

a procedure whereby such duties may be delegated to the Minister for Justice. The best method of delegation would be by Governor's proclamation. This would permit the situation to be changed from time to time without involving the need for further amendment to the Act.

The Bill before the House seeks to amend section 154 of the Supreme Court Act accordingly.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 8.16 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 6th April, 1976

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

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson): I wish to announce that I have appointed the member for Bunbury (Mr Sibson) to be a Deputy Chairman of Committees during the present session.

QUESTIONS (50): ON NOTICE

1. LONGMORE REMAND CENTRE

Security

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Following the incident at Longmore remand and assessment centre on 23rd February in which a staff member was brutally assaulted, was a promise given on behalf of the Government that doors, etc., in the building would be strengthened and other work done to improve security?
- (2) Will the Minister state what items of the promised work have already been attended to?
- (3) Of the work which remains to be done, will he state when this is likely to receive attention?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Cabin doors have double locks.
- (b) Cabin door frames have been reinforced with steel plates.
- (c) One cabin has been modified as a prototype for testing.
- (d) A prototype cabin door has been fitted for testing. It is

one of four new types designed.

- (e) An additional key safe has been installed as part of a new security key system.
- (3) I am advised by Public Works Department that much of the work that remains to be done requires quotations to be obtained. The work will be carried out as soon as these are received. Subject to the availability of funds, the work should be completed in three to four months.

2. HOSPITALS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Meeting

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health: On what date is the hospitals development programme committee expected to hold its next meeting?

Mr RIDGE replied:

Next meeting is scheduled for 6th May, 1976.

3. DENTAL THERAPY CENTRES *Mandurah, Pinjarra, and Waroona*

Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Is it proposed that a dental therapy centre will be established during the 1976-77 financial year at—

- (a) Mandurah;
- (b) Pinjarra;
- (c) Waroona?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (a) to (c) No.

4. SOUTH METROPOLITAN LAKES

Conversion to Reserve

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is he aware of the unique and beautiful nature of the area which includes Lake Bibra, Little Rush Lake, Yangebup Lake, Wattleup Lake, Thompson Lake, Kogolup Lake, South Lake and North Lake?
- (2) Is he aware that there exists an opportunity to create a reserve in the area cited remarkably close to the city and which is needed increasingly as the south-west corridor develops?
- (3) Will the Government create a reserve of this land?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is "No" what action will the Government take to prevent further deterioration of the area until a decision can be made?

- (5) Is the Government aware that every delay puts this unique chain of lakes at hazard and permits the continued deterioration of the area?
- (6) Is the Government aware that these various lakes constitute a unit, each necessary to the other for fauna habitat and that dozens of species of birds, some of which are rare, inhabit the area?
- (7) Will he table suitable maps showing the ownership of Lakes Yangebup and Kogolup and the surrounding land?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The member will be aware that the Environmental Protection Authority is currently carrying out an intensive public review of such areas within the broad area termed "System 6" which includes the area to which the member refers.
- (3) Answered by (2).
- (4) The matter will be kept under review by appropriate bodies.
- (5) The Government is aware of the pressure on wetlands and studies are being undertaken accordingly.
- (6) The ecological interdependence of various areas is a complex issue which is one of the topics under study.
- (7) This information is available to the member through the public title-search facilities in the Office of Titles of the Crown Law Department.

- (3) Yes. Results of National Health and Medical Research Council Market Basket Survey, 1974, have been published and a copy is tabled for information. Results of 1975 survey not yet available.

The results of the survey were tabled (see paper No. 146).

6.

NEW LAND FARMS

Cabinet Subcommittee

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Cabinet subcommittee to consider the release of new land for farming still extant?
- (2) If so, who are the members of it?
- (3) What criteria are used to determine whether new land should be released for agriculture?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Ministers for Agriculture, Local Government, and Lands.
- (3) The Government policy, as approved by Cabinet on 16th September, 1974, has not changed. In general, the criteria are that new land releases be for consolidation purposes rather than opening up large new areas for selection, that such releases be land along existing roads (or where road building was approved) which had suitable soil and a potential for adequate water, that the land should be of a sufficient size to maintain a family, and should have a wheat quota allocated. Applicants for such land would also be carefully examined for farming ability and experience, and availability of finance. Current policy on the release of agricultural lands is being kept under constant review by the Government.

5.

HEALTH

Pesticide Residue: Survey

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What were the results of the "market basket survey" to discover the extent of pesticide residues conducted in 1973 in co-operation with the National Health and Medical Research Council?
- (2) In connection with this, what were the results for each of the samples and what were the numbers of samples in the various categories?
- (3) Have such surveys been carried out since 1973, and if so, will he table the results?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Results are as published in the National Health and Medical Research Council Pesticides Residues Survey, 1973, which has been tabled.
- (2) Answered by (1).

7.

HEALTH

Apples and Pears: Mercury and Lead Content

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the safety levels applying in Western Australia for mercury content in apples and pears?
- (2) What is the level recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council?
- (3) What monitoring is carried out to determine the levels actually occurring?
- (4) What are the safety levels applying in Western Australia for lead content in fruit?

- (5) What is the level recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council?
- (6) What monitoring takes place so as to ascertain the actual level?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 0.03 parts per million of mercury.
- (2) As in (1).
- (3) By National Health and Medical Research Council Market Basket Survey.
- (4) 4.0 parts per million of lead.
- (5) As in (4).
- (6) By National Health and Medical Research Council Market Basket Survey.

8. WATER SUPPLIES *Metropolitan Sources*

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

What percentage of the water used in the Perth metropolitan area for each of the years 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975 was obtained from—

- (a) surface storage facilities;
(b) confined aquifers;
(c) unconfined aquifers?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Year	Surface Storage.	Confined Aquifers.	Unconfined Aquifers.
	%	%	
1940	99.24	.76	
1945	94.06	5.94	
1950	91.34	8.66	
1955	89.3	10.7	
1960	83.0	17.0	
1965	94.6	5.4	
1970	89.1	10.9	
1975	88.4	4.0	7.6

9. LAND

Release for Farming

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) How many parcels of land have been made available for selection for primary producers in the following land districts—

Avon
Canning
Cockburn Sound
Dampier
Esperance
Fitzgerald
Hay
Jilbadgbi
Kent

King
Kojonup
Leake
Melbourne
Murchison
Murray
Nelson
Neridup
Ninghan
Oldfield
Plantagenet
Roe
Sussex
Swan
Victoria
Wellington
Williams
Yilgarn?

