmer would be entitled to the concessional loan.

Subsequently, this matter was the subject of a discussion on radio. I put it to the member from another place on air that, in fact, he had made

that call and received that answer. However, subsequent events showed that the emergency loan funding became a "loan of last resource". This has caused a considerable degree of confusion in the area and, to this time, the perplexity has not been resolved. So, if for no other reason, a review and an examination at first hand by this Government is desirable and necessary.

I wish to raise another matter arising from a reply I received today to a question on notice I directed to the Premier. The Premier stated that, following cyclone "Alby", 242 applications for emergency loans had been received from farmers in the south-west. Of this number, 29 had been rejected, leaving a total of 213, with 10 pending—meaning, of course, that 203 had received loan assistance.

The second part of my question sought to ascertain how many farmers had received concessional loans at 4 per cent, and the Premier replied as follows—

195 were approved for loans, including 4 which subsequently withdrew their applications.

Unless there is some further distortion of the position, that answer does not appear to be factual. I can find very few farmers who have received a 4 per cent concessional loan. It could be that a percentage of the farmers received a certain proportion of their loans at 4 per cent but, of course, I am not in a position to say just what that number would be. However, to say that 195 out of a total of 242 applicants have received a 4 per cent concessional loan just does not make sense or add up. I question that reply to see whether some further explanation can be added to it.

I checked with my office today to ascertain the number of inquiries I have received on this matter, and there were almost 30; in addition, I have received a further dozen verbal inquiries. So, members can see there is a considerable degree of concern and misunderstanding over this issue.

A number of these inquiries—those requiring specific answers—have been forwarded to the Minister's office and elsewhere and in this regard I wish to record my appreciation to the Minister's secretary for the manner in which she has handled the inquiries I have referred to the Minister. They have been handled with the utmost dispatch. Some inquiries to other quarters have not received the same considerate treatment. However, a number of the replies which have come back have not been to my liking.

Again, apart from the evasiveness of the

criteria which surrounded the emergency relief loans and the need to resolve this once and for all and to lay down criteria which are simple, understandable and unambiguous, there was the attitude adopted by the Premier which was in contradistinction to those principles. I am sorry the Premier is not in the Chamber, because in times when he is cornered and when he finds his argument is very thin he is like the parson who had the annotation against his sermon, "Argument weak, yell like hell!" That is the tactic the Premier uses.

Mr O'Neil: The Premier will be back after the suspension of the sitting for dinner, and you can repeat that remark then.

Mr H. D. EVANS: On that occasion, the Premier stooped to abuse and personal vilification to justify actions he had taken. He had no defence against the criticism levelled against him except to turn to these abusive tactics.

Mr Clarko: That is quite unfair.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is not, and the member for Karrinyup knows it; in addition, this tactic to some degree has spread amongst his minions.

Mr Clarko: It does not behove you to make such accusations.

Mr Davies: He is telling the truth, and you do not like it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The point the member for Collie raised in connection with apple growers needs immediate attention. I asked the first question regarding this matter a considerable time ago. Cyclone "Alby" occurred on the 4th April and it is now the 2nd August. Four months have elapsed since the cyclone during which time the orchardists have been wondering whether or not they are to receive any compensatory payment. The reply to a question I placed on the notice paper was to the effect that the orchardists had access to the general form of assistance available, but there did not appear to be compensation in the offing, as discussions with the Commonwealth were still pending.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Before the tea suspension I was reporting the remarks of the member for Collie in connection with the need for compensation payment to apple growers who have been struck by cyclone "Alby". This is fairly essential in that the orchardists—who have suffered a loss of income and are faced with major management decisions in the purchase of fertiliser and spray, with the expense of cleaning in the fairly near offing, or with the reduced, and in some cases the almost completely wiped out,

income of the last season—need to know where they stand.

As the Minister indicated in reply to my question asked earlier, apple growers were eligible for the provision of carry-on finance from the cyclone "Alby" disaster funds. But the issue arises that more than loans are required; straight-out grants by way of compensatory payment are needed. The Minister also pointed out that negotiations with the Commonwealth have been going on for four months.

This is a situation where the orchardists concerned should have been told if there were no help forthcoming. It is grossly unfair to allow them to continue when some sort of help by way of compensation still remains in doubt.

Procrastination has given rise to a further problem. With the effluxion of this amount of time the problem of what criteria should be used to make the payments has to be faced. With the passage of time it will be virtually impossible to determine the exact loss a particular orchardist suffered.

To revert to the previous history again would be unsatisfactory, because last year and the year before some growers suffered almost total loss from hail. How do we account for their previous losses in production? Some young orchardists with developing orchards would face difficulty when trying to determine losses for the current season. So, to determine the basis of loss in this way, on which to make compensation payments, is going to be rather difficult.

As time passed the opportunity which could have been taken in the first weeks was lost and just how any compensation payments are to be determined is very hard to say. The question of delay is one that is most irksome.

We cannot understand this delay. If the Whitlam Government were still in power the blame would then have been heaped in great quantities on the Federal Government.

Mr Davies: Surely they would not do that!

Mr H. D. EVANS: We saw it happen so frequently. The action the Government is taking at present makes the situation even more poignant. In addition to the apple growers there are the vegetable and the potato growers who are in a similar situation—they, too, have suffered losses—and their position could be examined in the light of the special circumstances which occurred and ought to be given further consideration. The numbers affected are not great. The quantity of finance would not be great, and it is the sort of circumstance which is unlikely to occur in the future. So the problem of

precedent does not fully arise as it might with some other industries.

There is the question of the disbursement of funds from the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund. The answer I received to a question on this subject from the Premier with regard to the manner in which this money has been allocated is not altogether satisfactory. The question of disbursement has raised some adverse comment in most of the areas I have been associated with. Indeed, people raise the question, "Do you know anyone who has actually received a grant in this district?" This is a fairly general comment.

Last Friday I had contact with three farmers who had made application for a grant of fencing materials, but their letters had not even been acknowledged nor had a reply been received. This sort of situation is most unsatisfactory.

Mr Old: Is this the Lord Mayor's fund?

Mr H. D. EVANS: They made application for a grant of fencing materials and these were channelled through the regional administrator. The Premier replied in an unsatisfactory manner to a question I asked seeking information regarding the disbursement of the fund in particular areas. What was being sought was the number of applicants in a particular area who had received payment and the total amount of payment that had been received in the particular areas.

I can appreciate the point that individuals need not necessarily be named, but, in the interests of the fund itself, there is a need to give some publicity to the directions in which it has been disbursed in a general sense if specifics are to be totally avoided.

In reply to a question asked by the member for Geraldton today the Premier gave certain figures in relation to the Lord Mayor's fund.

Mr Carr: It was a grant of \$5 500 from the Lord Mayor's fund to one fisherman, and a sum of \$31 500 was granted to eight other fishermen.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mention is made there of another industry receiving a grant from the Lord Mayor's fund, yet the Premier has refused to divulge the total amount in the particular areas to which I referred. It seems to me that if the Government—although it has no direct control over the Lord Mayor's fund and neither should it have—has contributed to a fund, it certainly should know the broad aspects of disbursement. It need not necessarily know the precise details. This is in the interests of the fund itself.

I gave those three illustrations and the general tenor of the queries which have been raised in the

areas I represent. In the interests of public relations and in order to facilitate future appeals seeking public support, I suggest steps should be taken to avoid an unsatisfactory situation arising at the present time which could adversely affect future appeals of equal importance.

As we know, the fund has closed; but a sum in excess of several hundred thousand dollars is still being held. The suggestion that those moneys should be placed in a holding fund seems precipitate at the present time, because to my knowledge a number of individuals would qualify for assistance. This is one reason that the motion moved by the member for Collie is timely. He suggested that a comprehensive statement of disbursements from the fund should be drawn up. This would include disbursements of all kinds to farmers and orchardists. The statement should include also the amounts that have been distributed. This has not yet been provided and it could probably form the subject of a further question in the House. The statement should provide information as to the amount received from the Commonwealth, the contribution made by the State, and the money provided by the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund. We are not asking for a balance sheet, but an indication of the allocation of funds should be provided to satisfy the people who have been closely involved. It is a sheer necessity that such details should be given.

For that reason, the member for Collie has brought forward a matter which must be faced up to and which must be resolved. It should be resolved in the manner suggested in the motion. It is on those grounds that I support the motion moved by the member for Collie. I hope that the apology due to him from leaders opposite is forthcoming in the near future.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [7.42 p.m.]: I have listened with interest to the member for Collie and the member for Warren. I should like to make it clear from the outset that I am very sympathetic towards the situation in the areas they represent.

Mr Skidmore: What are you going to do about it?

Mr OLD: If the member is patient, I shall tell him.

Mr Skidmore: I thought you would have got to it by now.

Mr OLD: We are not all as quick as the member for Swan.

Mr Davies: More is the pity.

Mr B. T. Burke: Do not get personal.

Mr OLD: Members will appreciate the fact that the Government has done a tremendous amount for the affected areas, not only the areas which the member for Collie and the member for Warren represent, but also the whole southern part of the State which was affected by cyclone "Alby".

Whilst I acknowledge problems still exist, certainly in the fruit-growing areas, I point out that a large number of people have been assisted not only with loans at an interest rate of 4 per cent, but also with grants from the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund.

I am surprised and disappointed the member for Warren is querying the answer given tonight as to the number of loans granted. I should be equally surprised if the member for Warren does not know of somebody in the Manjimup area who has said he has received a 4 per cent concessional loan, because only yesterday at the—

Mr H. D. Evans: I have said they received 4 per cent loans. I am querying the total number that has been indicated and I am asking for a further breakdown, because I am certain all those people would not have received the full concessional loan sought.

Mr OLD: If I recall rightly, the member for Warren said he found it difficult to discover anyone in his electorate who had actually received a loan. I find that very hard to believe.

Mr H. D. Evans: I said that of a grant. I know of some loans, but they are in the minority.

Mr OLD: The member for Warren feels the figures of 242 applicants and 195 approvals are not correct, as I understand him.

Mr H. D. Evans: I questioned that they have all received the full assistance.

Mr OLD: They have all received a concessional loan.

Mr H. D. Evans: The full amount they asked for, or a portion?

Mr OLD: The question was, "How many applications for emergency relief loans following cyclone "Alby" were received? Of this number how many were rejected and how many received loans and how many are still being considered?" There was no talk about full loans. When the member for Warren talks about full loans, I assume he is talking about the number of people who received the upper limit.

Mr H. D. Evans: Not necessarily the upper limit, but the amount they asked for.

Mr OLD: This must be assessed. If the money was handed out at 4 per cent interest to everybody who happened to be in a particular area during a

disaster, this Government would face a great deal of criticism, especially from the Opposition, for giving 4 per cent loans to people who did not require them. These people could then invest that money with a building society and make a nimble 6 per cent.

Mr H. D. Evans: But the Government said there would be no restriction. It was not a loan of last resort.

Mr OLD: I do not know who said that.

Mr H. D. Evans: It was said.

Mr OLD: A loan has never been granted in a disaster area unless criteria have been laid down. It is irresponsible to suggest that because somebody lives in a particular area he should be granted a concessional loan out of taxpayers' money.

Mr H. D. Evans: The Premier told a member from another place, while I was in that member's office, that there were no criteria; all were eligible.

Mr OLD: I cannot comment on that.

Mr H. D. Evans: That member made that statement over the air.

Mr OLD: I do not know who the member from another place is or what the question was, so I am unable to comment on that.

Mr H. D. Evans: I have told you before in the House.

Mr OLD: Perhaps the member would like to tell me again by way of interjection.

Mr Sibson: There is no qualification on those who may apply; that is what he said.

Mr OLD: Last night I was speaking to a shire president who represented an area which was affected by cyclone "Albany"—I am sorry, cyclone "Alby". I almost used the same expression as that used by the member for Collie. This shire president told me the Government was to be commended for the way in which it had handled the situation.

Mr T. H. Jones: And which shire is this?

Mr OLD: I am speaking about the Shire of Donnybrook. The president said the Government should be commended for the alacrity with which it had responded to the request for grants and loans.

Mr T. H. Jones: I said that, did I not?

Mr OLD: On the other hand, the member for Warren is saying we have been rather tardy and mean with the disbursement of money. I take issue with that.

Mr H. D. Evans: You have certainly been tardy with the fruit growers.

Mr OLD: Let me remind the member for Warren, as one who has been involved in the support of the fruit industry, there are two sectors as the member knows. One is a support grant by the Commonwealth for at-risk export and the other is a dollar-for-dollar State-Commonwealth supplementary support scheme. These grants are determined by a formula. I am not prepared at this stage to go into great detail; but there has been continuing and I must say frustrating—to give the member opposite some comfort—

Mr H. D. Evans: And prolonged.

Mr OLD: That is correct. There have been prolonged negotiations with the Commonwealth Government. As the member for Warren knows, certain guidelines are laid down for equalisation funds and they are to be used in certain areas only. As I mentioned in answer to a question tonight, negotiations are being conducted with the Commonwealth Government to ascertain whether the dollar-for-dollar grant or the supplementary support can be varied in some way so that the Government may give the relief to the fruit growers that it desires to give.

The member for Warren mentioned the ability to assess the loss to the fruit growers. I was in the Donnybrook area and I must apologise to the member for Warren because I was not in his area. However, I was in the Donnybrook area two days after the cyclone. I travelled as far as Bridgetown. At that time, in the presence of the officer in charge of the Manjimup office, I said it would be necessary to make some type of quick assessment of the situation so that, when the time came to provide compensation, we would be able to make an assessment. I put it to members opposite that time was the essence of the contract. With the number of farmers and orchardists in the area affected, it would have been a physical impossibility to carry out an individual assessment of each orchard or property in the region.

Therefore the only thing to do was to take a sample assessment and endeavour to strike some sort of average, and then listen to what the growers had to say.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about the shed managers? They would have a pretty good idea.

Mr OLD: These are the people we would listen to, but the member for Warren is the fellow who said we had no way to assess anything. Now he tells me we have a way to assess it. I am very pleased he has changed his attitude, because he is accusing this Government of taking no cognisance of the problems of the fruit growers. I can assure

him that we have sympathy for the fruit growers and have taken action. We have asked the assessors to study the matter and they have, and a further assessment will be made.

Mr T. H. Jones: When?

Mr OLD: The honourable member talked about historical assessment and about hail.

Mr H. D. Evans: There are problems in that regard and I have told you one of the solutions which might be available.

Mr OLD: I can only say to members opposite that they are accusing this Government of being unsympathetic and unresponsive to requests from people in their areas. That is not the opinion of the people who are in a position to assess the situation in the fruit-growing area.

Mr H. D. Evans: We are accusing you of tardiness.

Mr T. H. Jones: There is still criticism that the relief did not go far enough. I said that in my opening remarks.

Mr OLD: I heard what the honourable member said and I was pleased he was invited to the Shire of Donnybrook to discuss the necessity to come in more quickly and supply generating sets and gifts of cattle, etc. I can only say that this was discussed by myself and Mr Tuia some two or three weeks after the cyclone.

Several members interjected.

Mr OLD: I feel the honourable member was terribly lucky to get off the hook as easily as he did.

Mr Davies: It is only because of the work he did.

Mr OLD: Actually the hooks do not go in as far as they do in the party to which members opposite belong. Members there shift around rather quickly and there could be another move soon.

Mr Davies: We are a happy team here.

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: The records should show that we laughed with mirth!

Mr OLD: Lack of liaison between Government departments was an accusation levelled by the member for Collie who claimed it came from the Donnybrook Shire.

Mr T. H. Jones: From Mr Tuia.

Mr O'Neil: Can you identify the departments?

Mr OLD: No, they have not been identified. Again, last night in consultation with the shire president of the area, commendation of the liaison was expressed, and also it was stated that the

work done by Mr Beeson and Mr Farrell in co-ordinating the liaison of departments was exemplary and greatly appreciated.

The member for Collie mentioned the problem with the blossoming of trees, and I know of this problem. The future situation is unknown until we see what occurs, and the member for Collie made this point particularly clear.

The grant from the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund for fencing is something the member for Warren raised. He said there had been no grants made in this regard, and I find this terribly hard to understand.