- (2) What is the area of land made available for each of the above-mentioned land districts?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) The information provided in response to the member's question relates to areas released for a two year period from 1st January, 1974, to 31st December, 1975, and is as follows—

	No. of locations	Area (hectares).
Avon	7	270
Canning	1	2
Cockburn Sound	1	1
Dampier	—	—
Esperance	—	—
Fitzgerald	7	2191
Hay	6	1234
Jilbadgbi	7	6505
Kent	9	5955
King	2	242
Kojonup	5	74
Leake	5	4047
Yilgarn	6	3882
Melbourne	—	—
Murchison	—	—
Murray	2	4
Nelson	33	2049
Neridup	2	205
Ninghan	4	4267
Oldfield	4	938
Plantagenet	49	5228
Roe	15	13856
Sussex	5	205
Swan	3	1753
Victoria	2	1543
Wellington	2	6
Williams	8	1392
Total	185	55849

10. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Swan River: Oil Spillage

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is the Swan River Conservation Board aware that towards the end of February there was a spillage of oil into the Swan River or into Blackadder Creek, which is one of its tributaries?
- (2) If so, what firm was responsible for the spillage; how did it occur, and what action has the Swan River Conservation Board taken against the firm?
- (3) What action has the board taken in an attempt to avert any further spillage?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes. Signs indicated the spillage was into Blackadder Creek, which is a tributary of the Swan River. Some oil had entered the Swan. Quantities unknown.

- (2) Western Oil & Refining Co. Pty. Ltd. This company has approval from the Swan Shire—which controls the West Midland rubbish tip—to deposit oil residue in a defined area of the tip. The waste in question was deposited outside the defined area.

The board took action through the shire to ensure that oil could not pass from the rubbish disposal site to Blackadder Creek. No action has been taken against the firm by the board, since control of the tip is under the jurisdiction of the Swan Shire Council.

- (3) The board has insisted that if such wastes be continued to be dumped in a defined area of the rubbish tip, action be taken in the design of the tip to ensure that there is no contamination of the creek.

The condition was noted during the course of a normal inspection by boat.

The board's inspectors make inspections—at least fortnightly—by boat, in addition to which vehicular inspections are made into the tip itself.

The two inspectors had the tip bunded immediately to prevent further oil entering Blackadder Creek. Inspections were made frequently during the days following the incident, since when inspections have been made twice a week to ensure that supervision is maintained. The local authority has also been active in controlling the situation.

Results of subsequent inspection upstream and downstream of the confluence of Blackadder Creek and the Swan River give no evidence of contamination by oil.

11. JUMBO STEELWORKS *DERC Study: Funds*

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) With reference to question 18 (3) (b) of 1st May, 1975 has the jumbo steelworks consortium been approached for funds to assist the Demographic and Environmental Resources Committee, so as to study the social implications of a jumbo steelworks, bearing in mind that the Government has indicated that the work of DERC is hobbled by a scarcity of funds?

- (2) If no approach has been made, why is this so?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The issue is considered to be broader than just relating to a possible jumbo steelworks study by the present consortium.

12. WASTE DISPOSAL *Plastics: Burning*

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) To what degree is there burning of plastic waste in Western Australia?
- (2) By whom is such an operation carried out?
- (3) What is the address at which this operation occurs?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) This information is not readily available and would seem to be unobtainable.

13. MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIR

Obnoxious Odour: EPA Jurisdiction

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Does the Environmental Protection Authority have statutory jurisdiction over the alleged stench which emanates from the Midland abattoir?
- (2) Which sections of the Environmental Protection Act gives authority to the EPA to act?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Various sections in part IV.

14. STATE FORESTS

Consultative Committee

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) Is there a consultative committee which recommends to the Forests Department policy and which consists of persons who are not Forests Department employees?
- (2) If so, who are the members of this committee and upon what matters does it advise?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).

15. GOVERNMENT CARS

Disposal by Tender

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Treasurer:
Is it intended that used Government cars which no longer are being sold by public auction, will be sold by tender or by some direct method, thereby making it difficult for the private individual to buy such vehicles?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

During the past three months, the Government Stores has been authorised to sell Government vehicles by auction on a trial basis to assess the best return to the Government by differing methods of sale and disposal.

The Government is awaiting a report on the results of the trial following which a decision will be made on whether the auction system will continue to be used for disposal of vehicles in the future.

16. PORTS

North-west: Development

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has the Government received any representations or proposals over the last two years regarding the possible development of Ronsard as a deep water port?
- (2) If so, will he indicate the source of the representation and whether the Government has investigated the potential of the proposals?
- (3) Has the Government any firm plans for the establishment of additional ports above the 26th parallel?
- (4) If so, what are the proposed locations and for what purpose would they be established?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No formal proposals have been received. Project feasibility documents submitted to the State have referred to Ronsard as a potential port site, among others.
- (2) Texasgulf Australia Ltd. Yes.
- (3) No firm plans exist, but the Government is aware of the potential for development at several locations including supplementary development of existing ports.
- (4) At Dixon Island—for iron ore products and petro-chemical industries.
At Dampier/Legendre—for LNG and iron ore exports.
At Port Walcott—for iron ore products.

17. GOLD

Discovery near Meekatharra

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has he read the article in *The Sunday Times* dated 21st March, 1976, wherein it was stated that a mining official was of the opinion that the recent gold discovery near Meekatharra could be a gold reef?
- (2) Is the Mines Department in a position to indicate the potential of the discovery?
- (3) Will a departmental investigation be held?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, but reports to date indicate that some gold nuggets have been discovered. As yet it has not been reported that the quartz reef located is auriferous.
- (3) A departmental mines inspector is scheduled to examine the find on his next visit to the Meekatharra area. This should be in the next week or two.

18. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Accounts: Payment through Banks

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) In connection with the proposal for consumers to pay State Energy Commission accounts through approved major banking groups, will he advise what commission will be paid to the banks for this service?
- (2) What is the anticipated annual cost to the SEC for this service?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The commission ranges from 30 cents to 50 cents per receipt. The level of commission is subject to review after six months.

- (2) It is too early to establish a trend in the collection pattern to determine an accurate estimate of the anticipated annual cost. In any case, this would have to be compared with the saving arrived at by not using collection offices and mobile collecting vans and this, together with an improved cash flow, is expected to result in a net saving.

19. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Muja-Perth Power Line

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) In view of the resumptions necessary for the proposed 330 kV power lines from Muja to Perth will he advise if the power lines could follow the existing routes?
- (2) If not, what are the impediments to such a proposal having regard for the fact that land has previously been resumed?
- (3) Since the announcement of the project has the commission received any complaints from—
 - (a) the public;
 - (b) Members of Parliament, regarding the proposed construction of the power lines?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) The easterly line was originally planned to follow the existing 132 kV line route from Muja to Hackett's Gully but was re-located westwards at the request of the Forests Department to avoid that part of the forest which was to be quarantined in an attempt to combat the effect of "dieback". The westerly line follows as closely as possible existing line routes on the coastal plain, realising that there is an advantage in keeping major power lines separated to some degree in order that lightning activity does not cause outages on lines at the same time.
- (3) One written complaint from a landowner and several telephone inquiries (not complaints) including one from a member of Parliament have been received.

20. NATURAL GAS

Price Increase

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has W.A. Natural Gas, the operator of the Dongara field, approached the Government requesting a price rise for its gas?
- (2) If so, when will a decision be reached by the Government to either approve or decline the request?

- (3) What is the duration of the present contracts between WANG and the State Energy Commission?
- (4) If a price rise is approved will the cost of gas be increased to the public of Western Australia by the SEC?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) At this time the Government is unable to accede to the company's request. The matter will be reviewed from time to time.
- (3) 15 years from the 1st April, 1972.
- (4) Yes.

21. TEXADA MINES PTY. LTD.

Sale of Majority Interest

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Is he aware of any negotiations taking place between Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. and C. Itoh & Co. Ltd. for the purchase of a majority interest in Texada Mines Pty. Ltd.?
- (2) If "Yes" can he indicate the present stage of the negotiations?
- (3) Did either company approach the State Government prior to the commencement of negotiations?
- (4) Are previous restrictions on the export of salt and production of potash to be carried out by BHP?
- (5) Will a new agreement be negotiated between BHP and the State Government?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes (in past tense).
- (2) Agreement has been reached.
- (3) Yes, both.
- (4) BHP has acquired 76% of Texada's shares. Texada is obliged to report on the economic viability of potash production and sales until early 1979 when current restrictions on sale of salt and the potash position will be reviewed.
- (5) There will be a review in 1979.

22. POLICE STATIONS AND QUARTERS

Inquiry into Accommodation

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Did he read the *Police News Bulletin* for January, 1976, wherein numerous photographs appeared showing the disgraceful conditions at various police quarters and police stations in Western Australia?

- (2) If "Yes" will he give favourable consideration to having an investigation carried out into the general needs of accommodation for this department in Western Australia?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) The needs of Police accommodation are constantly under review.

23. RAILWAYS

Perth-Kalgoorlie Line: Upgrading

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What action is Westrail taking to upgrade the Perth-Kalgoorlie railway line?
(2) Will he advise of any other sections of rail that will be upgraded by Westrail this financial year?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) A study to submit to the Commonwealth for upgrading Western Australian lines which includes the Kalgoorlie-Perth line and in which the cost of the work is estimated at approximately \$38 million, is well advanced and should be ready for submission to the Commonwealth shortly.
(2) Upgrading will be carried out on—
The Brunswick-Collie Western No. 2 section;
The South-west main line between Pinjarra and Armadale;
Sections of the Midland railway and Geraldton-Mullewa-Morawa.

24. RAILWAYS

Metropolitan Passenger Services: Electrification

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has his request to the Federal Minister for Transport as to whether he will pay two-thirds of the capital cost of electrifying metropolitan rail passenger services been refused?
(2) If so, why?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
(2) A decision has not yet been given by the Federal Minister.

ABORIGINES

Laverton Royal Commission: Police Costs

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Premier:

What were the results of approaches of the State Government to the Federal Government to pay for police costs at the Laverton Royal Commission?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

On receipt of advice from the Commonwealth Government that it was not prepared to meet the police costs at the Laverton Royal Commission—even though the Commonwealth is presumably paying all costs incurred by, and on behalf of Aborigines—further representation has been made to the Commonwealth Government requesting reconsideration of the decision.

26. ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

Substitution

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

When is it intended to introduce the more equitable form of revenue raising than the present road maintenance tax, as was promised by the Country Party in its policy speech for the last State election?

Mr OLD replied:

Alternatives to the road maintenance charge have been discussed recently by the Australian Transport Advisory Council and it was considered that for a suitable alternative to be implemented, it would be preferable for all States to act together. With this purpose in mind, the Australian Transport Advisory Council and the Commonwealth Department of Transport are carrying out further investigations at the present time to ascertain if a suitable alternative can be recommended to the States.

As road maintenance tax funds are of vital importance to this State for meeting urgent road needs and for meeting the severe matching requirements in the Federal Road Grants Acts, any alternative to the road maintenance charge must provide equivalent funds to the present charge.

27. RAILWAYS

Track Improvement: Finance

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in the *Sunday Independent* of 4th February, 1976, as having said: "that

hundreds of W.A. tracks were virtually useless unless the money was forthcoming?"

- (2) Has the Premier made an approach to the Prime Minister for \$38 million to repair Western Australian tracks?
- (3) If so, in what form was the request made?
- (4) Has he raised the matter with his Federal counterpart?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) This matter has been informally discussed between the Premier and the Prime Minister.
- (4) No. However, a detailed report on the condition of the permanent way is currently being prepared and this will be submitted to the Federal Minister for Transport when completed.

28. POLICE

Moratorium Rally: Summonses

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is it correct that summonses have been issued on those people who addressed the moratorium rally in Forrest Place on 20th March, 1976?
- (2) If "Yes" will he please advise—
 - (a) the number of summonses issued;
 - (b) the names of the persons involved;
 - (c) the reasons why the summonses were issued?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Five.
 - (b) Daniel O'Connell, Keith James Peckham, John Gorrie Boardman, Raymond Ciantar, Patrick Laurence Troy.
 - (c) Each person breached regulation 1613(4) of the Road Traffic Code.

29. COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME

Extension

Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What priority does the East Merredin area have for extensions to the comprehensive water supply?
- (2) What priority does the Corrigin/Bullaring area have for extensions to the comprehensive water supply?