Mr H. D. Evans: That is not what I said.

Mr OLD: Would the honourable member tell me what he did say so that I can answer him properly?

Mr H. D. Evans: That it is difficult to find anyone who received such grants from the fund in the areas I represent. Three fellows made applications for a grant for fencing and their letters have not been acknowledged, let alone received favourable consideration.

Mr OLD: This again amazes me because the same gentleman last evening said that letters had been received by pretty well all the applicants in the area he represents indicating they would be advised in the next day or two of the fate of their applications. Obviously this has not happened in the Manjimup area.

Mr H. D. Evans: This fellow rang me up and came to see me last Friday.

Mr OLD: I find it hard to believe, because if such a letter were sent to one area it would be sent to the other. I find it amazing that a fund like the Lord Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, which has been administered by some very responsible people, comes in for the criticism it has received tonight. The money was subscribed by the people of Western Australia—

Mr Davies: It is not beyond criticism.

Mr OLD: —and administered in a most exemplary manner.

Members opposite will recall that within a week of the cyclone—in fact, within three days—the Government had made available fencing posts for the south-west and great southern areas to make sure that damaged fencing could be repaired in order that the stock might be contained.

Mr H. D. Evans: That was a good move.

Mr OLD: Within another 10 days the Lord Mayor's fund had made available five times that number of posts. I have great sympathy for the fruit growers in the area of the member for Collie

and I can assure the honourable member that every effort is being made to assist those people who have experienced the problems he has enunciated, and I have no reason to disbelieve him because I know that what he says in regard to some cases is correct. I also know that many people, to a large degree, have been able to recover their position as a result of the buoyant local market for apples. A tremendous number of apples went into cold store for the local market and I realise that at this stage there are still some apples in cold store and that the local market is probably not as buoyant as it has been in the last month or two.

My information leads me to believe that although the situation is serious in some instances, it is certainly not desperate in others. Some people who have had their stone fruit orchards burnt obviously have a problem.

Mr T. H. JONES: Would you agree there are problems for the producers in trying to get back into business?

Mr OLD: Certainly. I agree there are problems, but I think that with a disaster so widespread as cyclone "Alby" we will always have problems.

I would also like to point out one thing. People affected by something as widespread as "Alby"—something which is recognised as a natural disaster—are given certain concessions. However, the one, two, or three people whose orchards have been burnt out are not covered by such concessions and have to make their own recovery. What we are considering is a larger version of a local disaster and I think that in the main people in rural industries learn to accept the fact that they do take certain risks.

I would like to reiterate that the Government is very concerned about the welfare of these people and it is making every endeavour—in addition to what has already been done—on a Commonwealth-State basis to ensure we get additional finance and help for those apple growers who are in fact in disastrous circumstances today.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [8.00 p.m.]: I am very concerned with the reply given by the Minister for Agriculture. It was a negative reply; he did not say whether he would support the proposition—the pleas I made on behalf of the orchardists and farmers generally in the Collie and Donnybrook areas. The Minister did not indicate the attitude of the Government; he simply said that so far as he was concerned he had sympathy for the member for Warren and myself. He has agreed that representations were

made, but up to this point in time he has not indicated whether he will go along with the proposition that the criteria under which assistance was granted should be re-examined, and that a statement should be made on the disbursement of funds which have already been made available.

Mr Old: We have already done that; it has been done a dozen times.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister did not say whether he would go along with that proposition.

Sir Charles Court: It has been done a dozen times.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Premier has just returned to the Chamber. He has not been in the Chamber since we resumed at 7.30 p.m., so I suggest he be quiet because he is not aware of what the Minister said.

Sir Charles Court: You simply asked a question, (a) and (b), and I answered that question.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Premier ran for cover this afternoon, and the Deputy Premier has not been sitting in his seat.

Mr O'Neil: I accepted your apology!

Mr T. H. JONES: The Premier now comes into the Chamber and joins in the argument, but he does not know what the Minister said.

Mr Old: We have to agree with what you have said, because we have already done it.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister did not indicate whether he would support the proposition.

Sir Charles Court: We have done it, so we do not have to agree to the motion. It was a fool motion.

Mr T. H. JONES: For the edification of the Premier, the Minister said he was sympathetic towards the member for Warren and myself. He said the Government had done a terrific amount of work, and we acknowledged that. However, the Government has not done sufficient. Both the Minister and the Premier are aware that an application for assistance for fruit growers who lost their crops was made to the Federal Government some four months ago, and it is time we had some reply to that application. Of course, the Minister would not tell us the position. All he had to say in response to the member for Warren and myself was that the Government was still negotiating with the Federal Government.

Mr Old: That is right.

Mr T. H. JONES: The fruit growers at Donnybrook, Manjimup, and in other areas, want

to know their position. They have said quite clearly it is time a more positive effort was made. Surely four months is long enough for this Government's counterpart in Canberra to make up its mind.

Mr Old: How many positive decisions have been made?

Mr T. H. JONES: We hear much talk about the new federalism, but here is an example of its breakdown. The fruit growers are critical. They appreciate what has been done, but they claim it is time they knew what their financial position would be in the future.

Sir Charles Court: They do know.

Mr T. H. JONES: They do not know.

Mr Old: Everyone knows except you.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is four months since an application was made to this Government's counterparts in Canberra for some assistance for the fruit growers, and it is time a decision was made. How long will they be kept in suspense? That is what they are asking me in my electorate.

I am an elected member of Parliament representing many of the concerned fruit growers, and I cannot answer their questions. All I can say is that I will raise the issue on their behalf. It is time the State Government did something with regard to the application to the Federal Government. It is time a decision was made. I do not think that request is unreasonable in view of the negotiations that have taken place over a period of four months. What will happen so far as the subsidy scheme is concerned?

Mr Old: No-one made a quicker decision than this Government after cyclone "Alby". Never has any relief been provided faster.

Mr T. H. JONES: Of course, that is arguable, too.

Mr Old: Well, what is the argument?

Mr T. H. JONES: We have been asking questions.

Sir Charles Court: That is about all you have been doing.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister said he spoke to the President of the Donnybrook Shire.

Sir Charles Court: He said he was amazed at the amount of money poured into Donnybrook.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Premier is touchy again. Obviously, he has been hurt.

Mr Old: No, he is speaking the truth.

Mr T. H. JONES: The President of the Donnybrook Shire appreciates what has been done, as do most people. All I am saying—as I

said when I commenced my speech—is that the growers want certain areas of assistance re-examined. That is not unreasonable. The Minister said he sympathised with the plight of the people who lost so many trees as a result of fire and the cyclone generally.

Mr Old: I said they have problems; that is right.

Mr T. H. JONES: Well, what is to be done? Those growers are asking that the Government take some positive action to assist them in their problems. That is all my motion does.

The Minister has been in close contact with the apple growers and the stone fruit growers, and he is aware of the situation. Having agreed with me, he has an obligation to the fruit-growing industry in this State to do something. The Minister is aware of the problem; he has not denied it. He has admitted that he goes along with my remarks.

Mr Old: I said some stone fruit growers have a problem as a result of the fire. We acknowledge that.

Mr T. H. JONES: All I am asking is: What about doing something about it, now that the Government knows of the problem and admits the problem? That is all my motion does.

The Minister is aware of the plight of the orchardists because he has been in consultation with them. The Opposition is calling on the Government to take some positive action to remove the stress on the fruit growers. I do not think that is an unreasonable request.

Sir Charles Court: Your motion does not say that, you know. It asks for information, which we have repeated for the twentieth time.

Mr T. H. JONES: The motion requests a re-examination of the criteria under which assistance was granted.

Mr Old: We have.

Mr T. H. JONES: For the information of the Premier and the Minister I will again read paragraph (b) of my motion, as follows—

(b) should re-examine the needs of applicants and the criteria under which it was granted.

Does that not clearly spell out what I have said? I have been complaining about the basis on which allocation of funds has been made. No assistance is to be made available for loss of crops.

The potato growers lost their crops last September and they lost them again as a result of cyclone "Alby". There is no provision under the present relief arrangements to give those potato growers assistance by way of direct grants. All

they can get is a loan. Those people have suffered two very bad seasons, and on their behalf the member for Warren and I are asking the Government to acknowledge the problem.

The Government should do something constructive to assist the potato growers. It is true that grants have been made, and it is true that the Government has taken some action. The Minister, when replying to my motion, raised the question of some growers obtaining a loan and reinvesting it. I do not think we are dealing with that type of person. In all honesty, I would be very concerned if I knew of any grower or farmer who would take advantage of such a situation as a result of cyclone "Alby".

Mr Old: You would be the first to criticise us if we made available a loan to everybody at 4 per cent irrespective of his circumstances.

Mr T. H. JONES: I know there have to be guidelines.

Mr Old: Yes, but you want them taken away.

Mr B. T. Burke: No-one is suggesting we take them away.

Mr Old: I was talking to the butcher, not the block!

Mr T. H. JONES: Take the grower to whom I referred this afternoon. He applied for a \$6 000 loan, and he received \$2 000. He has to plant 196 stone fruit trees, and it is possible that further trees have been damaged. He is already in the position of paying off the land and now, of course, during the next five years he will have very little income. As a result of the destruction of his trees, he will lose in the vicinity of \$9 000. That is the type of person I am talking about. That is the type of person who wants financial assistance. He will have problems servicing his loan, but together with the other 16 growers who signed the letter he wants some direct grant, not a loan, because it is beyond any comprehension that he will be able to service the loan.

They are not viable because, due to the loss of their fruit-bearing trees, their capacity to produce income has been taken away from them. My motion asks the Government to have a look at this area to see whether anything can be done. The growers came to me, as their member, and said, "We have financial problems. What can you do about it?" I am asking the Minister, who has toured the area and knows of the problems, to give consideration to changing the criteria for the disbursement of funds.

Mr Old: All those applications were assessed by the delegated agency which obviously must have

had available to it the information which you have; so it is your assessment against theirs.

Mr T. H. JONES: I am saying the criteria are the problem. Referring again to the letter from Mr Beeson, he said there is no provision for payment for loss of crops. He has told the 16 growers concerned they cannot get any money. The criteria laid down do not allow for any Government grants in this area. Mr Beeson, the regional administrator, advised them by letter that no money is available.

What are they expected to do from the time they plant the tree until it bears fruit five years hence? Their income has been destroyed overnight.

Mr Old: What about the fellows in the southern part of the State who cannot get their crops in because it is too wet? Are we supposed to pay them for the crops they cannot get in?

Mr T. H. JONES: That is a seasonal matter.

Mr Old: But it is still financial.

Mr T. H. JONES: I am speaking about the scheme for people involved in cyclone "Alby". It is of no use arguing that if it does not rain for the next four years no wheat will be planted. I am asking the Minister to look at the criteria laid down, and I think I have made my point very clearly.

I appeal to the Government to let the fruit growers know what is going on and to tell the Federal Government that four months is too long to wait for a decision as to whether subsidies will be available. In view of the Minister's close liaison with the Federal people, is it reasonable that after four months the fruit growers of Western Australia are still waiting for an answer? The member for Warren and I have fully dealt with the matter. I hope that positive action will be taken, a statement will be issued, and a re-examination will be made of the position of fruit growers and farmers, generally, in the affected areas.

Question put and passed.

WATER SUPPLIES

Appointment of Standing Committee: Motion

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [8.14 p.m.]: That is a splendid start to the session as far as private members' business is concerned, and I am quite certain the motion I move tonight will evoke the same response. I move—

That a standing committee of this Parliament be appointed to investigate all

aspects of water supplies in Western Australia and report regularly to the Assembly.

I mention only the Assembly because we are dealing only with the Assembly. I suppose if the committee wanted to report to the Parliament it could do so.

The aims of the motion are, firstly, to rectify the confusion which currently exists in the community regarding the quality of domestic and industrial water supplies. I am certain it will be agreed a great deal of confusion exists, and I think the matter needs immediate attention.

Secondly, I want to attempt to reconcile the contradictory statements which have been made on this issue by the Ministers for Health and Water Supplies. I do not think it will be difficult to reconcile them but I think the Ministers must have the opportunity to do so, and a Standing Committee will give them that opportunity.

Thirdly, I want to provide information to the Parliament and the public, on an ongoing basis, about the quality of the State's water supplies, particularly in the light of recent problems. No-one can deny we have recently had problems, and no-one can deny we will have problems in the future, so there is a need now for Parliament as a body to establish a Standing Committee to accomplish those three simple but very basic aims.

The role of the Standing Committee would be to warn the Parliament—and, through the Parliament, the public—of looming dangers in regard to water supplies; to seek ways to rectify the problems and improve the quality of those water supplies; and to encourage conservation of water resources and advise on ways of coping with problems similar to those which have arisen in recent years, particularly in the 12 months just passed.

The motion has not been moved without a lot of thought, and there are reasons for it. Members have heard the aims, and I now want to state the reasons, which fall into three major categories. The first reason is the current controversy. The second reason is the continuing problems with water supply in Western Australia and the vital importance of an adequate and high standard water supply. The third reason is the evidence that is available that the quality of our water is deteriorating, and deteriorating at a much greater rate than I, and I am sure many other members of the community, expect.

It is because of recent highlighting of the problem that we have done some work on it, and we are surprised and alarmed at what we find.

The current controversy, of course, is that there is no unanimity on the quality of our water supplies. I believe it has reached the stage where somebody has to tell us the truth, some body has to have the authority to find the truth, and someone has to tell the public the truth. We need an inquiry to find out the answers to those problems which are of great concern to us.

It is important to find out these answers because it is quite self-evident that the quality of water is of incalculable importance to the State and to the future, and we sometimes lose sight of that fact. I think some people do not believe we are in a serious situation. The debate which has occurred through the media—television, radio, and Press—over the past few weeks has, I believe, been confusing to most people.

On one hand we have had a series of experts in the medical field and related fields raising serious questions about the quality of the State's domestic water supplies and its effect on health. On the other hand, a series of Government spokesmen have claimed that there is nothing to worry about. So we have two diverse opinions. The Minister for Health and the Minister for Water Supplies have made statements indicating that their departments—and I do not necessarily say the Ministers themselves said this—have different standards for determining the acceptability of the salinity level in our water supplies.

Of course the language in which the debate has been couched has been unfamiliar to most people. We have heard talk of hundreds of milligrams per litre, total dissolved salts, and total dissolved solids. We do not use these phrases every day, and they may be confusing to people, however simple they are when we become used to them.

All this has added up to a picture of charge and counter-charge, claim and counter-claim, complexity, confusion, and controversy. We have to do something about it. The greatest difficulty, of course, is trying to find out just where the truth lies, and the problem becomes more difficult when the people who should know, the people whom we should respect in our community and to whom we look for guidance and leadership in matters of this kind, make contradictory statements. We have had public health officials versus eminent doctors, scientists versus water supply officials, and it is understandable that as a result the public are becoming confused and at a loss to know what the truth is. That is why it is so important that Parliament tonight accepts this responsibility to find out the truth and to let the people know what the truth is.

The matter is very serious and has major

implications for the health of Western Australians not only for the present, but also for the future. We must realise that the state of our water supplies affects not only people but industry as well. There are such major implications that the time has come to cut through all the verbiage, to cut through the claims and counter-claims, and to establish the truth.

What must an inquiry do in the current controversy? It must endeavour to establish the truth, and to do this it has to examine, cross-examine, and re-examine, if necessary, all the people who have been making the competing claims. An inquiry must have the capacity to consult other experts—any experts who are available. We must seek out the people who can give proper guidance. The inquiry must weigh up the best possible information obtainable not only in the metropolitan area, not only in this State, not only in Australia, but also anywhere else in the world. Other speakers tonight will tell members of some of the problems that have been encountered and overcome in other parts of the world, and what the experience has been. There is plenty of expertise available. I am quite certain we can agree that good as our expertise in Western Australia may be, it is not the best available in the world.

To do those things, to set up a committee with those aims and those objectives, is the only way in which Parliament can carry out its public responsibilities and protect properly the public interest.

I want to say more later about the competing claims of the experts; however, at this time I would like to say evidence has been provided that there should be grave concern for our water supplies, as I have already said. I have much of this evidence here in front of me.