- (3) Can he give an indication when extensions in the above-mentioned areas can be undertaken?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) A survey carried out in 1973 identified areas east of Merredin as areas which justified high priority in considering possible future extensions of the comprehensive water supply scheme.
- (2) The Corrigin-Bullaring area was not included in the 16 areas of need listed by the above survey.
- (3) No. Farmland reticulation is very expensive and substantial extensions can be considered only if significant financial assistance is obtained from the Commonwealth Government, preferably in the form of a grant. In the submission made to the Commonwealth Government in September, 1975, financial assistance was sought for extension of the comprehensive water supply scheme to areas east of Merredin.

30.

TRUCKS

Maximum Axle Loading

Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Transport Commission given consideration to the motion passed at the recent Farmers' Union conference regarding increasing maximum truck axle loading from 8 to 10 tonnes?
- (2) If so, is any action likely to be taken in this matter?
- (3) If not, is there any prospect of farmers being granted permits to overload their vehicles to 10 tonnes maximum axle loading during the harvest period?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) A national association of Australian State road authorities study team formed to report on the economics of road vehicle limits included in its recommendations an increase for the loading on single axle with dual tyres from 8.2 tonnes to 8.5 tonnes. These recommendations are currently being examined by all State road authorities and other interested bodies. A decision on the recommendations in the report is expected to be made by the Australian Transport Advisory Council later this year.
- (3) No. Special permits could not be considered for one section of the community only.

31. WATER SUPPLIES

Warralakin

Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) At the present rate of consumption how long will it be before water stored at the Warralakin storage tank is exhausted?
- (2) If after this time rain has not replenished the supply will the Government undertake to have the tank filled by carting water to the tanks from the goldfields pipeline?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) At the present rate of consumption Warralakin storage tank will be empty by the end of May, 1976, if the supply is not augmented. The position is being closely watched.
It is anticipated that with early winter rains and by utilising the local bore source if necessary, the supply in the tank will be maintained.
- (2) It is not anticipated that this will be necessary. In any case, water is available at Warrachuppin Dam some 8 kilometres to the south-east of the Warralakin tank.

32. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Merrydown Wine Co. Ltd.: Wine Production

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Has a representative of the British company Merrydown Wine Co. Ltd. visited Western Australia for the purpose of assessing the potential of setting up a production plant in this State?
- (2) If not, when is a visit expected?
- (3) Has he had any contact with this company since his return from overseas?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.

33. IRON ORE

Temporary Reserves: Grants since 1974

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Mines: In connection with iron ore temporary reserves granted since April, 1974, will he detail as follows:—

- (a) the number of iron ore temporary reserves granted;
- (b) the names of successful applicants;

- (c) the location and area of each;
- (d) the number of applications currently pending a decision?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (a) Nil.
- (b) and (c) Not applicable.
- (d) 108.

34. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Power Lines: Undergrounding

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What moves have been made to encourage the underground reticulation of power lines by private developers and, as an alternative, the siting of overhead power lines away from street frontages, possibly along the back fences of homes, as promised by the Premier in his election policy speech for 1974?
- (2) In view of the Premier's undertaking that an urgent study of undergrounding of power lines would be held overseas, if necessary, to determine the best way to make it standard practice in urban developments as soon as possible, why has such a study not been undertaken?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The costs which private developers are required to fund to enable the installation of underground reticulation in residential areas have been kept to a minimum. This is evidenced by an increase in the number of residential lots being connected with underground supply.

Siting of power lines along rear property lines in residential areas has been investigated by the State Energy Commission but not adopted because of overriding practical considerations.

- (2) Studies have been undertaken. Two of the commission's senior officers have carried out independent investigations related to the undergrounding of power lines in Britain and America during 1974 and 1975.

As a result of these studies existing practices in keeping with appropriate overseas techniques have been confirmed and latest developments are being carefully monitored for implementation if considered appropriate.

35. **INCOME TAX**

Zone Allowances

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for the North-West:

Will he make representations to the Federal Treasurer for an upward reassessment of taxation zone allowances for people living above the 26th parallel?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

This question could more properly be addressed to the Premier. I have prepared an answer as follows—

A submission is in the course of preparation to the Commonwealth Government to review zone allowances provided under the Income Tax Assessment Act.

However, I have discussed this matter with the Premier. He has advised me that he has taken up the matter with the Prime Minister, that many of the anomalies have been pointed out, and that the urgency of coming to a decision has been stated clearly to the Commonwealth Government.

36. **WASTE DISPOSAL**

Research Station

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Mines:

Has the Government taken action to set up a waste research station in the Government Chemical Laboratories?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Submissions from the Government Chemical Laboratories on establishing a waste research section are presently being studied.

37. **FARMERS**

Retraining Programme

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

- (1) What is the estimate of the number of farmers who have left their farms in each of the last three years?
- (2) Of these how many would be—
 - (a) predominantly beef farmers;
 - (b) new land farmers?
- (3) What retraining facilities are available to farmers under—
 - (a) Commonwealth Government;
 - (b) State Government;
 retraining programmes?
- (4) Does the State Government propose to implement any retraining programme in the near future, and if so, would he give details?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Rural statistics for the agricultural areas for properties over 100 ha suggest that farm numbers fell by—

490 in 1972-73;

435 in 1973-74;

and 250 in 1974-75.

These figures would include normal sales and amalgamations as well as those occasioned by financial problems of beef and new land farmers. A few other farms would have been sold but not amalgamated.

- (2) (a) No estimate is possible for beef farmers but it is known that the sale of land in the lower south-west has been depressed in the last two years suggesting that very few beef farmers have actually sold their farms;
- (b) in a recent survey of new land areas, 16 blocks out of the 100 studied had changed hands in the last three years. On this basis perhaps 300 new land farms have been sold in the three years.
- (3) (a) NEAT scheme (National Employment and Training)—for any retraining in fields where there are employment prospects. TEAS (Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme)—for first tertiary academic qualifications;
- (b) no specific retraining schemes are available for farmers through the State Government.
- (4) No programme is under consideration at this time.

38.

STATE FORESTS

Working Plan

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) When is it expected that the Forests Department working plan will be completed and tabled?
- (2) Is it mandatory for the Forests Department to produce a working plan, and if so, for what period must it cover?
- (3) How many working plans have been produced by the Forests Department since its inception, and in what years were these tabled?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Late 1976 and immediately following approval given by the Governor.

- (2) Yes, for a period not exceeding 10 years.
- (3) 58. To date working plans have not been tabled and have been a confidential document.

In view of the public interest, it has been decided to table the relevant sections of future plans in Parliament. These plans will be more comprehensive and will result in overall management proposals and specific plans for selected areas being available for public information.

39. TOURISM *Expansion Plans*

Mr TAYLOR, to the Premier:

With respect to his press release P75/1071 of 31st October, 1975, wherein he referred to plans "to generate a major expansion of the tourist industry over the next decade", will he indicate what sections of his plans have been implemented to this date?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

My news release has achieved its short-term objective of encouraging bona fide tourist developers to register their intentions to carry out feasibility studies with the State.

Of eight submissions received, several are of very considerable interest and, in all instances, appropriate co-operation and assistance will be available from departments.

As my statement indicated, the Government's concern is to ensure an increasing degree of development as time progresses. Alterations to the structure of the Department of Tourism have given it a greater capacity to advise and counsel, and co-operate with the private sector, and to actively participate in discussions from the outset.

In addition, the department has become involved in the financial aspects of projects to a greater degree than ever before, and is responsible for the review of tourist orientated proposals which involve Government guarantees.

A good deal has been achieved in six months, and I am optimistic that firm foundations have been laid for the expansion of tourism to the benefit of the economy of Western Australia.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Stock-Winterfold Roads Junction

Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Traffic:

When does present planning envisage that traffic directional lights will be installed at the junction of Stock Road and Winterfold Road?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The installation of traffic lights is not planned at present but consideration is being given to a modification of the intersection.

41. BRIDGE

Burswood Island

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

What is the current position and programming for a bridge over the Swan River at Burswood Island?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

The position has not changed since I advised the member in March, 1975, that no date has been fixed for commencement of construction and the project has been questioned by the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads.

42. HEALTH

Drunken Drivers: Rehabilitation

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has any progress been made with investigations into a scheme to rehabilitate motorists who lose their licences for drinking offences as reported in *The West Australian* of 1st January, 1976?
- (2) If so, could the Minister report on proposals and progress made for implementing any scheme?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Further study suggested to the Government that the matter is difficult and highly controversial. Methods of implementation and alternatives are still being studied.

43. SPEECH AND HEARING CENTRE FOR CHILDREN

Financial Assistance

Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Has the Government received any approach from the Speech and Hearing Centre for Children, Wembley, for assistance to help the centre over its reported financial crisis?

- (2) If so, what assistance is the Government able to offer?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes, in a letter dated 2nd March.
 (2) In my reply of 5th March I asked for a detailed financial submission to be made to the Minister for Education, for consideration by officers of the Education and Treasury Departments.

Latest advice is that the submission should be received this week. Arrangements were made with the centre's bank for an existing overdraft facility to be continued in the meantime.

44. TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Francis Street: Commencement

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What stage has planning reached for the proposed new technical college in Francis Street, Perth?
 (2) Is the Minister in a position to provide an estimate of the cost of the proposed new technical college?
 (3) When is it expected that work will start on the first stage of the building?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Initial discussions have taken place between senior officers of the Education Department, Public Works Department and principal and senior staff of the college.
 Preliminary sketches have been prepared by the Public Works Department architects.
 (2) Documentation is not sufficiently advanced to enable an accurate estimate to be made.
 (3) Mid-1977 subject to the availability of finance.

45. NEW ART GALLERY

Plans

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

Will the Minister table plans and details associated with proposals for the new art gallery and the need to demolish the old Perth Girls School?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The plans I shall table indicate the location of the proposed new Art Gallery in relation to the old Criminal Investigation Branch building, the Police Courts, and Girdlestone (Perth Girls' School).

The demolition of Girdlestone is necessary to provide public access to the Art Gallery from James Street.

The plans were tabled (see paper No. 148).

46.

TECHNICAL COLLEGE

James Street: Transfer of Departments

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Which departments of study currently located at James Street technical college are to be relocated in St. George's Terrace?
 (2) How many students and staff will be involved in the shift?
 (3) What is the estimated number of staff and students who will remain at the James Street centre?
 (4) Has the Minister fully investigated the problems that will inevitably arise for the staff and students involved in any shift to St. George's Terrace?
 (5) Is the Minister prepared to meet a deputation comprised of representatives of staff and students from the James Street centre to discuss difficulties and problems associated with any Government decision to insist upon the move?
 (6) Has the Government considered/ investigated the possibility of selling the St. George's Terrace site as a means of helping to fund the construction of the new premises in Francis Street?
 (7) What is the estimated total cost of the transfer of staff and equipment, including all necessary renovations and alterations at the St. George's Terrace centre?
 (8) For what precise purpose is the land to be used on which the Girdlestone buildings now stand?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (3) Since it is unlikely that students will be transferred prior to the beginning of the 1978 academic year, precise information as requested, cannot be provided.
 (4) Yes.
 (5) Deputations from staff and students were received at the Education Department on Friday, 2nd April, 1976.
 (6) Investigations have been undertaken but there is no immediate plan to sell the site which will be needed for educational purposes for at least another five years.

- (7) As in answer to (1) to (3), it is not possible to give the detailed estimate of costs but a sum of \$200 000 has been allocated for necessary renovations and alterations at the St. George's Terrace site in the 1975-76 financial year.
- (8) For the proposed Art Gallery.

47. MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT

Benefits

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

- (1) Since the coming into operation of the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Act, 1973, has there been a manifest slow down in the number of new or renewed claims for benefits payable pursuant to the Mine Workers' Relief Act with a corresponding build up of the reserve in the fund administered pursuant to the last-mentioned Statute?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is substantially in the affirmative, is it from an actuarial view considered that the trend referred to in (1) will under present legislation continue?
- (3) Does the Government intend accordingly to amend the Mine Workers' Relief Act to increase benefits payable to present and future beneficiaries under that Act during this year?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) The number of claims for benefits has decreased since 1973 and this would be one factor in the increase in funds.
- (2) to (4) An actuarial examination of the fund at the 31st January, 1975, has been completed and is presently under study by the Mine Workers' Relief Board.

48. PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

Pipelines: Study

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has the State Government received particulars of the Federal Government's Pipeline Authority's detailed study of Australia's petroleum and natural gas pipelines?
- (2) If not, when is it anticipated that details of the study will be made public?