I will refer to some of the continuing problems with which this State will be faced and which this Standing Committee should be able to cope with. Firstly, if there is any beneficial effect of the drought which we have suffered in recent years it is that we are much more conscious of the need to preserve, protect, and enhance the quality and quantity of our water. I am quite certain members will agree that the drought brought home to us most sharply just how precarious our water supplies are. I am sure everyone viewed with trepidation the almost daily reports of our water storage, and we all wondered whether we would get through the summer and whether we would ever have sufficient water again.

Just because we have had about four inches above our average rainfall for the year so far to

this day, we would be living in a fool's paradise if we believed that all our problems were over, that we can now forget there was a drought, and forget about doing anything for the future. That is not so. This is only a temporary release from the serious situation in which we found ourselves, and indeed there is no clear indication that the rainfall we have had recently has provided a release at all.

If new industries are to be established here, a plentiful supply of water is essential. I suppose we all want to see new industries established to provide employment, because unemployment is one of our most pressing problems. However, we will not attract new industries if we do not have sufficient water, and existing industries will not be able to continue unless we can ensure an adequate and sufficient water supply. More and more industries are using additional amounts of water, and there is no guarantee that we will have enough to supply them all.

Of course we must have an adequate supply of water if our population is to expand, and I do not believe there is much likelihood that our population will not expand although the rate of expansion may be questionable. We will need an adequate supply of good quality water to be able to quench the thirst of our increased population. If our population is to remain healthy rather than become more susceptible to hypertension and cardiovascular ailments then we must have good quality water. If we have illness in the community, an added burden will be thrown onto our already limited hospital accommodation, and this will mean an added burden to the taxpayer.

Mr O'Connor: Have you seen any health reports that relate hypertension to the salt in the water?

Mr DAVIES: Yes, and I will read this report in a moment.

Mr O'Connor: It must be the only one.

Mr DAVIES: No, it is not. If the Minister has been reading the newspapers recently he will have seen reports that increased salinity in the water supply can raise the likelihood of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases in the population. I am not suggesting that there is no argument on these points. I am able to quote an eminent doctor in support of this theory, and I am sure the Minister for Water Supplies will be able to quote another eminent doctor with the contrary view. It merely highlights the point I am making and I am glad the Minister has given me the opportunity to highlight it. We need to cut through the controversy and the verbiage to get something done. I am asking for a committee to be established for exactly that purpose; to find out

where the truth lies and to monitor the position in the future.

Official Government figures show there is rising salinity in our water supplies in almost all of our dams and, of course, rising salinity means a drop in the quality of the water. So that I can justify the statement I have made, I seek to have incorporated in *Hansard* a table setting out the salinity of the hills catchment dams. Perhaps if you look at the table, Mr Speaker, you may agree to allow it to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: Might I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that Standing Orders require a member to seek leave of the House, and if that leave is granted and I approve of the material, then it shall be incorporated. It is for you to seek leave.

Mr DAVIES: I am sorry, Sir, I thought the first thing to do was to seek your approval. I will seek leave of the House at the end of my speech to incorporate the table. The table has been compiled from annual reports of the Government Chemical Laboratories. In the meantime I will pass copies to an attendant so that you, Sir, may judge whether or not the material may be incorporated and so that the Minister for Water Supplies may study it.

The figures to which I am referring are official Government figures, and they show salinity in the hills catchment areas has increased. The reservoirs to which I refer are the Canning, Churchmans, Mundaring, North Dandalup, Serpentine, South Dandalup, Victoria, Wellington, and Wungong. The figures relate to salinity expressed as sodium chloride for the years 1974 to 1976. They show the maximum readings available from previous reports and also the minimum readings from the same source. From the table members will be able to gain some idea of the increase in salinity in these areas.

I would like to point out that getting this information is not quite as simple as one might think it would be. I suppose if one wishes to study the quality of water the first thing one would do is go to the reports of the Metropolitan Water Board; and that is exactly what I did. But there I drew a blank, so I thought, "How foolish I am, if it is a health matter it will be in the annual reports of the Public Health Department."

So I went there, and again I drew a blank. There is nothing about salinity in the annual reports of either the Metropolitan Water Board or the Public Health Department. So I looked at the annual reports of the Medical Department and again found nothing.

After some searching and ringing up on the

telephone—not to the Metropolitan Water Board—I found that the information in respect of the salinity of water supplies could be found in the annual report of the Mines Department, of all things! The reason the information is contained there is that the Government Chemical Laboratories do the work, and those laboratories are under the control of the Mines Department.

We cannot yet obtain the 1977 report of the Mines Department, but I am pleased to say we have been able to obtain a pull of some of the figures compiled by the Government Chemical Laboratories. One of the difficulties in producing public material is, of course, in having the reports printed. As I have said, the latest report I can get is the 1976 report. The 1977 report, of course, is now more than 12 months overdue, and I suppose it will be quite a while before we get the 1978 report. However, the figures are available if one likes to make a few phone calls and ask a few questions.

To interpolate here, I thought we might at this stage make the Government Chemical Laboratories a department on its own. I am quite certain that people trying to ferret out information find it most confusing when eventually they ascertain that the laboratories are under the control of the Mines Department. Just what relationship they have to that department and what rapport exists between the two, I do not know; but it seems to me that the time could well be here when the laboratories should be made a separate department.

So, Sir, I will seek leave to incorporate those figures later in order to back up the statement I have made that official Government figures show that the salinity of our water supply is rising and that, of course, means a drop in quality.

The drought has showed us how short of water we are to cope with current levels of population and industrial activity. But what would be the position if we had a similar drought in 10 or 20 years' time, and if the salinity of our water continued to increase at the rate it has been increasing over the past few years? Perhaps we should examine the evidence that is available. As I have said, it is difficult to get evidence, but we did find some.

The Minister for Health and the Minister for Water Supplies, and presumably their respective departments, have conflicting maximum salinity levels for metropolitan and country water supplies. The Minister for Health was reported in *The West Australian* of the 22nd July—and it is on the file in the building at the moment—as saying that World Health Organisation standards

allowed for 500 milligrams of total dissolved salts in each litre of drinking water. However, in a letter to the editor of the same newspaper, published on the 18th July, the Minister for Water Supplies said that the WHO quoted two levels—the maximum permissible level, which is 1 500 milligrams per litre, and the highest desirable level, which is 500 milligrams per litre.

I cannot find anywhere that any further statement has been made by either Minister or their respective departments to try to resolve the conflict which obviously exists.

On top of that, the Associate Professor of Cardiology at the University of Western Australia (Dr Barry Hopkins) is reported in the *Daily News* of the 19th July as follows—

Dr Hopkins said the standard reference for salt (sodium chloride) content in drinking water was the U.S. Heart Association recommended maximum of 20 milligrams per litre.

"Whether we have a reading in the 500 range as Mr Ridge indicated or 1 500 as Mr O'Connor, says both are far above what is acceptable," he said.

Mr O'Connor: Two ranges are quoted by the WHO and you would know that.

Mr DAVIES: Yes, I have said 500 milligrams is the desirable level, and 1 500 milligrams is the absolute maximum permissible level.

Mr O'Connor: That is the acceptable level.

Mr DAVIES: No, it is not. I will go on to quote why we believe we cannot go past the 500-milligram level.

On one hand the Minister for Health was quoted as saying we should use the figure of 500 milligrams, and on the other hand we have the Minister for Water Supplies saying 500 milligrams is desirable, but we can go up to 1 500 milligrams, although serious consequences will result if we remain continually at the latter figure.

Mr O'Connor: That is correct on the WHO figures.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister is giving the public to understand that the salinity level is quite safe at 1 500 milligrams, but it is not; that is the maximum permissible limit under WHO standards. Even if the Ministers join forces and say, as they do now, that they are aware of the WHO specifying maximum desirable levels and maximum permissible levels, surely they must both agree that we ought not exceed the maximum desirable level of 500 milligrams per litre. That is the figure we should be aiming for,

and I believe it ought to be the maximum upper level that we set for ourselves.

If, however, Dr Hopkins is correct, then we are in big trouble because he was suggesting 20 milligrams per litre. Therefore we must do something to try to retrieve the situation and to lower the salinity levels of the dams.

The salinity of country and metropolitan water supplies is increasing at an alarming rate. People living in country areas, particularly those supplied from the Wellington Dam, face the biggest threat. I refer members again to the figures which I hope to have incorporated in *Hansard* later.

The Wellington Dam, of course, is by far the worst. The Wellington Dam, which is near Collie—I do not think I have to tell the House that—supplies water to great southern towns through about 11 200 service outlets, in addition to the Collie River irrigation district. Some of the bigger towns supplied include Narrogin, Katanning, Tambellup, Brookton, Kulin, and Lake Grace, but of course, there are many more.

In 1964, the Government Chemical Laboratories reported that the total dissolved salts in water from the Wellington Dam was about 168 milligrams per litre. In May, 1978—just 14 years later—the level had increased by more than five times to 880 milligrams per litre, again according to the Government Chemical Laboratories. Obviously, that is well above the desirable limit of 500 milligrams per litre which the Minister for Health at one time said was the maximum.

The Government Chemical Laboratories report of 1973—do not forget, that report would not have been published until about 1975, some 18 months to two years later—warned of the problem. They had noted the increase in salinity in 1973, and their warning is contained in this report, a copy of which I am perfectly willing to make available to anybody who wants to have a look at it.

The report contains the following statement—

This is a cause for concern because a first class irrigation should have a total dissolved salts content of less than 500 milligrams per litre.

That is what the Government Chemical Laboratories said in 1973, yet the level in 1973 was above that. In other words, the people of the south-west now are drinking water which, in the opinion of the Government Chemical Laboratories, is not fit for irrigation. Not only is it being drunk by the people of the south-west but I suppose it is also being used for irrigation purposes.

Mr Herzfeld: How can you compare the two?

Mr DAVIES: I do not have to compare the two; I am merely quoting what the Government Analyst said in his report. There is no reason to compare the two. If the water is not good enough for irrigation, I suppose in the opinion of the member for Mundaring it is good enough for drinking.

I am quoting from a Government body which has been expressing concern, but, typical of some of the narrow-mindedness of people on the Government side, they do not want to consider a problem such as this. This is a matter on which we can find great unanimity. We should be working together to try to obtain the best quality of water for our people, instead of trying to score political points. I certainly have not been trying to score political points in moving my motion, but the member for Mundaring can do so, if he likes.

I turn now to the salinity level of water in the Mundaring reservoir. This should be of interest to the member for Mundaring. I wonder whether he knows what the increase has been over the last 12 years; I am sure he does. However, I will tell the House, because members are waiting with bated breath. What is the Minister for Forests growling about? She normally sits there with such a benign expression on her face.

Mrs Craig: You posed the question, and I answered you. The salinity level in the Mundaring Weir has increased by 240 milligrams per litre of total dissolved salts.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister is going to get a surprise, because she is right. How splendid! The prize is 240lb. of salt.

Mrs Craig: Thank you; it will come in handy for the cattle.

Mr DAVIES: In 1964, according to the report of the Government Chemical Laboratories, the salinity of water in the Mundaring reservoir was 120 milligrams per litre. In 1976, which was the latest set of figures I could obtain from the Government Chemical Laboratories, the salinity level had increased to 380 milligrams per litre. Therefore, over the last 12 years the salinity level of the Mundaring reservoir has more than trebled.

That fact should give cause for complaint and concern because that reservoir supplies water to the goldfields and agricultural areas such as Wubin, Dalwallinu, South Merredin and Kondinin—and they are very large centres indeed.

However, of more concern is that the figures I am quoting are only mean annual samples, whereas a spot sample taken this year from water from Sawyers Valley, supplied by Mundaring

reservoir, showed that the total dissolved salts in drinking water was 590 milligrams per litre, or 90 milligrams per litre above the desirable maximum total dissolved salts.

Mr O'Connor: Who gave you that figure?

Mr DAVIES: The same source—the Government Chemical Laboratories.

Mr Herzfeld: And that was after three years of drought.

Mr DAVIES: I am not denying it. In fact, I have already spoken about the drought and said that it will not be the last one and that our difficulties are not over yet.

Mr Herzfeld: If there is no water coming into the dam, what is there will evaporate and that increases the salinity. What is it going to be next year?

Mr DAVIES: By jove, if I had a second prize to distribute tonight there would be no doubt the member for Mundaring would get it.

Mr Herzfeld: I would not accept it.

Mr DAVIES: I have just mentioned that the figures I have been quoting are mean annual figures. Obviously, at different times of the year and under different conditions they will vary and, equally obviously, the fact we have just had a drought will increase the salinity of the water in the reservoir. I am pleased the member for Mundaring drew that fact to our attention because I am sure no-one else understood. How ridiculous he is!

In a Press release dated the 20th July, the Minister for Water Supplies made the following statement—

Salinity of each source of supply has remained fairly constant for a number of years. Reservoirs and groundwater were normally low, artesian normally higher.

In fact—again, according to the Government Chemical Laboratories—in Canning Dam the level of total dissolved salts in 1974 was 216 milligrams per litre. According to the Minister's statement of the 20th July, this year, the level was 280 milligrams per litre, or an increase of 30 per cent in four years.

That is cause for concern, even under the conditions we have been experiencing. I am sure if we pause for a while the member for Mundaring will give us another little lesson on physics and science. I am sure we all appreciate that recent conditions have been a little out of the normal.

The increases in other dams in the same period are as follows—

Churchmans—an increase of 22 per cent.

North Dandalup—an increase of 15 per cent.

Serpentine—an increase of 17 per cent.

South Dandalup—an increase of 25 per cent.

Victoria—an increase of 6 per cent.

Wungong—an increase of 11 per cent.

Those figures indicate the increase in salinity over a four-year period, which should be of concern to us. In view of the admission of the Minister for Water Supplies earlier this year that the salinity level of artesian water is usually higher than the level of reservoir water, the salinity figures for water from artesian wells serving Perth are also interesting. The following figures I shall quote are from a Metropolitan Water Board report entitled "Water Sources and Water Quality (Salinity)". The figures listed are typical of total dissolved salts and they are—

Mirrabeeka (1)—700 milligrams per litre.

Yokine (4)—700 milligrams per litre.

Bold Park (2)—700 milligrams per litre.

Mounts Bay (2)—1 200 milligrams per litre with maximum of 1 350.

Leederville (4)—1 000 milligrams per litre with maximum of 1 350.

Attadale (1)—1 100 milligrams per litre.

The Minister claimed in the Press release I quoted that "normally at peak summer demand, the proportion of artesian water does not exceed 25 per cent of the total water supplied from any one reservoir, but during last summer this figure was exceeded in some isolated areas". However, the Metropolitan Water Board report I mentioned earlier states—

Some 45% of all water came from underground water sources which operated as base load supply.

On one of two occasions (early and late summer) some areas received exclusively artesian water.

For this reason, many areas received higher than normal mineral content.

It is not fair to say there were one or two isolated instances when the report says some areas were exclusively served during early and late summer by artesian bores and many areas received water with an excess of mineral content.

This means that when consumers were receiving artesian water exclusively, they were drinking water with dissolved salts levels between 700 milligrams per litre and 1 350 milligrams per litre. A level of 1 350 milligrams per litre is

almost three times the maximum level which the WHO and the Public Health Department consider desirable.

What I am saying is that some time during last summer some areas were supplied exclusively with artesian water which could have been up to three times as high as desirable standards set by WHO and suggested as desirable by the Minister.

The Metropolitan Water Board report also records spot-check samples of tap water salinity during 1977-78. In some of these checks the total dissolved salts in the drinking water were 770 milligrams per litre in South Perth and 540 milligrams per litre in Swan View. They were spot checks made by the department last summer, highlighting what we had to do to maintain water supplies to Perth. There was no alternative; we had to use what was available, but it is alarming that it was of the quality I have indicated.

It is interesting to note that this problem appears to be one peculiar to Perth. The salt content of Perth's drinking water is up to 12 times higher than that of Melbourne and Sydney and three times higher than the average for all mainland capital cities. So it is something to be concerned about.

Mr O'Connor: How does it compare with Adelaide?

Mr DAVIES: I do not have the figure for Adelaide but, as I said, I queried that myself and Adelaide would appear to be the mainland capital which drags down the average. If we are 12 times higher than Sydney and Melbourne and only three times higher than the national average, it is obvious that some city drags down that average and it is London to a brick on it is Adelaide. I am not worried about Adelaide's water; I am worried about Western Australia's water.

What are some of the implications of water salinity? This is something we need to look at when considering the need for a committee. I concede there is some dispute between reputable medical authorities about the implications of salt in water. This is part of the problems of dispute, confusion, and complexity which exist and which I mentioned earlier.

As I said, I am quite certain the Minister will be able to quote figures from some reputable authority that show we have nothing to worry about, despite the fact that I can quote reputable authorities which have indicated we do have something to worry about; and there is evidence from medical authorities to show that we should worry.

Drinking water with a high salt content may exacerbate problems of people with high blood

pressure, heart disease, and kidney disease. So anyone with those problems has something to worry about if there is a high salt content in the water he drinks.

Australians already eat food with a large amount of salt in it and they often add excessive amounts of salt themselves. The first thing we often do when we sit at a table with our meal in front of us is to reach for the salt before we even bother to check whether we need it. This means that although salt in water may be only a proportion of what we ingest, it is very important because of the overall high salt intake of Australians. It does become an important public health matter.

Drinking water with a high salt content will add to the problems of people who already have salt-affected medical complaints, some of which I have mentioned. A recent American study suggests that sodium—salt—intake from drinking water might be an important factor in creating hypertension in susceptible people.

I would like to quote a letter by Dr G. D. Bower, a paediatrician and renal physician, who works at the university in its Department of Child Health and at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. It is as follows—

Children and adolescents with unexplained high blood pressure are being detected with increasing frequency. All the available evidence supports high salt intake as being an important factor in the early development of this hypertension. Once detected the condition found in a young individual is usually persistent and often associated with cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease. Thus the observations supporting a link between high blood pressure in high school students and the ingestion of drinking water with salt concentration similar to Perth's water, must cause great concern. All efforts must be made to halt the increase in our drinking water salt level not only for this effect on otherwise normal individuals but also for the considerable problems it is creating for children suffering from other kidney and high blood pressure diseases.

Sir Charles Court: But is that not only a very tiny part of your salt intake—through water?

Mr O'Connor: About 4 per cent.

Mr DAVIES: Other speakers tonight will show what happens.

Sir Charles Court: It is only a very small proportion of what you take. If you did not drink water, it would not reduce your salt intake very much.

Mr DAVIES: We could go back to the fluoride argument and have that all over again.

Mr O'Connor: That was going to poison us all.

Mr DAVIES: I do not remember saying it was going to poison us all.

Mr O'Connor: That was an argument put forward.

Mr DAVIES: Some people said that. Recently I have read about concern in the community in regard to the problems some people are trying to relate to fluoride. Once again, these are people who should be in a position to assess properly the situation. For my part, I am pleased to see that the reports coming out show there appears to be an improvement in the condition of children's teeth because of fluoride.

Mr O'Connor: A substantial improvement. The problem is it is putting a few dentists out of work.

Mr DAVIES: I do not believe any dentists are out of work at the present time. There are certainly no dentists out of work who really want to work. There may be some dole bludgers; but if a dentist really wants to work he will not be out of a job! I say that without fear of contradiction. I have not noticed any dole bludger dentists anyway.

I have noted Dr Bower's concern. He quoted a number of references for the major statements made. Anyone is welcome to a copy of this letter. I should like to quote a comment made by the Minister for Health and reported in *The West Australian* on the 11th July. It reads as follows—

On advice from the Commissioner for Public Health, Dr. J. McNulty, I cannot accept the link which (it is claimed) exists between salt concentrations in Perth's water supply and the incidence of high blood pressure.

However, despite that comment, there is sufficient evidence and enough reputable people who say there is a link between the two situations mentioned. The evidence of these people, and their opinions, give me—and I am sure a number of other people—cause for grave concern and they encourage us to look more closely at the matter.

If there is no reason for concern, why did the WHO bother to establish 500 milligrams of salt per litre of water as the desirable standard? We all know water is a small part only of our diet; but, in establishing a standard of 500 milligrams per litre, surely the World Health Organisation would be aware of this. That organisation would not believe all we were going to live on was water. It would assess the normal part salt plays in our

diet when arriving at a desirable standard for water salinity.

In recent years, of course, there has been a great tendency if a problem arose to shunt it off to a committee of inquiry. I often think Governments set up a task force, a committee, a Royal Commission, or some such to look at problems which they do not like to face up to, or are not able to face up to at the particular time. A Government can always establish one of these committees—a one-up committee—to bring down a report and obtain headlines in the newspapers for a few days. We then find out that nothing eventuates and the whole matter is forgotten.

However, this is a matter which is of concern to all Western Australians and it will be of concern to them for many years to come. It is a case where there is a genuine dispute among reputable and qualified people. They dispute the facts and they dispute the implications of the facts. For that reason we need an authoritative and top-level committee of inquiry which is able to look at the issues involved and report to Parliament and to the public. It is because the issues are so important, and because they are of public concern, that the inquiry should be established by Parliament.

I believe I should summarise the points I have made. Perhaps it will then be easier for the Minister to reply when he agrees to establish a Standing Committee. The points I have made are as follows: firstly, there is considerable confusion and conflicting arguments about the level of salt in our water and the implications of that salt in our water. I am sure everyone will agree there is confusion, and there is argument about desirable quantities and the implications of that salt in the water.

Secondly, there is evidence that the salinity of our water has increased considerably in recent years and this must be a cause for concern. That evidence is contained in the reports of the Mines Department, of all departments; but, more importantly, it is contained also in the report of the Government Chemical Laboratories which eventually becomes incorporated in the annual report of the Mines Department.

Thirdly, there is evidence that high salt content in water can affect health badly.

Fourthly, adequate supplies of high quality water are essential for our normal domestic life to carry on, and for industry to carry on and expand. It is not only people who are involved; it is people and industry.

The fifth point I hope I have made is that the provision and preservation of the quality and

quantity of our water supplies will be a problem for Western Australia for many years to come. I believe the drought brought that home to us and demonstrated that we have a problem. That problem will always be with us.

The sixth point is: it is time for an impartial inquiry to establish the truth of all these matters, to protect the present, and to plan for the future. There is nothing wrong with protecting what we have and planning for the future.

The seventh point is that it is not a matter in which there is much room for political point scoring. We did get into a little argument earlier; but I was not trying to score points. If there is anything wrong, some members sitting in the Chamber tonight must take the blame for failing to alert the community at an earlier stage. Many of us are to blame. As a previous Minister for Health, I must take some of the blame, although I point out the report which is really of concern to me came out in 1973 and probably was not made available until approximately 1975. However, I do not excuse myself because of that. As a Minister I had a responsibility, and if such a report came across my table, I should have taken action on it. Some of my colleagues on this side of the House, who were Ministers with me, must take some of the blame also. However, I think members will hear tonight of some of the steps taken by previous Ministers and the concern which was expressed.

I believe previous and present Ministers in the coalition Governments must take some of the blame also. But taking some of the blame is not enough; now is the time to do something about it. It is no good repenting and being sorry. We must get on with the job and do something about it. The best action we can take is to pass this motion tonight which will enable a Standing Committee to be set up.

The eighth point I have tried to make is: the time has come to establish beyond doubt how good our water supplies are and to establish a body responsible to the public for monitoring supplies on an ongoing basis to alert us to looming problems. That is what we want. We want somebody to tell us now how good our water supplies are and we want them to watch the position in the future and to warn us—to alert us—of looming problems.

This problem does not affect only one section of the community; it affects every person not only in the metropolitan area, but also in the rest of the State. That is why the matter is of concern and why it is urgent. I believe we should act in the best parliamentary tradition. We should forget

our political differences on this matter. We should realise it is a matter of grave concern. We should realise also that we should pass this motion in the public interest. I believe honestly that we are here to serve the public interest.

I have pleasure, Mr Speaker, in moving the motion and would seek leave to have this paper incorporated at the appropriate place in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has requested that certain material be incorporated in *Hansard*. It will be necessary for leave of the House to be granted for that to occur. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

The incorporated table was as follows—

SALINITY OF HILLS CATCHMENT DAMS (Surface Samples)

Reservoir	Salinity as NaCl (Annual Mean)											
	1974			1975			1976			Max.	Min.	
	mg/l	T.D.S.	mg/l	mg/l	T.D.S.	mg/l	mg/l	T.D.S.	mg/l	Yr.	mg/l	Yr.
Canning	180	216	190	228	210	252	265	1972	140	1964		
Churchmans ..	90	108	100	120	105	126	110	1972	100	74/75		
Mundaring	210	252	250	300	315	378	445	1972	120	1964		
North												
Dandalup* ..	130	156	120	144	140	168	140	72/76	105	1974		
Serpentine	135	162	140	168	155	186	190	1972	120	1964		
Sth.												
Dandalup ..	120	144	120	144	130	156	130	1976	120	74/75		
Victoria	165	198	180	216	220	264	235	1972	170	1974		
Wellington	225	270	300	360	490	588	490	73/76	140	1964		
Wungong*	135	162	135	162	140	168	145	1972	125	1974		

Total dissolved solids approximate to NaCl x 1.20 for all Hills supplies.

* Pipehead dams, and hence mean levels represent only the flow period.

† Constructed since 1964.

SOURCE: Annual Reports of Government Chemical Laboratories.

The SPEAKER: Is there a seconder to the motion?

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [9.10 p.m.]: I am very happy to second the motion so ably moved by the Leader of the Western Australian Labor Party, the Leader of the Opposition. It is a motion which is most timely in the history of Western Australia and it is a motion which is concerned with our most precious commodity; that is, our water supplies.

The lack of water, and its quality and quantity are probably the severest constraints Western Australia has to its future development. Unless we can come to grips with the problem, the people of Western Australia will be drinking substandard and unhealthy water and they will be paying a lot more for it.

Therefore it is timely that we put the question of water supplies in its proper perspective and

debate the subject in an objective fashion, and that is what I intend to do tonight.

Firstly, let us consider the sources of our water in Western Australia, and particularly the water for Perth. In the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board's report, called "Perth's Water Needs Now and Future" published in January, 1978, is the following on page 3—

SOURCES OF SUPPLY

Current water supplies (1977-78) are obtained from:

Hills sources	79%
Unconfined aquifers	16%
Artesian aquifers	5%

The proportion of groundwater is expected to increase significantly in the near term. The water from unconfined aquifers requires full treatment (coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration and disinfection) whereas artesian water, though slightly saline, has very few other impurities and is quite palatable when mixed with hills water or treated water, from the unconfined aquifers. In the main, these sources are developed where the demand is occurring to avoid the considerable expense of constructing large trunk mains from distant sources.

In a Press statement dealing with the sources of our water supplies, the Minister for Water Supplies, on the 21st July, said—

"Changes in salinity at the tap were caused by seasonal changes in the mix of these three sources, not by external influence," he said.

"Some suburbs got more artesian water—and so experienced higher salinity—than others during drought months.

Mr O'Connor said that the artesian bores were Perth's main source of water before the Canning Dam was built in the late 1930s.

During drought, when the reservoirs were low, some areas got a higher proportion of artesian water.

Normally at peak summer demand water supplied from any one reservoir did not contain more than 25 per cent artesian water.

During last summer, however, this was exceeded in some isolated areas supplied from the Mt Eliza and Bold Park reservoirs.

So in the last 12-month period, because of the drought, there has been—and according to the Metropolitan Water Board this is likely to

continue—a mix of water from the hills, artesian bores, and these unconfined aquifers. Also, in its report the Metropolitan Water Board is indicating that in future we will have to be looking for water from the Murray River, from desalination plants, and even possibly from sewage treatment plants.

I now want to deal with the third point I wish to make; that is, the desirable standard of our water from a health point of view. Firstly, I want to refer to the National Health and Medical Research Council report of the 75th Session in Canberra in November, 1972. At page 16 of that report, under the heading, "Environmental Health Committee", is the following—

Council received the report of the Environmental Health Committee and adopted the following recommendations:

Desirable Standards for Public Water Supplies in Australian Capital Cities

Council recommended that the document entitled "Desirable Standards for Public Water Supplies in Australian Capital Cities," shown in Appendix IX of this report, be approved as the desirable standards for public water supplies in capital cities.

In the appendix it lists—

CHARACTERISTIC

Physical and Chemical Maximum Allowable Concentration

Treated Water Supplies

Total Dissolved Solids 500.00 ppm

In other words, 500 milligrams per litre would be the standard we should adopt in Western Australia. However, I have not heard one Minister refer to this standard adopted by the NHMRC at which Western Australia is represented in the person of the Commissioner of Public Health. It seems the Minister for Water Supplies wants to rely on the standard set by the World Health Organisation which proposes a desirable level of 500 milligrams per litre and a maximum level of 1 500 milligrams per litre. One must bear in mind that when talking about in excess of 500 milligrams per litre the report is referring to under-developed countries. I do not believe that Western Australia in that sense is an under-developed country.

Mr O'Connor: They do not state that in the report.

Mr HARMAN: Reports must be interpreted.

The WHO fundamentally is dealing with under-developed and under-privileged countries.

Mr O'Connor: It is dealing with health standards.

Mr HARMAN: I am suggesting that Western Australia is not an under-developed country and what we ought to be attempting to achieve is that maximum desirable level set by the WHO of 500 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids. Certainly it should adopt the level which has been adopted by the NHMRC, to which Western Australia was a party.

If we could find out from the Government what standards it has adopted for Western Australia, we would know a little more about where we are going.

I also want to refer to the Metropolitan Water Board Development Plan 1978-1983 which, at page 17, states—

The salinity of water supplied to customers normally falls between 300 and 500 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids (T.D.S.). Normal variations occur according to the location of the property served, the time of the year and the proportion of water from artesian wells. The World Health Organisation recommends a highest desirable T.D.S. content for domestic use of 500 mg/litre and a maximum permissible content of 1 500 mg/litre.

The report continues—

Some areas in Western Australia where sources are scarce have water supplies with a T.D.S. content of 1 000 mg/litre or higher.

Now one must ask where are these towns? Where are these communities that are drinking water with a total dissolved solids content of higher than 1 000 milligrams per litre when we have adopted a standard of 500 milligrams per litre? That is the information provided by the Metropolitan Water Board Development Plan. Where are these towns? Of course, we will find out during the next couple of weeks, mainly as a result of asking questions.

It was quite significant that when the Minister for Water Supplies gave some figures recently he did not—of course, quite conveniently—refer to any of these communities that are drinking water with a total dissolved solids content of 1 000 milligrams per litre or higher. That is what we are faced with in Western Australia, and members from both sides of this House represent people who live in those types of communities and who drink this substandard water. The report goes on—

Substantial financial savings could be made

if the Board's normal standards were relaxed to a level of 750 or 1 000 mg/litre T.D.S. content. Such a change might allow the use in future years of water of marginal quality from such sources as Woorloo Brook and the Brockman River. In addition, by mixing, water from sources with even higher salinity (such as the Murray River) might be able to be used without desalination.

So, this is the extent of the problem we are debating tonight. The next point I want to examine is the demand for water. I refer again to a Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board report titled, "Future Water Resources". It was published in 1973 and under the heading, "Factors Which Affect Growth" appears the following—

Increases in the volume of consumption result from the growth of population, of industry and of the area served. Recently in Perth the demands of industry became much more significant than formerly and some of the requirements of single industries are very high.

I will point this out shortly. The article continues—

Approaches have been made to the Board on behalf of industries requiring for one plant, up to as high as half of the total yield of the South Dandalup Reservoir.

So we can see there is a tremendous potential for demand, which is quite obvious of course. Just to make that comparison, and put in real practical terms what this future demand for water could mean, I point out that on the 30th June, 1976, there were 252 291 water services in the metropolitan area serviced by the Water Board. If Alcoa commences operations at Wagerup it will use a quantity of water per year which would be equal to—given the present ceiling of 150 kilolitres—64 000 services. A further example is that Alcoa's production last year used water equal to 56 000 serviced outlets.

To explain the comparison a little further so that members will have some realisation of what those figures mean, if Alcoa and Alwest proceed with their present plans they will use water equivalent to 184 000 serviced outlets, or to put it another way, 73 per cent of Perth's serviced outlets in 1976.