- (3) When will work commence on an off-shore pipeline from the north-west shelf fields and the construction of a trunk pipeline to Perth?
- (4) Who will be responsible for construction costs of—
- the off-shore pipeline;
 - the trunk pipeline to Perth?
- (5) Are his policies in conformity with those made by the present Deputy Prime Minister in November, 1975, that a Liberal-National Country Party Government would scrap the Labor Government's plans for a transcontinental pipeline?
- (6) Is he aware that a pipeline linking the north-west shelf gas fields with Eastern States pipeline networks is still being considered by the Federal Government's Pipeline Authority?
- (7) At what location will the State Government purchase natural gas for distribution to—
- Pilbara projects;
 - metropolitan consumers;
 - Eastern Goldfields projects?
- (8) What is the anticipated cost of the gas to consumers in Western Australia?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) It is for the Federal Government to decide when and if the report will be made public.
- (3) As soon as possible. Investigation work is proceeding rapidly and the Government will press for a go-ahead decision.
- (4) These matters are subject to current negotiations with the joint venture partners.
- (5) The Government of Western Australia opposes the transcontinental pipeline plan—apart from the reason of the unilateral intrusion into State affairs by the pipeline authority—because the proposal for such transmission appears to be economic nonsense at the present time.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) and (8) As with question (4) these matters are subject to current negotiations with the producers.

49. *This question was postponed.*

50. **MIDLAND JUNCTION
ABATTOIR**

Effluent Disposal

Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the name of the consultants who were engaged to design and/or commission the new effluent treatment plant at the Midland Junction Abattoir?
- (2) Were tenders called for the design and commission of the new plant?
- (3) If "No" why not?
- (4) If tenders were called, what was the final tender figure accepted and what were the other tender figures?
- (5) What are the names and qualifications of the consultants who have been approached to advise the abattoir board since the new plant was installed?
- (6) What are the qualifications and experience of the proposed resident chemical engineer?
- (7) Have any of the consultants or other persons advised the abattoir board that to ensure the minimum escape of obnoxious gases from the offal treatment plant they should vent every place where there would be an escape of gases so that these gases could be treated and evacuated to the atmosphere through the after burner?
- (8) Have any of the consultants advised or considered that the after burner is inadequate or is not functioning to the satisfactory level demanded by the Air Pollution Control Council?
- (9) Have any of the consultants proposed to the board that they should consider the installation of an anaerobic digester system?
- (10) What method is used for the disposal of dead animals and are these animals in any way treated to give a return of either meat meal or other by-products?
- (11) Is the treatment mentioned in the above question carried out in closed or open type digesters?
- (12) Has the abattoir considered the possibility that some of the smells may emanate from the treatment of such dead animals?
- (13) Is he aware of any other similar plants that were designed and/or installed by the same engineers that installed the Midland plant?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (13) The answer to the question involves three pages and I request permission to table it.

The reply was tabled (see paper No. 149).

QUESTIONS (8): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. **BAUXITE MINING**
Alcoa Project

Mr MENSAROS (Minister for Industrial Development):

On Thursday, the 1st April, the member for Morley asked the following question—

- (1) How many hectares of land have been affected each calendar year by Alcoa's bauxite mining operation?
- (2) How many tonnes of bauxite have been produced in each of those calendar years?
- (3) How many personnel have been employed by Alcoa for each of those years in—
(a) mining operations;
(b) refinery operations?
- (4) Will he table a map indicating the areas which have been mined for bauxite?
- (5) What is the capacity of the refineries and what has their output been for each of the years referred to above?

I replied that the specific information would be compiled and presented as soon as possible. I now ask permission to table the tabulated information and the map.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: They are gratefully received.

The reply and the map were tabled (see paper No. 147).

2. **ENVIRONMENT CENTRE**

Charitable Collections Act: Licence

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Government acknowledge the right of citizens to band together to protect their interests and to further the welfare of the community?
- (2) If so, why has the Government refused to issue a licence to the Environment Centre pursuant to the Charitable Collections Act?
- (3) As the Government claims to be in difficult financial circumstances, would not such a licence enable the centre to help itself financially and so lift a burden from the taxpayers' shoulders?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes, in a lawful manner.
- (2) Legal advice is that the centre does not qualify as a charitable organisation within the meaning of the Charitable Collections Act.
- (3) Answered by (2).

3. TRADE UNIONS

Secret Ballot

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the name of any trade union in Western Australia which does not accept and practise the principle of the "secret ballot" in the election of its officials?
- (2) If so, will he provide details?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) In reply to the member for Ascot I say that the all-important aspect of secret ballots, proposed by the Government, is the fact that they will be conducted by an outside body.

Mr Bertram: Why?

Mr GRAYDEN: It is of no significance that a secret ballot should take place in a union. The important point is that it should be conducted by an outside body. Then, it can be seen by all and sundry—including union members in the union concerned—that there are no irregularities in the ballot.

4. TRADE UNIONS

Secret Ballot

Mr CARR, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Minister received any reports of alleged "strong-arm tactics" in respect of trade union ballots which have threatened the individual rights of union members to vote for their union leaders in secrecy?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) How many instances have been reported to him; and
 - (b) will he name the unions concerned and indicate the action he has taken to follow up the complaints?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) In reply to the member for Geraldton, may I say I have had numerous complaints and I would imagine that most members in this House, over a period of years, have had incidents reported to them.

Mr Carr: How many, and which unions were involved?

Mr GRAYDEN: In no circumstances would I name the individual unionists, because that course would lead to victimisation.

5.

ROYAL VISIT

Inclusion of Albany

Mr WATT, to the Premier:

Has the Premier been advised of a possible Royal visit to Australia next year, and will Western Australia be included? If so, would consideration be given to the 150th anniversary celebration of Albany? The celebration will be carried on throughout 1977, and I ask whether Albany could be included in the visit when the itinerary is framed?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the member for Albany, the Prime Minister has advised me and all other Premiers today that an announcement has been made of a visit to Australia and New Zealand by Her Majesty the Queen.

On the present programme she will arrive in Australia on the 7th March and it is expected she will be in this country for approximately three weeks during which time she will visit all States.

I understand the visit is part of a total programme during the 25th year of the Queen's Coronation. She hopes to visit all British Commonwealth countries. Of necessity, her visit will be fairly brief if the programme is to be adhered to, but we have been advised our State will be visited.

In answer to the last part of the question, when the under-secretary attends a conference next Monday with representatives of the other States of the Commonwealth, to discuss at officer level the outline of the itinerary, he will put to the Commonwealth, as I have already put to the Prime Minister, that should there be a Royal visit we should have regard for the fact that Albany will be celebrating its 150th anniversary.

6.

TRADE UNIONS

Government Confrontation

Mr B. T. BURKE to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is the Minister conscious of any political advantage to be gained by organising a well-orchestrated confrontation with the union movement?

- (2) Does the Minister intend to maximise this political advantage by being as unreasonable as possible in his dealings with the union movement?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government has been extremely reasonable with the unions since it first came into office. There has been some complaint from unions that they have not been consulted on this secret ballot issue.

The reason is that during the last few weeks the TLC has declined to permit its representative to sit on the advisory committee of the Minister for Labour and Industry. The committee has been working well for a number of years but the TLC has recently taken action along the lines I have just mentioned. Had it not been for that action, a meeting would already have been convened and the trade union movement would have been consulted on the issue.

The situation now is that a meeting of the committee will take place early next week including two representatives from the TLC—if they will attend the talks—and two representatives from the Confederation of Western Australian Industry. It seems to me that the request made by the TLC for a meeting with Cabinet is simply a means of extricating itself from the situation in which it has placed itself by opposing secret ballots.

7. COMPANY DIRECTORS

Appointment: Ballot

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

In the light of the Government's announcement to introduce legislation to require the Government to conduct ballots for the election of trade union leaders, is it intended to extend that principle to the election of company directors in all those companies in which the Minister himself, and his ministerial colleagues, own shares?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

I want to assure the member for Ascot that the legislation will also be extended to cover employer organisations which are similar to trade unions.

8.

BRIDGE *Burswood Island*

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

As the answer the Minister gave me to question 41 today is almost word for word with the reply he gave to a similar question asked in March, 1975, can I take it there has been no action since that time?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:
No.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY *Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 1st April, on the following motion by Mr Tubby—

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

May it please Your Excellency:

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

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [5.10 p.m.]: At one stage during last week we were subjected to a reply from the Premier stating that the trade union movement should measure up to its responsibilities, and that it should accept a reverse decision with regard to the action taken by the Government in challenging the Industrial Commission in the case of the Municipal Officers' Association *versus* the State Energy Commission. The guidelines were considered to have been contravened by the decision of the commission so far as the Government was concerned.

The Government felt that the Industrial Commission should act to protect the interests of the community, and laid down certain factors implying that it was fair play that the unions should indulge in fair approaches to the commission.

For the purpose of this debate I am prepared to accept that so that I may proceed to show fair play should be the issue if the Premier believes in looking after his own employees, or the employees subject to his jurisdiction. The same should apply to the Minister administering education.

I want to refer to an issue known as the great "TEA robbery", or the donation of \$10 000 to college funds by the lecturers of the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College.

During the early period when the colleges for advanced education received their autonomy under the Education Act Amendment Bill of 1970, the individual colleges were faced with the problem of

trying to assist their lecturers to remain in employment. That caused a great many problems for many of the academic staff and, in particular, those from the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College.

Before the appointed day in 1973 it was clear that the lecturers from the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College would not receive the salaries they had enjoyed when employed by the Education Department.

Because of the difficulties associated with assessments, and because of the period of change, it was felt by the college board that the academics should be placed on a lower grade, but should receive allowances. In effect, that meant they would not suffer any monetary loss, but they were actually downgraded in a group. It was quite a departure for a person with professional qualifications to have to go out into the jungle of the academic world and find himself downgraded.

The suggestion at the time was that the move should be temporary, and the lecturers accepted it on the understanding that the position would be reviewed and they would receive justice when the correct course was agreed upon.

The Mt. Lawley Teachers' College Board recognised the injustice of the situation and moved towards correcting it. A total of 21 lecturers were upgraded. I have a list of the names of those lecturers and I would be glad to table the document if any member wants to see it.

It was easy to understand the point of view of the board in upgrading the lecturers. The original move was of a temporary nature, and when the temporary situation had resolved itself the board wanted to right the position. That is fair enough.

Then a very strange thing happened. After the board had made a decision that the teachers' salaries should be upgraded and the temporary allowance should disappear, the Principal of the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College had to take the issue to the council of the Teacher Education Authority, which has certain powers of determination in relation to the salaries paid to all academic staff.

It is pertinent to refer to the Teacher Education Act, 1972, section 20 of which deals with the functions, powers, and duties of the council in relation to employees who seek to be transferred from the Education Department to the college board. That section contains a provision which indicates the duplicity of this Government. On one hand it says, "Give a fair go to the worker", and on the other hand it deliberately denies employees at the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College a sum of \$10 000.

Section 52 of the Teacher Education Act deals with the preservation of the rights of staff and employees who transfer

from the Education Department to the jurisdiction of the college board. It was inherent in the Act that the salary and grading of those employees should be protected. Section 53 was a special section relating to the transfer of academic staff and it states—

53. (1) On the appointed day—

(a) the person who was, immediately before that day, Principal of a college maintained by the Minister under section 10 of the Education Act, 1928; and

(b) each person who was immediately before that day, a member of the staff of the college in a substantive office which was advertised under the Education Act, 1928,

shall be transferred on the appointed day as the principal or a member of the staff, as the case requires, of that college as incorporated by section 32 of this Act.

The section goes on to say there shall be no loss of entitlements and that all salaries and gradings applicable to those people shall remain.

The college board measured up to its obligations by granting a temporary allowance to compensate for the downgrading. When the matter went to the Teacher Education Council, which is the overriding body under the Teacher Education Act, a very strange thing happened. The college board said, "We want to right the injustice to the people concerned." I cannot say with any degree of certainty that this was the situation but it appears that of the 26 members of the council only 12 bothered to vote on the matter; eight supported the injustice against the academics and four opposed the recommendation. So the council, acting within its rights under the Act, said to the college board, "Even though you want your lecturers to be reinstated to the grades they enjoyed when they came under the jurisdiction of the Education Department, and even though we agreed that the Act should contain provision for this, it is to be denied to the employees and they are to be downgraded."

That is precisely what happened. The college board has downgraded the lecturers and given them an allowance which has been eroded by inflation, and those 21 people are suffering a monetary loss of back pay amounting to \$10 000, which they should receive on the ground of equality and on the basis of the provision which the Government incorporated in the Act. I might add that these lecturers work under an award granted to them by the Western Australian Industrial Commission. The staff association has not succeeded in having the decision reversed. The

opinion of the association's solicitor, which is also the opinion of the Industrial Commission, is—

... that whatever the intentions of the Teacher Education Act, the Teacher Education Authority has the power to make the decision it has regarding salaries; and the employer, i.e. the College, cannot determine the conditions of the service or salary of its employees.