Mr Shalders: Can you tell us the production levels of Wagerup or Worseley?

Mr Skidmore: It is a horrible waste of a resource.

Mr HARMAN: A letter from Alcoa of

Australia, written on the 14th June, 1978, stated that 9 300 megalitres of water were required for production. That does not include water for dust control on mine haul roads.

I think last year's production by Alcoa was 3.5 million tonnes of alumina, and it is anticipated that four million tonnes of alumina will be produced each year at Wagerup. So that is the situation in respect of our water supplies and the likely demand for water supplies in the future, just for one industry. However, obviously, there are bound to be more industries which will want to commence or expand in Western Australia.

As I pointed out at the beginning of my contribution to this debate, water in Western Australia is one of the most severe constraints we have on development.

To complete the point on the future supply of water I want to refer to "Perth's Water Needs Now and Future". It is a report by the Water Board and at page 4 the report states that the present water commitment is approximately 200 million cubic metres per annum. It states that by the turn of the century it is predicted that the demand will increase to 427 million cubic metres to serve a population of 1.7 million people. So it can be seen that in another 22 years the requirements and the demand for water in Western Australia, in this region, will increase to double the amount being used at present.

There is also a need in this debate to mention the requirements of the sources of water. This information is set out at page 5 of the report of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board for January, 1978. The report refers to the achievement of objectives, and reads—

The choice of source requiring a minimum amount of treatment must always be regarded as preferable to the installation of sophisticated purification plant.

And so it goes on. I suggest members might like to read that report.

The other point I want to stress tonight concerns salinity. I am qualified to make observations, but I am not qualified—not being a medical person—to make inferences from my observations. However, I want to bring to the notice of members in this Chamber the fact that research is going on which correlates between the high salinity level of drinking water and hypertension, high blood pressure, renal diseases, and some other problems in humans.

If we accept that at least in certain parts of the State and at least at certain times of the year the water has a level of dissolved salts higher than the

level set by the National Health and Medical Research Council, we can look at some of the effects of drinking that water. I suggest when members consider this matter they read an article on page 1136 of *The Lancet*—a medical journal of high repute—dated the 27th May, 1978, which refers to hypertension and salt poisoning and discusses studies which have been made of groups of people in various parts of the world, ranging from the Indians of Brazil to Polynesian islanders and New Guinea natives. The article states—

Studies of such groups . . . have revealed a high prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular disease. There are many other differences between "primitive" and "civilised" societies which may account for the observed differences in blood-pressure; nevertheless, these observations are suggestive, and have led to the hypothesis that the "civilised" man's diet contains quantities of sodium far in excess of his physiological needs and that this excess produces hypertension in genetically-predisposed individuals.

There is a great deal of information in that report.

I refer to another report in *Archives of Environmental Health* of September-October, 1977. It is headed "Elevated Blood Pressure and High Sodium Levels in the Public Drinking Water".

Mr Blaikie: Who wrote that report?

Mr HARMAN: It is a report on the preliminary results of a study of high school students in America, written by Edward J. Calabrese and Robert W. Tuthill of the University of Massachusetts.

Mr Blaikie: What are their qualifications to write that report?

Mr HARMAN: I suggest the honourable member read the report and make his own assessment of their qualifications. Like the Minister for Health, the member for Vasse wants to lampoon medical people.

Mr Blaikie: I do not want to lampoon people. I want to help you.

Mr HARMAN: The report states—

The preliminary results are so striking that we are presenting them immediately to the scientific, medical, and regulatory communities to call attention to a possibly serious environmental health problem.

Two groups of students were studied in two different communities in America, one where the drinking water had a sodium level of 107 milligrams per litre and one where the drinking

water had a sodium level of eight milligrams per litre. The conclusion they came to was—

Mr Blaikie: By way of clarification, can you give us a conversion from milligrams per litre to grains per gallon?

Mr HARMAN: This is a serious subject. It is the most serious debate we have had in this Parliament, and the honourable member can only make inane suggestions.

Mr Blaikie: I guarantee you cannot work it out yourself.

Mr Skidmore: We gave gallons away months ago.

Mr HARMAN: The report concludes by saying—

. . . the result is that persons at the high end of the distribution in the high sodium community will become hypertensive years earlier than persons in other communities.

That study in America showed that where there was a high sodium level in drinking water people who were predisposed had a higher potential.

Another paper, entitled "Hypertension treated by salt restriction", appeared in *The Lancet* of the 4th February, 1978, and it states—

Excessive salt intake is probably a major cause of the epidemic of hypertension in "civilized" countries and a reduction in salt intake may help to control the epidemic.

Mr Shalders: Fish and chips will be very tasty from now on.

Mr HARMAN: I do not know why the honourable member is joking.

Mr Shalders: Relate it to food intake as well as to fluid intake.

Mr HARMAN: During the time the honourable member has been the member for the area, the people in Mandurah have been drinking very substandard water, while the Alcoa works were using water containing less than 500 milligrams per litre. The report from which I have just been quoting concludes by saying—

Our findings have wider implications, and taken with other evidence suggest that if the mean sodium intake of the Australian population were reduced from 190 mmol/day to 100 mmol/day then the epidemic of hypertension would be prevented.

There is a relationship between salt intake and hypertension, which I do not think is disputed by the medical profession.

I now want to refer to another ingredient of our water supply; that is, aluminium sulphate. The *British Medical Journal*, which I do not think

even the member for Vasse would dare to demean, contains a reference to the concentration of aluminium in the water supply in Scotland, which is greatly increasing owing to the addition of aluminium sulphate. It is having an effect on people with certain problems, and the medical people in this House could enlarge on that report. The treated water supplies in Western Australia contain aluminium sulphate, and a Standing Committee should be continually reviewing the findings of various researchers throughout the world.

To conclude on this point, the Australian Water Resources Council Technical Paper No. 7, entitled "A Compilation of Australian Water Quality Criteria", had this to say on page 241 under the heading "Sodium"—

While sodium in public water supplies is not known to cause any harm to healthy people, it can be a serious problem for people suffering from hypertension, oedema associated with congestive heart failure or toxæmia in pregnancy.

So, not only is there evidence to suggest that a high level of salt intake into our bodies is related to hypertension, but also there is evidence to suggest that, where there is a high level of sodium content in our water, people who are predisposed to hypertension will be adversely affected. We have to ask ourselves how many people in Western Australia are involved. We are told that 15 per cent of the Australian population suffers from high blood pressure. That means in Western Australia some 150 000 people would be affected immediately by an increased salt intake through the water supply. So, we are not talking about a handful of people; we are talking about a relatively large percentage of our population.

As our leader said, Dr Barry Hopkins referred to the salt content in our water supplies, and so did several other prominent medical men—people who are well qualified to make such statements. However, the Minister for Health was prepared to suggest that these people were of no account, and in another report he made derogatory comments about medical people who had come forward to make statements which, in his view, were not substantiated, and which were made for political and fear-mongering reasons.

That was a very shoddy approach to the problem by our Minister for Health. Not only was it irresponsible, but also I believe it was very mischievous that the Minister should lampoon people and try to silence medical practitioners from coming forward to make statements about the health of our community. I would have

thought it was the responsibility of the Minister to encourage persons so qualified to come forward to make statements about the hazards and the potential dangers that exist in many areas, and particularly the hazards in relation to our water supply. So, I do not think the Minister won any marks at all; in fact, he showed his ignorance when he lampooned the medical profession rather than praised it.

Mr Skidmore: The Minister silently left the Chamber!

Mr HARMAN: The Labor Party, and the Parliamentary Labor Party, thought this matter was so serious that we should conduct an inquiry amongst our own members to try to find out the truth, and to see why the Minister had lampooned the medical profession and why the Minister for Water Supplies and the Minister for Health made conflicting statements. So I wrote to the Minister for Health on the 20th July, in the following terms—

The State Parliamentary Labor Party has directed its Health Committee to examine all aspects of salt content in our drinking water supplies.

The Health Committee wishes to be as fully informed as possible on this question, especially the effects of high salt levels in drinking water upon the health of the community. To this end the Committee would be anxious to discuss these matters with appropriate officers from the Public Health Department. The Committee seeks your approval for an officer to confer with us at a suitable time.

That letter was written on the 20th July. All we wanted to do was to confer with an officer of the Minister's department, an officer who would have some knowledge of this matter. I have not received a reply from the Minister; I have had no indication from him at all as to whether or not he will make available to the Opposition a Government officer to answer our queries, an officer paid by the taxpayers of Western Australia. I wonder why we have had no indication from the Minister. All I can do at this stage is to wonder. I leave it to the public of Western Australia to question why the Minister is not prepared to make available to the representatives of at least half the population of the State an officer of the department to tell us about the correlation between hypertension and the salt content in our water.

Nothing has come forward. I can only suggest to members of this House that because of the importance of this matter, because of the value of

this precious commodity to all the people of Western Australia, for the first time we ought to establish a Standing Committee. I can think of no better issue on which this Parliament could make a decision to establish a Standing Committee than our water supply. Every representative of the people would then have the opportunity to investigate all the matters that have been raised so far, and then we can see where we are going in the future. This debate is not just about salt or about health. Its implications can affect the whole future of Western Australia. It can affect the future development of our resources, and as the representatives of the people we ought to have the opportunity to hear all the evidence that is available, and to make recommendations to this Parliament whenever it is possible to do so.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Water Supplies) [9.47 p.m.]: As I do not want to hold members in suspense for any length of time, I will make it clear from the outset that it is our intention to oppose this motion.

Mr Skidmore: We are disappointed!

Mr O'CONNOR: Members opposite have made a number of statements which are well known to members of this Chamber, but they have not made a statement which could be of use to such a committee and which would benefit the present situation. It is strange that members opposite have kept talking about what has occurred in this type of situation without saying what a committee could do to improve it.

Mr Davies: Did you leave the Chamber for a time while I was speaking?

Mr O'CONNOR: I would be the first to agree that in the last three years—the driest three years on record—there has been a deterioration in the quality of the water supplies in this State. There are several reasons for this. As members have mentioned, because of the dry seasons we have had to use more underground water. Members know also that this water has a higher salt content than has the water coming from the catchment areas.

The member for Mundaring made a good point, although he was ridiculed by Opposition members, when he said that evaporation has a great deal to do with the problem.

Mr Davies: He was stating the obvious.

Mr O'CONNOR: It certainly has a bearing, and we must bear in mind that we have had the three driest years on record for the last 100 years; and as the level of water drops down in the dams the salt content increases to a certain extent.

I had to smile when the Leader of the

Opposition said, "Now is the time to do something." I would like to let him know that he has missed the boat. We have been doing something very substantial about this problem for the last nine months.

Mr Bertram: There has been something very wrong with our water for the last nine months.

Mr O'CONNOR: Of course the member for Mt. Hawthorn might have some suggestions to make as to how the situation can be improved. He can bring up his suggestions in this House. Any member who has suggestions that may help this situation can mention them, and anyone can obtain any figures they want from me, as the Minister, or from the department.

Mr Skidmore: The water is sure fouling up the home brew! We are getting a shocking home brew these days.

Mr O'CONNOR: Would the member drink it before?

Mr Skidmore: Yes, for sure; it was good stuff. I will bring in a bottle and let you sample it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I think it is ridiculous to suggest that a Standing Committee would achieve anything. Over the years that the Metropolitan Water Board has been in operation—and that is since 1909—we have had no complaints about the salt content of the water. These complaints started only when the bauxite industry wanted to expand its operations in the Darling Range. Quite frankly, I believe that aspect is involved in the whole issue.

Members have made a great deal of play about water being vital and important, and so it is; however, the bauxite industry employs 2 500 people and provides bread and butter for about 10 000 people, and it is also important.

Mr Davies: We will not have a bauxite industry if we don't have any water.

Mr O'CONNOR: We have an excellent group of people investigating and trying to improve the standard of water purity in Western Australia. During last summer one of the main problems we faced was not the amount of salt in the water but the amount of water we had, and from where we would get the next lot. In my opinion the public, the media, and everyone concerned realised this and did what they could to assist in difficult circumstances.

I stand very firmly by the dedicated members of the Metropolitan Water Board, the Public Works Department and the Public Health Department who consistently work in this area in an effort to achieve the best possible results for the public. If this motion were carried it would

mean a duplication not only of the work being done by those people, but also of the work of government; and, frankly, I can see no reason for that.

Members have made quotations from the World Health Organisation. I would like to clarify a point here. I have in my hand the World Health Organisation edition 3 of 1971.

Mr Davies: Edition 3 of what?

Mr O'CONNOR: It is the International Standards on Drinking Water.

Mr Davies: That is all we wanted to know.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am sorry; it is in small print and I had difficulty reading it. The report refers to the desirable and permissible levels of salt, and it says that the desirable level is 500 parts per million and the permissible level is 1 500 parts per million.

Mr Davies: No, it is not parts per million.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am sorry; the figures refer to milligrams per litre; but it is exactly the same thing.

I was amazed to hear the member for Maylands say that the World Health Organisation set one standard for people in well developed countries and another standard for those in undeveloped countries. His statement is as cranky as can be. The World Health Organisation sets what it believes to be an acceptable standard, and it applies right throughout the world.

Mr Harman: And it is 500 milligrams per litre.

Mr O'CONNOR: The desirable level is 500 milligrams per litre, and the permissible maximum is 1 500 milligrams per litre. To say that organisation sets separate standards for developed and undeveloped countries is so cranky that it is not worthy of further mention.

Some members asked questions in connection with the standard of milligrams per litre as against the old standard of grains. I think members understand grains better than milligrams, and I have been advised that if one divides the number of milligrams by 14.5, one gets the number of grains. So 500 milligrams is the equivalent of about 35 grains, and a level of 35 grains has been generally accepted in most areas as meaning the water is fairly good.

Mr Jamieson: You wouldn't get the member for Vasse feeding that to his cows.

Mr O'CONNOR: I would like to quote a small portion of a report of the Department of Conservation and Environment, which states that the Metropolitan Water Board has adopted the

recommended limit set by the World Health Organisation of 500 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids, and the Perth water supply is well within that. I say frankly that the people of this State generally are drinking good water, and the scare tactics that are being thrown around have frightened people unnecessarily in many ways. The water we drink here is fit for human consumption and is better than the water in many other countries. It is worse than some, but it is certainly fit for human consumption. When one understands the small amount of salt contained in our water, one realises that it forms only a very small part of the total salt intake of people in this State.

I am giving the reasons that I believe a Standing Committee is not necessary, but I am not saying there are not some problems which have to be watched constantly. However, the proposed committee would not do anything new. We already have a Water Purity Committee which includes expert medical and engineering officers—people who know what they are talking about and who are specialists in this area.

Surely those people are able to do more than a Standing Committee; and surely a Standing Committee of this Parliament would simply be doing the job that members of Parliament should be doing anyhow. If a member believes problems exist in any area he should ask questions and, if necessary, take action in this House.

Mr Davies: A member of Parliament cannot get expert opinions.

Dr Troy interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is the sort of stupid interjection I would expect from the honourable member.

I am advised that we have officers conscientiously watching this problem all the time. As I have said, we have experts not only from the Metropolitan Water Board but also from the Public Works Department, the Public Health Department, and various other sources.

Take for instance the Water Resources Council. This council was set up some nine months ago and has already produced two reports to the Government. Not only has it reported to the Government, but it has also made suggestions which have been taken to Cabinet and approved, and these will be made public within the next four to five weeks.

Mr Harman: Will you table the reports?

Mr O'CONNOR: In due course, yes. I have—

Mr Harman: "Within a reasonable time"—like the SGIO report.

Mr O'CONNOR: I will not answer the member's question if he does not want to listen.

Let us consider the members of the Water Resources Council—an expert body in many ways which, within its terms of reference, can do much more than a Standing Committee of this House could do. On that council we have the Director of Engineering of the Public Works Department (Mr R. M. Hillman), who would be well known to the member for Welshpool.

Mr Jamieson: We had him appointed.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Hillman has extensive experience in water supply projects, and was Chief Engineer for the Metropolitan Water Board before he took control of the water section of the Public Works Department. He has been involved in a large number of water schemes; he was associated with the construction of the Serpentine Dam, the development of the Dandalup River scheme, and many others. He was also involved with the first stage of the Gnangara groundwater scheme. He is a very well known and well respected engineer in this State.

Another member of the council is a prominent south-west farmer and north-west pastoralist and businessman, Mr T. Emanuel. Then we had a Morawa Shire councillor, Director of Wesfarmers, and wheat and sheep farmer, Mr S. Glassford, who has always had an interest in water research. Another member is the senior vice-president of the dairy section of the Farmers' Union (Mr D. Partridge). Then we have Mr W. R. Stephens, who is a former president and the current Secretary of the WA Vegetable Growers' Association; Dr C. Georgeff who is a Swan Shire councillor and the nominee of the Local Government Association; Mr R. K. Cheetham, President of the Shire of Narembeen and the nominee of the Country Shire Councils' Association; and Mr Geoffrey Cohen, a member of the manufacturing industrial council of the Confederation of WA Industry.

Mr Jamieson: It's a bit heavy.

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes, but it is a competent group of people. Other members are Mr P. Booth who is a councillor of the Institution of Engineers, and the Chief Engineer of the Metropolitan Water Board (Mr Hunt). Another member is the Director of the Department of Conservation and Environment (Mr Porter).

Mr Bertram: Who represents consumers on this council?

Mr O'CONNOR: All of them, because they all consume water. I thought the member would have known that.

Mr Skidmore: You should put another man on that body—a member of the home brewers association!

Mr O'CONNOR: I take the point made by the honourable member; obviously it has upset him to a degree.

Mr Skidmore: It certainly has; it has spoiled about 14 bottles of home brew.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will spoil the member for Swan if he continues to interject when he is out of his seat.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Speaker, I think the member for Swan has been affected by the quality of what he has just been drinking.

Mr Skidmore: I have not been drinking.

Mr O'CONNOR: I know; I said it facetiously, and I thought the honourable member would have realised that.

Mr Skidmore: I accept your facetious remark.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Porter was also involved with the Thames water scheme. He has had a great deal of experience in England. We have the Co-ordinator of Industrial Development and the Conservator of Forests on this body. The Government believes these men to be more capable of carrying out the type of work we are discussing tonight than a Standing Committee of this House.

The Leader of the Opposition said, "Let us start now." I say the Leader of the Opposition has missed the boat, because these men have been working in this area for nine months. Their terms of reference and main responsibility are to co-ordinate future policy, and to make recommendations to the Government about the assessment, development, conservation, management and protection of the State's water resources.

Mr O'Neil: Any Standing Committee of this House would have to refer to the reports of these committees you have told us about.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is correct. Members opposite talked about having a watchdog. However, we already have a number of watchdogs in this area; namely, the Public Works Department, the Water Purity Council, the Binnie study, the Water Resources Council and the public. The public, of course, are very good watchdogs, because if there is anything wrong with the water they very quickly approach their member of Parliament. We have our own people involved in several national bodies and reporting back to Western Australia the results of those deliberations and the achievements of other States. As far as we possibly can, we try to ensure

our standards are equal to those applying elsewhere.

The water supply is constantly monitored to check for impurities of any sort, and remedial action is taken as soon as possible. The Government certainly is anxious to maintain the standards and will do everything it possibly can in this direction.

There is no doubt that the seasonal conditions have had a bearing on this problem. The public know about it, and were very responsible and responded extremely well to our call for water restrictions. They drank the water and there were very few complaints. The water we are drinking today is better than it was two months ago because of the rain we have received and the additional water with less salt content running into the dams. In addition, we are not using underground water to the same extent as previously; this is where most of the problems were developing—if there was a problem at all. The standards have always been within the permissible limits of the WHO.

I was surprised that no member opposite asked the very relevant question, "Do we do any testing of the water?" Members opposite probably would not know the number of times annually our water supplies are monitored and tested.

Mr Davies: They are all quoted in the reports.

Mr O'CONNOR: I can tell the Leader of the Opposition, because I know.

Mr H. D. Evans: Well, how many times, then?

Mr O'CONNOR: In the metropolitan area, monitoring tests are carried out on bores 9 600 times in one year. On top of that, 6 604 bacteriological tests, 672 chemical tests, and 95 further comprehensive tests are carried out. A total of 16 971 tests a year are carried out on our water supplies. This indicates quite clearly that the position is being watched very closely, and that the bodies which have been established now are watching this area.

Members opposite might suggest we should double that figure. However, the Public Health Department and the various committees know what is required. They are watching our water supplies in the public interest and are making sure they are fit for human consumption.

There has been a lot of talk about the amount of salt in our water. The amount of salt ingested through water is between 4 per cent and 9 per cent of the total intake; 9 per cent would be a very high figure which certainly would not be achieved by anyone in this State. A person would need to drink 10 litres of water before he took in one

teaspoonful of salt. I suggest to members opposite that before he became salt-affected he would die from drowning!

How much water can a person drink before he is affected to any extent by excessive salt intake? The best way for a person to overcome this problem is to watch the other areas, which comprise 95 per cent of his salt intake. He should watch the type of food he eats, and his diet generally. I am not suggesting that some unhealthy people are not affected to a greater extent than others; however, a normal, healthy person has no problem with our drinking water and can drink as much as he likes. In severe cases where a person is affected, dietary control can assist; however, the medical people are the ones to advise in this area.

What has happened in recent times has caused alarm and unnecessary fear amongst people. Emotional statements have been made which have been quite deliberately designed to confuse people and to try to stop an industry from operating in this State, rather than anything else. The Leader of the Opposition talked about the issue being confusing, but it has been made deliberately so.

I believe there has been unnecessary and unrealistic concern in this area. If I thought that people were being adversely affected in this regard I would be doing everything I possibly could to rectify the situation. The three dry summers we have experienced have helped to create this problem, but it is partly overcome now and if we receive the rains we all hope will come it will assist us even more.

In the emotional atmosphere which has been created, it has been very difficult to obtain in a rational manner the viewpoint of an efficient authority. People have tried to confuse the issue by bringing forward figures and using various terms and expressions the average individual would not understand. People have been confused and frightened by the dramatic and misleading statements which have been made to a greater degree than should have been the case.

Mr Harman: By whom?

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member has seen them in the Press.

Mr Harman: Which ones?

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Bartholomaeus was one. Has the honourable member not been in touch with him on this issue?

Mr Harman: Who were the others?

Mr O'CONNOR: I will answer that question when the honourable member answers my question.

In connection with the total issue, the Government is concerned also to make sure that as much water as possible is available and at the best quality we can possibly provide. To this extent, this Government has thrown a blanket around the Wellington Dam—possibly one of the worst in this State in regard to salinity—to prevent any further clearing around the dam. In some cases, the Government has even been buying back land so that we can revegetate the area and bring down the salinity level.

We are proceeding to build two new dams—the Wungong and the North Dandalup. On top of that, the Government announced some time ago a \$92 million programme for country water supplies.

All these programmes indicate that the Government is concerned about this problem and is doing everything it possibly can to make sure the water supplies in this State are suitable for the people of Western Australia. Certainly, what they are drinking at the moment is quite suitable.

It is vital to encourage this sort of thing when we have a rising population and large-scale development. The metropolitan area has a capacity of 485 million cubic metres in its dams. With the Wungong and Dandalup Dams this will increase by another 100 million. I can see no reason for a parliamentary committee to be set up. It would be totally unnecessary and would only duplicate work that is being done; work that members of Parliament should be doing anyway. If a member of Parliament feels something is wrong he should bring the matter up in Parliament so as to bring it to the attention of the public.

Mr Skidmore: I thought that was happening.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is happening and the Government first acted on this nine months ago. The Leader of the Opposition has missed the boat. As I have said three or four times before, the water we are drinking is suitable for human consumption and the authorities handling this matter are competent and responsible.

The Water Resources Council looks after the quality of water, the resources being used, and the resources not used or which are undeveloped in the State. We have the Water Purity Committee which has been operating since 1927. We have the Western Australian representatives on the technical committee on water quality and the high level technical committee of the Western Australian Water Resources Council.

Mr Skidmore: Why has our water got salty recently?

Mr O'CONNOR: We had three dry summers.

Mr Skidmore: So those committees could not overcome that problem? I pose the question because there are such things as desalination plants.

Mr O'CONNOR: Is the member aware of how much they cost?

Mr Skidmore: Of course; I used to run one 30 years ago in the north.

Mr O'Neil: That was a Coolgardie safe.

Mr Skidmore: It was a plant from North America.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Metropolitan Water Board has been operating since 1909 and it had no queries about salt in water until the bauxite industry question arose when we had a group trying to prevent the industry proceeding. It would be interesting to know what these people are up to and where they are getting the substantial sums of money for advertising.

I have here an article headed, "Water Quality Criteria 1972", a report of the National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Engineering, Washington, D.C., 1972. I will not go into the report in detail because some people may not understand it, but it makes the recommendation that, "In view of the above discussion no limit is recommended for sodium".

I would like to quote from *Hansard* of October, 1966. Members will remember we had a fluoride debate at that time when scare tactics were used to frighten so many people. Quotations from medicos were used at that time to suggest to people they would be dead in a certain period of time, etc., if fluoride were used. At that time the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, (Mr J. T. Tonkin) made the following comment—

Let us weigh the pros and cons, dispassionately. Let us weigh the evidence which exists in the medical literature, and make up our own minds as to whether there is any special reason why some people are getting certain results from their experiments, as against the results being obtained by others who can speak with authority.

Another member who has since left this Chamber was Dr Henn, who said—

I was wondering whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in all the mass of literature that is available...on fluoridation of public water supplies...was seeking the truth, or seeking just that part of it which he could use to play on the emotions of the public. I will leave the House decide that question.

That is relative to this debate because when speaking to this issue people have selected sections of reports without looking at the total aspect of the matter and without admitting there are problems in many other areas apart from the areas they have discussed.

I have made it clear that in my opinion, and I trust in the opinion of members on this side of the House, there is no need for a committee such as has been suggested. We have monitoring and testing of our bores in the metropolitan area carried out 16 971 times a year. Our bores are tested by the Government Chemical Laboratories and if there are any problems they are brought to our attention very quickly.

We have organisations operating watching the operation of water supplies and they are continually trying to extend and improve them and make sure that the public is getting the best water possible. We have competent experts and professional people in the Metropolitan Water Board, the Public Works Department, the Water Resources Council, the Water Purity Committee, representatives on the National Technical Committee on Water Quality, and the National Technical Committee on Water Resources. All these agencies handle our water problems and they are handling them well under the circumstances.

If we agree to this committee the next request for a committee would be perhaps for a pollution committee, a road reserves committee, or an environmental committee. The committee suggested would create unnecessary duplication of work; work that members should be doing anyway. I oppose the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Jamieson.

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Off-road Vehicles: Cervantes

864. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) (a) Is it a fact that the area around the Pinnacles at Cervantes has been almost devastated by off-road vehicle action;
- (b) if so, will the Minister take the necessary action to ensure that no further damage be allowed in this area?

(63)

- (2) If any report has been prepared by departmental officers on this area, would the Minister table same?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) No.
- (b) The area is subject to regular patrols by national parks rangers.
- (2) There is no report of alleged devastation.

SEWERAGE

Septic Systems: Midvale

865. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that a letter was forwarded to the Commissioner of Health on 18th July, 1978, regarding a health hazard that now exists in Beaconsfield Avenue, Midvale, caused by the inability of the present septic leach drains to successfully operate?
- (2) Would he arrange to have an immediate inspection made of the area of development in and around Beaconsfield Avenue, Midvale, with a view to ensuring the efficient and proper operation of the septic systems now installed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) An inspection was conducted on the 20th July and corrective action is being instigated by the Mundaring Shire Council.

ROAD

Kwinana Freeway: Banksia at Manning

866. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Was the Minister's department advised that a stand of banksia that exists between the Mt. Henry Home and Aquinas College was to be removed for the purpose of the southern extension of the freeway?
- (2) Can the Minister assure the House that only those banksia that were required to be removed were removed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The Department of Conservation and the Environment has had a representative on the advisory design committee for the southern extension of the Kwinana Freeway and therefore has been able to advise the Main Roads Department on all relevant aspects of the freeway construction. The Minister is satisfied that the Main Roads Department is taking every possible care in relation to the removal of trees. However, it is understood that in the vicinity generally described by the member an area of banksias has been cleared on private property in preparation for private development.

HEALTH

Herbicides 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D: Instructions on Use

867. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Health:

In view of the continuing controversy over the use of the hormonal sprays 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D, will he issue instructions that these sprays are no longer to be used until expert opinion is received that such sprays are not injurious to health?

Mr RIDGE replied:

No. There is no evidence that the present use of the spray is injurious to health.

EDUCATION

Maida Vale School

868. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Education:

Will he advise when a resources centre (library) will be provided at the Maida Vale primary school?

Mr P. V. JONES replied.

The principal was advised by letter, dated the 27th July, 1978, from the Superintendent of Buildings that the school is not listed for a resource centre for 1978-79 financial year, but will be considered for listing in the following year, dependent upon the availability of funds.

HOUSING

Forrestfield Development

869. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has compensation or a *gratia* payment been made to residents living in the Forrestfield area who were affected by the dust nuisance caused by the construction of the housing commission development in Lincoln Road, Forrestfield, last December?
- (2) If "Yes" what was the criteria of assessing the damage caused to the various homes?
- (3) If payments have not been made, will he further advise when they will be compensated?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) The commission's assessed contribution has been forwarded to the local authority, which is co-ordinating the matter of compensation and will arrange disbursements on behalf of the Housing Commission, Gold Estates, and itself. Distribution is expected at an early date.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members and Meetings

870. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Who are the members of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee?
- (2) How many times has it met since its inception?
- (3) How many regulations have been reviewed?
- (4) How many regulations have been referred to Parliament?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Geoffrey Alexander Kennedy, Q.C.; Hon. Sir Ross Hutchinson; Professor Gordon Stanley Reid.
- (2) 12 times.
- (3) 101 (including by-laws and rules) of which 19 were new regulations and 82 were amendments to existing regulations.
- (4) None.

PORT AUTHORITY REGULATIONS

Report

871. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Will he table a copy of a report which State Cabinet considered on 1st May, 1978, which arose from a judge's ruling that Port Authority regulations used to arrest pickets at Fremantle were invalid?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

No. It is not customary for the content of such reports to be made public.

HEALTH

Mental Health Act: Amendment

872. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the Mental Health Act under review?
- (2) If so, when will a Bill be brought before the Parliament to amend the Mental Health Act?
- (3) From which organisations is information being sought for a review of the Act?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The Mental Health Act is under minor review only, the purpose of the exercise being mainly to rectify some anomalies, particularly in relation to committal procedures.
- (2) It is not anticipated that any Bill will be presented during the current session of Parliament.
- (3) Any individual or organisation who or which desires to comment or contribute is welcome to do so, but it is stressed that no new major legislation is intended. Comments have been received from Watchdog, Citizens Commission on Human Rights, Foundation for the Abolition of Compulsory Treatment, and various units of the department.

ROADS

Federal Funds

873. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the total of Commonwealth payments in 1977-78 as general road grants?

(2) What is the estimated total for 1978-79?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

This question was answered by yesterday's reply to question 859.

STATE FINANCE

Federal Funds

874. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the value of Commonwealth payments to the State Government in 1977-78 for the—
 - (a) hospitals development programme;
 - (b) community health programme;
 - (c) school dental scheme;
 - (d) urban public transport;
 - (e) agricultural extension services;
 - (f) children's services programme;
 - (g) housing;
 - (h) dwellings for pensioners?
- (2) What is the estimated value of Commonwealth payments to the State Government in 1978-79 for each item (a) to (h) in (1) above?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The information requested was contained in the schedule tabled in reply to question 841.
- (2) (a) Nil;
(d) \$2 000 000;
(g) Basic allocation of \$17 521 000 and the State is eligible for a further allocation of \$12 246 000 on a matching basis.
(h) \$1 086 000.

Information on the other programmes will not be known until the Federal Budget is presented.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES BILL

Exemptions

875. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

With reference to clause 4 (2) of the Off-Road Vehicles Bill, will he please give an indication of the Government's intentions as to how much of the State will be excluded from the provisions of the Bill?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

No. As the member knows, I invited public comment upon the Bill and am presently considering these submissions. I am carrying out a full review of the Bill and consider it inappropriate to discuss individual items at this stage.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES BILL

Exemptions

876. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

With reference to clause 8 (3), (4), (5) and (6) of the Off-Road Vehicles Bill, will he please give an indication of the Government's intentions as to what classes of person will be given permits or exemptions from the Act and for what type of activities?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

See answer to question 875.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Regional Facilities

877. Mr CARR, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he received a submission from the Town Councils of Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Narrogin and Northam, requesting special State Government assistance for the provision of regional cultural facilities to be located in those centres?
- (2) Does he acknowledge the principle that such regional facilities should be substantially assisted by the State Government rather than being totally funded by the local authorities, in the same way that several recent cultural facilities in the metropolitan area have been substantially provided by the State Government?
- (3) When does he expect to be able to provide an answer to the town councils' submission?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I will have to give part of the answer verbally because the reply to part (1) of the question does not appear on the copy I have here. I hope the honourable

member will appreciate this, and I will have the answer retyped if he so desires. The answer is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) The member is aware of the contents of my 15th May, 1978, letter to the Mayor of Geraldton and the President of Greenough Shire Council, in which I dealt with this subject.

The town councils concerned have likewise been advised that I hope to talk to them in more detail when we have finalised the 1978-79 Budget.

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Fishermen

878. Mr CARR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How many fishermen received funds from the Government for damage resulting from cyclone Alby?
- (2) What was the total amount of such money paid to fishermen?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) Eight fishermen were granted loans totalling \$31 600 and, in addition, one fisherman was assisted with a grant of \$5 500 from the Lord Mayor's relief fund.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Rural Scheme

879. Mr CARR, to the Premier:

- (1) Which councils received assistance under the rural unemployment relief scheme?
- (2) How much was paid to each council?
- (3) During what period was each council receiving funds?
- (4) What was the number of men employed by each council?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

A total allocation of \$1 348 395 has been made to twenty-six shire councils since September, 1976. Proposals submitted by shires provided for a total of 840 persons to be employed on various projects throughout the period.

The allocations for each council and the

nature of projects covered and men to be employed, have usually been announced progressively.

A considerable amount of work would be involved in extracting from the accounts details for each shire, including the period each council was receiving funds, and it would not be reasonable to require Treasury officers to undertake this task in lieu of more urgent current work on Budget preparation.

inappropriate for a member to ask a question of a Minister where the question relates to areas of responsibility not under his direct control. In the case of the question now answered by the Minister for Health, obviously the Minister has had regard for those Statutes which are under his control. However, I think it inappropriate that he be expected to answer questions relating to areas under the control of some other Minister.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION

Regional Offices

880. Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Attorney-General:

- (1) Are there any plans for offices of the new Legal Aid Commission to be established in regional centres?
- (2) If "Yes" will the Minister please advise the details?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

There are no plans to establish regional offices of the Legal Aid Commission at present.

CAMPING

Legality

881. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

Will he please direct me to any section of any Act dealing with the legality or otherwise of persons camping elsewhere than in specified caravan parks or camping areas?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I wish to point out that I am not competent to say that we have been through every Act to determine whether the answer I am about to provide is correct. However, if the member refers specifically to the Health Act (Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds) Regulations 1974, and the Local Government Model By-Laws (Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds) No. 2, I think they should satisfy his query.

The SPEAKER: I would like to point out for the guidance of members that I believe it is

MINING

Revenue, Expenditure, and State Batteries

882. Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Would he please furnish a breakdown of revenue to his department for the year ended 30th June, 1978, showing particularly rentals for various tenements?
- (2) Would he please indicate the breakdown of expenditure by the State under the heading of "Mines" for the same period together with comparative figures for 1976-77?
- (3) What proportion of the total salary account of the Mines Department is apportioned as against the operation of State batteries?
- (4) (a) When was the first State battery commissioned; and
(b) where did it operate?
- (5) What was the original purpose of State batteries?
- (6) Is the policy still the same policy today?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Territorial Mining Royalties:

	\$
Royalties	54 519 170
Rents	3 211 830
	<hr/>
	Total \$57 731 000

Departmental:

Chemical Laboratories	114 374
Explosives	130 272

	\$
Survey fees.....	168 948
Exemption fees.....	46 233
Other fees and charges	44 671
Sale of publications.....	81 620
Miscellaneous.....	20 365
Kalgoorlie metallurgical labs	18 124

624 607

State batteries 171 333

\$58 526 940

(2) Mines:

	1976/77	1977/78
	\$	\$
Salaries.....	6 463 600	7 067 573
Administration expenses.....	495 877	486 694
Payroll Tax	321 393	344 806
Printing and stationery—Government		
Printer	78 468	68 787
Chemical Laboratories	194 260	196 054
Geological Surveys	169 870	205 856
Exploratory drilling	1 016 623	966 389
Explosives: expenses.....	74 755	44 130
Survey of leases and areas	561 015	657 425
Refunds of survey fees and revenue.....	116 260	76 004
Miners Phthisis Act Comp	4 950	4 760
Cartage of ore subsidy	12 376	11 477
Kalgoorlie Metallurgical Laboratory	15 304	18 124
Research on environmental effects of the woodchip industry		33 091
Advance to mine owners and assistance to prospectors		9 446
Drilling plant replacement.....	12 571	
Development of mining—losses on assisted ventures	408 656	182 531
	<hr/> 9 945 998	<hr/> 10 373 148

State Batteries:

	1976/77	1977/78
	\$	\$
Salaries.....	56 216	56 690
Administration expenses.....	128 056	140 567
Payroll Tax	49 641	53 281
Operating expenses.....	1 163 434	1 405 539
Minor improvements and plant replacement	12 307	20 910
	<hr/> 1 409 654	<hr/> 1 676 987

(3) The total of Mines Department and State Batteries salaries and wages for 1977-78 was \$8 149 876 of which \$1 082 303 was apportioned against State Batteries, which is 13.2 per cent of the total.

(4) (a) October, 1898;
(b) Norseman.

(5) To enable prospectors to test their properties and give the investing public an opportunity of judging the value of a district rather than a permanent ore reducing works (Annual report 1900).

(6) Yes. The main purpose is still to enable prospectors to test their properties.

PENSIONERS

Financial Imbalance

883. Mr WILSON, to the Treasurer:

In view of the fact that in the 12 months to June, the Consumer Price Index in Western Australia was higher than in any other State and that pensioners in this State are possibly disadvantaged by comparison with their counterparts in other States, by having the same income while having to meet higher costs, what special action does the Government propose to redress this imbalance for pensioners in Western Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In accordance with current Commonwealth legislation, pensions are automatically adjusted to reflect increases in the weighted average Consumer Price Index for the six State capitals combined. The adjustment is based on half-yearly increases in the combined average index between the June and December quarters.

As increases in pensions are based on an average CPI increase for the six State capitals, it follows that, on occasions, the relevant percentage increase for the CPI for some capital cities will be higher than the corresponding rise in pensions while, for other capitals, it will be lower.

In these circumstances, it would not be practicable for pensioners to be compensated when the CPI in their State happened to be higher than the corresponding adjustment to pensions. To be consistent, a negative adjustment would have to be made when CPI gains were lower.

In this respect, over the last five years the six monthly increases recorded in the Perth CPI have been equal to, or lower than the average increases for the six State capitals combined on five out of ten occasions.

Between December 1977 and June 1978 the corresponding increases were 3.01

per cent for Perth, and 3.38 per cent for the six capital cities combined.

EDUCATION

Technical College, Francis-Aberdeen Streets: Art Studies

884. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What provision for art studies will there be in the new technical college to be built between Francis and Aberdeen Streets?
- (2) If there is to be no such provision, is it intended that art subjects are to be farmed out to other centres?
- (3) Is the move of the sculpture studio to the old convent building in Aberdeen Street a temporary or permanent arrangement?
- (4) If it is a temporary move, where is it to be located ultimately?
- (5) What is the reason for the decision not to retain the art school within the precincts of the new cultural centre?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The new building between Francis Street and Aberdeen Street will not accommodate art studies, but the old Perth Boys building in James Street is to be remodelled to accommodate the art studies of Perth Technical College.
- (3) Only temporary.
- (4) Answered by (1).
- (5) No such decision has been made.

885. *This question was postponed.*

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Morley Drive-Grand Promenade and Girrawheen Avenue-Beach Road Intersections

886. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has Commonwealth approval yet been received for the minor improvements to traffic engineering road safety programme?

- (2) Are traffic lights for the Morley Drive/Grand Promenade intersection, Dianella, and the Girrawheen Avenue/Beach Road intersection, Girrawheen, to be provided from funds under this programme?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), how soon will these lights be installed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) At the Morley Drive-Grand Promenade junction by mid September 1978; at the Girrawheen Avenue-Beach Road intersection by the end of October 1978.

SHOPPING CENTRE

Mirraboopa: MTT Arrangements

887. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In view of the impending opening of the Mirraboopa shopping centre in October and its relative remoteness from established urban development, what plans are there for bus services to and from the centre?
- (2) What alterations to existing bus routes and what new bus routes are proposed and when will services commence on these routes?
- (3) When is it anticipated that work will begin on the proposed bus transfer station at the new centre?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) It is our intention for the immediate present to institute a shuttle service between Wanneroo Road and Mirraboopa Shopping Centre. This service will cross existing services and will provide access to the centre.
- (2) No change.
- (3) This will depend on land becoming available and finance approved.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Communications Equipment

888. Mr WILSON, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is he aware that local emergency services have no access to funds for communications equipment?

- (2) Is he also aware that the Wanneroo emergency service is \$400 in debt and has no communications equipment other than secondhand equipment which it borrows from the Belmont emergency service?
- (3) In view of the valuable community service performed by such voluntary groups and the possible lowering of moral should adequate equipment continue not to be available, what action does the Government propose?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The State provides local emergency services with equipment but not funds, through the State Emergency Service. Relevant local governing authorities also assist with equipment and some may provide funds.
- (2) Any question of a debt would be for consideration by the relevant local governing body in the first instance. Wanneroo emergency service is a very active group and has been provided with suitable communications equipment, and in addition some obsolete hand-held radio sets requested by the voluntary co-ordinator for use as spare parts.
- (3) The Government values highly the voluntary efforts of all local emergency services, and will continue to support them as generously as possible.

LAND

Reserve 29753

889. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Further to her answer to a question without notice on 2nd May, 1978, regarding a decision of the City of Stirling's request for a portion of reserve No. 29753 to be separately reserved and vested in the Council for an autumn centre, can she now say whether the opinion of the Crown Law Department has yet been received?
- (2) If "Yes" can she say whether a decision has yet been made?
- (3) If "No" to (2), can she indicate the reason for the continuing delay in a decision being made and when such a decision might be expected?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) A Crown Law Department opinion was received to the effect that the proposed autumn centre is not consistent with the reserve purpose "public recreation".
- (2) and (3) Consideration is being given to the sensitive moral issues surrounding a change in reserve purpose as the land concerned was specifically set aside as a reserve for recreation under the subdivisional processes of the Town Planning Act (Section 20A in particular).

TOWN PLANNING

Bullsbrook Estate

890. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Is he aware that the Defence Department has been erecting signs near the Bullsbrook estate warning that the area is too noisy for housing?
- (2) Was he reported correctly as saying that the subdivision has been public knowledge since 1914?
- (3) Is he aware that the development company made no mention of the directions of air flight paths in their publicity material?
- (4) How many reviews of the town planning scheme for this area have there been since 1914?
- (5) What responsibility does the Town Planning Department have for assessing the current and future implications of the siting of housing subdivisions adjacent to airports and air bases such as Pearce?
- (6) What action does the Government propose to take to protect the interests of land purchasers who are now facing a drastic fall in property values because of aircraft noise?
- (7) What consideration, if any, is the Government giving to ensuring that similar developments do not occur in the future?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.

- (2) I have said that I am aware of the subdivision but that it is one which was surveyed in 1914 prior to the advent of the Town Planning Board which came into being about 1929.
- (3) No.
- (4) The Shire of Swan town planning scheme was approved in June, 1974 and the council has recently reviewed its planning scheme but as yet no report has been submitted to me. The land is currently zoned for rural use.
- (5) The department advises the Government, the Town Planning Board and The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority; it has no statutory responsibility for land use planning. The Town Planning Board, and in the metropolitan region the MRPA, are concerned with the overall land use problem including the conflicts in land use arising from noise and other nuisance factors, and are in consultation with appropriate State and Commonwealth authorities.
- (6) The Government has been liaising with the Commonwealth for some years concerning airport locations and adjacent development. It does not propose any action in respect of the position at Bullsbrook.
- (7) See answers to (5) and (6).

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Potato Growers

891. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he advise what financial assistance potato growers in the south-west received where crops were damaged as a result of cyclone Alby?

Mr OLD replied:

Potato growers with other primary producers were eligible for the provision of carry on funds from the cyclone Alby disaster relief (primary producers) fund where the effects of cyclone Alby reduced income.

No estimate is possible of the amount specific to potato growing.

STOCK

Sheep Stations

892. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many sheep stations are actively operating in each of the following areas:
 - (a) Gascoyne;
 - (b) Murchison;
 - (c) goldfields?
- (2) How many sheep stations actively operated in each of these areas in the years 1968 and 1973?
- (3) What has been the total wool produced in each of these areas in each of the past five years?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) I am unable to provide information additional to that detailed in my reply of the 21st March, 1978 to the member when the same type of information was sought.
- (3) Estimated wool production (kilograms) based on total value of the wool and average price greasy.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Gascoyne.....	4 177 451	3 864 265	4 098 468	4 586 165	4 178 815
Murchison.....	4 667 141	4 209 525	4 650 875	5 432 909	4 477 159
Goldfields.....	2 253 655	2 264 920	2 732 233	3 059 383	2 653 087

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Alcoa Alumina Refinery, Wagerup: Australian Equity Component

893. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Which firms hold the Australian equity component in Alcoa Australia Limited in its Wagerup bauxite project, and what is the percentage shareholding in each case?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The shareholders in Alcoa of Australia Limited are:

Australian part:—

	per cent
Westminer Investments Pty Ltd.....	20.00
Broken Hill South Ltd.....	16.60
North Broken Hill Ltd.....	12.00
Anglo-Australian Nominees Pty Ltd.....	0.32
Cushion Trust Ltd.....	0.08
	49 per cent

USA part:—

Alcoa of America.....	51.00
	51 per cent
	100 per cent

Alcoa of Australia is 100 per cent owner of the Wagerup project.

HONEY

Import

894. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What quantity of honey has been imported into Western Australia this year?
- (2) From where were such imports made?
- (3) Are the areas from which such imports are made a possible source of the disease European Foul Brood?
- (4) (a) Is it a fact that the beekeepers' association object to the importation of honey into Western Australia;
- (b) if "Yes" to (a), did the Department of Agriculture support their objection;
- (c) was Ministerial approval for the importation of honey given, and if so, why, in the light of the industry objections?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Bulk, 66 490 kg pre-packed, 49 920 kg.
- (2) Bulk—South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.
Pre-packed—Queensland and Tasmania.
- (3) No.
- (4) (a) to (c) I am informed that at the Beekeepers Annual Conference at Toodyay on the 3rd July, it was accepted that bulk honey could be imported into Western Australia from the Eastern States provided it was able to be certified as disease free from the exporting State of origin.

ABATTOIR

Midland Junction: Slaughtermen

895. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many slaughtermen have been trained at Midland Junction abattoirs in each of the past five years?
- (2) What is the cost, actual or estimated, in training a slaughterman for the Midland Junction abattoirs?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The number of slaughtermen who completed training and became qualified at Midland Junction are:
1973, 26;
1974, 20;
1975, 12;
1976, 60;
1977, 25.

It is estimated that of those men engaged as trainees only 50 per cent actually reached qualification standard.

- (2) The estimated cost to train a slaughterman is \$3 500.

ABATTOIRS

*Midland Junction and Robb Jetty:
Lambs and Sheep Slaughtered*

896. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many—
(a) lambs;
(b) sheep,
were killed at Midland Junction abattoir in each of the past 12 months?
- (2) What was the total kill of—
(a) lambs;
(b) sheep,
at Midland Junction abattoirs in each of the past five years?
- (3) What was the total kill of—
(a) lambs;
(b) sheep,
at Robb Jetty abattoirs in each of the past five years?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) 1977—

	Lambs	Sheep
July	39 405	59 058
August	94 941	55 132
September	137 126	65 760
October	178 618	47 552
November	55 543	55 298
December	11 820	34 934

1978—

January	7 788	17 768
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Ceased operations.

(2)	Lambs	Sheep
1973-74	413 997	558 891
1974-75	509 080	742 736
1975-76	713 532	1 113 558
1976-77	891 932	979 576
1977-78	525 241	335 502

(3)	Lambs	Sheep
1973-74	269 825	237 985
1974-75	375 366	372 607
1975-76	534 456	461 971
1976-77	533 713	369 088
1977-78	524 540	265 999

ABATTOIR

Midland Junction: Slaughter Fees for Cattle, Sheep and Pigs

897. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What are the current slaughter fees being charged at Midland abattoirs for—

- (a) cattle;
- (b) sheep; and
- (c) pigs?

Mr OLD replied:

I refer the member to the *Government Gazette* of the 19th August, 1977, pages 2711-12.

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Farmers in South-west

898. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

- (1) How many applications for emergency relief loans following cyclone Alby were received from farmers in the south-west of this State?

(2) Of this number how many—

- (a) were rejected;
- (b) received concessional loans at 4% interest;
- (c) are still being processed?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) 242.

(2) (a) 29;

- (b) 195 were approved for loans, including 4 which subsequently withdraw their applications. A further eight were provided with grants from the Lord Mayor's relief fund.

(c) 10.

NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF

Apple Growers

899. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) (a) Is it intended that the Government will compensate apple growers for fruit losses suffered during cyclone Alby; and
- (b) if so, what level of compensation is it proposed to pay?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), when will such payments be made?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Yes. Apple growers were eligible for the provision of carry-on funds from the cyclone Alby disaster relief (primary producers) fund and some apple growers were assisted.

In addition, the State Government has been negotiating with the Commonwealth Government to use any surplus in the "supplementary fund" which is normally used to supplement export prices.

- (2) When arrangements are finalised.

LAND

Kalbarri-Carnarvon

900. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) In the coastal area between Kalbarri

and Carnarvon, including islands such as Fourie Island, does the Government place strictures of any kind on the exchange or lease of privately held land?

- (2) What strictures if any apply at present?
- (3) Is it intended for environmental or other reasons to remodel any such current strictures?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) If the land referred to is freehold, the Lands Department is not involved and imposes no restrictions. If the land is leased from the Lands Department, the Land Act requires the lessee to obtain the prior written approval of the Minister for Lands to sell, assign or dispose of the lease, wholly or in part, and before offering or agreeing to do so.
- (3) This question should be addressed to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment.

TRANSPORT

Southern Western Australia Transport Study

901. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would the Minister advise—
 - (a) the total cost of the Southern Western Australia Transport Study report; and
 - (b) give a complete breakdown of all costs, including printing, relevant to the SWATS report?
- (2) As the Minister will not make available to the Leader of the Opposition the independent report submitted by the Director General of Transport and the Commissioner of Railways in relation to the SWATS inquiry, would the Minister allow me to peruse the report in his office on a confidential basis?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) When will it be announced if recommendations contained in the SWATS report will be implemented?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) \$602 720

\$

(b) Study team salaries and fees 520 419

Administration and office

costs	57 012
Printing costs	25 289

\$602 720

The Commonwealth contribution from the Transport (Planning and Research) Acts 1974 and 1977 was \$381 397.

- (2) No.
- (3) The co-directors will have the benefit of the public input into SWATS before being committed to a final assessment.
- (4) At the present time submissions are being received from the public on the report.

Ample time will be given for these to be received and together with the recommendations of the two co-directors they may well indicate other than direct acceptance of SWATS report in its entirety.

RAILWAYS

Ticket Collectors

902. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact Westrail is contemplating doing away with ticket collectors on the barriers at Perth central railway station and replacing them with electrical apparatus which will issue and cancel rail tickets?
- (2) If "Yes" would the Minister advise what will be the future of the ticket collectors having regard for the fact that these employees are limited to light duties and some are amputees?
- (3) Would the Minister advise what cost will be involved in preparing the Perth central railway station in accord with the 150th Year celebrations?
- (4) Would the Minister advise the anticipated cost relevant to the purchase of a diesel suburban rail car to meet our 3'6" gauge requirement?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes—such a proposal is currently being looked at.

- (2) There is to be a meeting with the Australian Railways Union at which the proposal will be discussed and amongst other things the future employment of the people affected will be examined.
- (3) While the general effort of rearranging some of Westrail's activities is planned to take place before the 150th celebrations it is difficult to estimate what cost can be attributed to such celebrations.
- (4) \$700 000 each.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

903. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:
- On how many occasions have requests been made for white ant infestation to be treated at Belmont Senior High School?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Records have not been maintained of the number of requests in the treatment of white ant infestation at Belmont Senior High School. However, since 1969, 70 infestations, mostly of a minor nature, have been treated.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

904. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:
- How much money has been spent on white ant infestation treatment at Belmont Senior High School and on the necessary repairs as a result of these infestations?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Since 1969, \$23 000 has been spent on treatment and \$2 000 on repairs attributable to white ant infestation, in addition, repairs attributable to white ant infestation costing \$6 000 and treatment costing \$7 000 are about to commence.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

905. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:
- How much money has been spent on general maintenance and renovation of the Belmont Senior High School over the last ten years?
- Mr P. V. JONES replied:
- \$130 000. This amount does not include expenditure on urgent and minor repairs and renovations as this information is not readily available.

EDUCATION

School Holidays

906. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:
- On the basis of what advice did he decide to change the Education Department's primary and secondary school holidays in Western Australia?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Over a number of years complaints from parents have been received at the Minister's office and the Education Department in relation to dismissals of classes, particularly in the early period of the school year. Similarly, comments and complaints from parents, the High School Principals' Association, and from schools have been received concerning the disrupting effect of the Royal Show holidays, especially in the preparation of senior students for examination. The new holiday pattern was therefore devised to deal fairly with the needs of pupils, teachers and parents.

EDUCATION

School Holidays

907. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:
- (1) What was the estimated cost of his letter sent direct to all teachers in Western Australia outlining the consequences of any decision by Western Australian teachers who refuse to accept the proposed changes to school holidays?

- (2) With reference to the abovementioned letter, on the basis of what authority does he claim that teachers who refuse to comply with "Thursday attendance" will jeopardise their seven weeks Christmas holiday pay?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Approximately \$150.
 (2) Regulation 117 of the Education Regulations, viz—

117. A teacher who, not being on leave, does not resume duty immediately following—

- (a) the summer vacation—shall be regarded as having been absent from duty during the period commencing on the 1st day of January of that year and ending with the day he resumes duty.

EDUCATION

Schools and High Schools: Staff Lists

908. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that he has guaranteed to have accurate staff lists at all primary and secondary schools by the proposed new date for the commencement of the 1979 school year?
 (2) If so, what administrative changes have been made in the Education Department to make him confident enough to make this promise?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Staff lists will be in all schools by the proposed new date for the commencement of the 1979 school year. Because the department's staffing formulae are now published each year, every principal will know his overall staff entitlement well before the end of the year.
 (2) To ensure accuracy of lists for 1979 the following measures have been, or are being, implemented:
- (i) The schedule for all of promotional positions in the department have been brought forward.
 - (ii) The closing dates for applications for transfer have been brought forward.

- (iii) A computer programme to assist with part of the promotional staffing has been completed.
- (iv) New application forms which allow transfer and promotion information to be processed more easily have been developed.
- (v) Tertiary institutions have been required to supply information on graduates at an earlier date.
- (vi) The complex specialist teacher staffing of primary schools which, in 1977, was done late in the year, is already being finalised.

EDUCATION

Repairs

909. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

Is there any financial policy which restricts the amount which can be spent on repairs at any one time as a result of a maintenance request, which could limit the extent and result of the work done, and would he please give details?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

910. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What was the initial cost of the Belmont Senior High School?
 (2) What other comparable size senior high schools were constructed at the same time and at what cost?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The initial costs, stage by stage, of Belmont Senior High School, are not immediately available. A search is under way to establish the costs.
 (2) The Tuart Hill Senior High School was constructed at approximately the same time as Belmont Senior High School. The costs of these schools, stage by stage, will be investigated and the member will be given the details by letter.

EDUCATION

Belmont High School

911. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

When is the next general repairs and renovations scheduled for the Belmont Senior High School and what is its estimated cost?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

1979-1980, and cost indication is \$200 000.

ROAD

Abernethy Road

912. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In view of the development in the Kewdale industrial area, are there any plans to upgrade Abernethy Road, which would increase the volume of traffic?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Abernethy Road is a local authority road and is the responsibility of the Belmont Shire Council.

It is designated as an important regional road in the metropolitan region scheme and the land required for future widening is protected under the scheme.

HEALTH

Mussels, Worms, and Crabs

913. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) For how long has the Public Health Department been aware of cadmium traces in mussels, worms and crabs found in Cockburn Sound?
- (2) How many tests were made in the past 12 months?
- (3) What locations were tested in the past 12 months?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Analysis of marine organisms for heavy metals has been undertaken in Cockburn Sound as part of the Cockburn Sound Environmental Study of the Department of Conservation and Environment. During routine testing for cadmium, levels were found at one location which were in excess of the present State recommended limits and a letter dated 8th June 1978 was sent to Dr. J. C. McNulty, Commissioner for Public Health, outlining the problem of cadmium in mussels.

A summary of the analyses for cadmium in mussels done by the Cockburn Sound study was also enclosed. Subsequently at a meeting between the Departments of Conservation and Environment, Public Health and Fisheries and Wildlife on 22nd June the representative of Public Health Department was informed of elevated levels of cadmium in polychaetes (worms) and the hepatopancreas (liver) of crabs.

- (2) A total of 7 separate surveys have been made as part of the Cockburn Sound study programme. In addition a further series of 6 sampling programmes were carried out specifically on transplanted mussels. Mussels were collected for analyses from 32 sites around Cockburn Sound on 16th November, 1977. Repeat sampling of the sites at Australian Iron and Steel (AIS) jetty, CSBP jetty and Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH) jetty was carried out subsequently in December, January, February, March, April, May and July (latter not yet tested). Transplanted Mussels—mussels transplanted and tested in December to AIS, CSBP and CBH jetties were sampled and tested in January, February, March, April and June.
- Polychaetes (worms)
Collected on February 14—three polychaetes tested from each of 9 sites.
- Crabs—flesh and hepatopancreas of crabs tested in May 1978 from 5 sites. Individual analyses were done on total of 16 crabs.
- (3) Locations for mussel collection—initial tests from 32 sites distributed throughout Cockburn Sound and Owen Anchorage from jetties, pylons and wharves, etc. Subsequent samples from CBH, CSBP, AIS jetties and Buchanan Bay (Garden Island).

Polychaetes—Mangles Bay, CBH jetty, Kwinana wreck, CSBP jetty, James Point, Woodman Point, south of sewage outfall, windmill of shipping channel and Warnboro Sound.

Crabs—off Palm Beach, CSBP jetty, near CBH jetty, off Cliff Point (Garden Island) near ship channel beacon.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE

Concrete Carters

914. Mr BERTRAM, to the Acting Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it a fact that a very large number of concrete carters were forced to go on strike for weeks recently in an attempt to establish stability and some improvement towards a fair reward for their labour and the very significant capital investment by them in their industry?
- (2) Is he aware that as a result of the strike somewhat fairer conditions were achieved?
- (3) (a) Having regard to the above circumstances, what did the Government do to resolve the strike; and
(b) what success did it achieve in that direction?
- (4) As a result of the strike what was the estimated total loss of income—
(a) by the concrete carters;
(b) by other people engaged in the building and other industries;
(c) by the employers and head contractors?
- (5) What was the total value of contracts which were held up by the strike?
- (6) What has he done to see that conditions do not deteriorate again to such an extent in the future as to once again call for strike action by people who do not want to strike but require a fair go and to retain their dignity?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Approximately 200 concrete carters were not forced to go on strike. Initially the dispute centred around the entry of additional trucks into the industry which could cause instability. It was a commercial matter not an industrial matter.

- (2) Certainly drivers are now to have a minimum guarantee of earnings.
- (3) (a) The drivers approached the Government in the early days of the dispute requesting it to control the entry of trucks into the industry. They were advised that the Government could not agree to their request.
(b) The Minister chaired a number of meetings between manufacturers and drivers to resolve the dispute. The services of a Government officer were offered to chair an enquiry into the matter, but these were not accepted. Pressure was kept on the manufacturers to resolve the dispute.
- (4) (a) to (c) This information is not available.
- (5) Information not available.
- (6) The commercial agreements now reached between the manufacturers and the individual drivers should maintain equilibrium in the industry in the future.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Funding

915. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

Will he set up an all party Parliamentary committee to investigate funding of political parties in Western Australia, including the possible public disclosure of donations to parties?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Rates: Payment by Monthly Bank Order

916. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is there anything in the Local Government Act which would prevent a local government body from agreeing to the payment of rates by monthly bank order?
- (2) Does any local government body in Western Australia accept rate payments by monthly bank order?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not to the knowledge of the Local Government Department.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mayors

917. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Local Government:

When does he expect to be able to provide answers to my questions forwarded to him in writing on 25th May, 1978, concerning the election of mayors in local government bodies which attain the status of a city?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The delay is regretted. A reply has been sent today.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT

Breaches and Enforcement of Section 48

918. Mr HODGE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are the provisions of the Transport Commission Act 1966-1976 section 48, vigorously enforced by the commission?
- (2) If "Yes" how many persons or companies have been prosecuted and convicted for breaches of subsection (1) (a) (b) (c) and subsection (2) (a) (b)?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is "No" what is the reason?
- (4) How many persons are employed to enforce the abovementioned sections of the Act?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Nil.
- (3) To enforce these provisions, would require costly administrative procedures such as using log-books. In any case, only a small proportion of commercial goods vehicles which operate in Western Australia are required to be licensed under the Transport Commission Act and would be required to comply with section 48.
- (4) No officers are employed specifically to enforce section 48 of the Transport Commission Act.

REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS AGENTS BILL

Details

919. Mr BERTRAM, to the Chief Secretary:

Relevant to the Real Estate and Business Agents Bill:

- (1) (a) Which interested bodies made submissions concerning this Bill;
- (b) will he make these submissions available for perusal by the Opposition;
- (c) if "No" why?
- (2) (a) Have licensed auctioneers been advised of the provisions of the Bill for real estate auctions to be conducted by licensed real estate agents or their employees;
- (b) if "Yes" with what result;
- (c) if "No" why?
- (3) What is intended to be the maximum amount of remuneration for services rendered by licensees?
- (4) What is meant by the expression "franchising Agreement" in clause 56?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) Submissions were received from the Urban Development Institute of Australia;
- Real Estate Institute of Western Australia Incorporated;
- Law Society of Western Australia;
- and a number of licensed land agents and Members of Parliament.
- (b) No.
- (c) Whether copies of submissions made should be available to the Opposition is a matter for those who made submissions.
- (2) (a) to (c) There has been no direct communication with the licensed auctioneers. The Bill has been available to all interested parties and persons since 20th April, 1978. Whether or not submissions were made was the prerogative of those interested or affected.
- (3) Clause 61 of the Bill provides that the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board will fix the maximum amounts of remuneration for licensees and these items will be left to its discretion.

- (4) "Franchising" means a form of marketing real estate in which a parent organisation grants an individual or other relatively small organisation the right or privilege to do business in an agreed manner, over a certain period of time in a specified place. This usually involves the use of the parent organisation's business name.

LAND SETTLEMENT AGENCIES

Statutory Control

920. Mr BERTRAM, to the Chief Secretary:

Is the public denied statutory control of Land Settlement Agencies?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

At present there is no legislative control of Land Settlement Agencies.