A circular from the staff association also states—

The T.E.A. Council's record has been consistently negative in the area of conditions of service. (Surely few other organizations have, in modern times, been described by the Industrial Commission as having a "sublime disregard for the rights of its employees . . .")

That last remark does not come from me or from any union but from the Western Australian Industrial Commission.

Let us have a look at section 20 of the Teacher Education Act to see what the powers are. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) reads—

(d) may make recommendations to the Minister on the general policy to be implemented in relation to the terms and conditions of appointment and employment of staff of the Authority and of the constituent colleges;

I suggest to the Premier and the Minister representing the Minister for Education in this House that they convey to the Minister for Education my disgust and dismay at the fact that 21 people can be denied a pay rise by ministerial action. Yet the same Ministers sit over there and blandly say the trade union movement should behave itself and act within the guidelines. Those 21 people employed by the Mt. Lawley Teachers' College have been robbed of \$10 000 up to this time, and it is a continuing offence. There is no way in which they can do anything about it. It is of no use the Ministry saying it had nothing to do with it. The council has power only to recommend. If the council's recommendation did not go to the Minister it should have done so, and if the recommendation went to the Minister the council is quite wrong in refusing to make up these wages. I believe the college board would honour its obligations.

It may be asked from where the board would get the money. The money for the salaries of teachers at colleges of advanced education is provided by the Commonwealth Government, and the Commonwealth Government should make up the backlog. I suggest to the Minister and the Government that when they challenge the actions of the trade unions they should take action to ensure the

wrong that is being done to these employees is righted; firstly, by paying to the lecturers the \$10 000 to which they are entitled, and secondly, by restoring them to the grades they had reached in the Education Department. They have been downgraded through actions of the Government. They do not like it; nor do I. I am not able to use a term which other members were reprimanded for using during the last session of Parliament, but I suggest it is an appropriate term to use in relation to this situation.

I come now to the matter of the Midland Junction Abattoir, where the situation is becoming such that we can expect some action by the board of management. I have no hesitation in saying that the board of management has been incompetent in carrying out its job since 1967, and it continues to be incompetent by telling the people of Midland, through the answer to the question I asked of the Minister, that it cannot stop the smell which is emanating from the abattoir and which has been causing difficulty for several years.

I have a letter dated the 3rd April, 1970, from the executive of the Amalgamated Engineering Union regarding the smells emanating from the Midland area. I also have a letter from Mr D. G. Day to the Swan Shire Clerk (Mr T. J. Williamson) regarding the nauseating odour emanating from the Bushmead factory. In fact, there is evidence of a smell emanating from that particular area since 1967.

Mr Thompson: Could I interject and ask whether the honourable member is aware that the Shire of Swan is taking steps to have the land on which the Bushmead factory is situated rezoned as an obnoxious trade area?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not aware of that. I do not know what it adds to my speech. I would prefer to make my speech myself. The honourable member can make his speech later on.

The situation in relation to smells emanating from the Bushmead area was the subject of a letter sent by the then member for Swan (Mr J. J. Brady) to the then Minister for Health (Mr R. Davies) in 1972, with particular reference to the problems created by the crayfish processing factory. The smell emanating from that factory was as obnoxious as the smell which is now coming from the Midland Junction Abattoir. In that instance the company faced up to its responsibilities and installed plant to eliminate the smell.

The process carried out by the crayfish factory is no different from the process carried out at the Midland Junction Abattoir in relation to the treatment of offal. The crayfish were transported to the factory from various places and became obnoxious even before they were treated.

The process at the abattoir is said to be a continuous one. It is no more a continuous process than I am a continuous speaker in this House. One company can overcome an obnoxious smell but another company cannot, for all sorts of reasons.

In 1972 the following petition was sent by a number of residents of Guildford and East Guildford to the then member for Swan (Mr J. J. Brady)—

We have been promised year after year that the offensive smell from the abattoirs area would be eliminated "in a few months". It is still very prevalent and we are sick and tired of promises. We appeal to you to do something.

The letter contains 21 signatures. In 1972 we asked the abattoir to do something. An acknowledgment was received from the Acting Minister for Health (Mr A. W. Bickerton) of a letter from Mr J. J. Brady in relation to the offensive odours. On the 12th June, 1972, a letter was sent to the Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs. It reads in part—

I should be pleased if your Department could advise if any immediate action is being taken to deal with this problem, which was the subject of a public meeting in the Guildford Town Hall about the middle of last year, when a committee was formed representative of various sections, to overcome the difficulty.

It then goes on to make other comment. In 1975 further meetings were held at the Midland Town Hall. Many people attended, and the question asked was, "When are we going to get some bloody action on the abattoirs?" Those were the words used.

Mr Thompson: Why didn't you ask your Minister for Agriculture, because he took some very positive steps?

Mr SKIDMORE: I will refer to that; however, the efforts of this glorious board of management at the Midland Junction Abattoir abrogated anything that Minister might have tried to achieve. It is of no use the member for Kalamunda, or any other member, trying to convince me that any blame can be placed on the shoulders of the then Minister for Agriculture, because the blame rests fairly and squarely on the board of management.

Mr Thompson: I did not imply that any blame rested with him; he acted responsibly.

Mr SKIDMORE: In 1972 a letter was sent to Mr Brady by Mr Bickerton, the Acting Minister for Health. That letter stated—

The fertiliser works, referred to by you, have installed at a cost of \$30 000 a new condenser to eliminate cooking odours. This appears to be working satisfactorily. Recently officers of the Public Health Department

were present when crayfish offal was being cooked and no odours were noted.

That was in respect of the crayfish factory, but when we look at the Midland Junction Abattoir this is what we find—

The Midland Abattoir Board has retained the services of a firm of consulting engineers in an attempt to overcome odours from the lagoons. Depending on Government finance, this work will be put into effect as soon as possible.

On the 30th June, 1972, we see letters written by various people, and petitions taken up by people in respect of this problem. All these are on the file. There is a letter from the Shire of Swan to the then member for Swan, and I quote the following section regarding the matter of offensive odours, which had been referred to the Minister for Health—

This material when left over a period can be in the first stages of decomposition hence foul odours beyond the control of the odour condensers will be the end product, causing a nuisance to surrounding residents.

The letter then goes on to refer to the meeting at the Guildford Town Hall, and the actions of the people at that time in an endeavour to get the abattoir board to do something.

That was in July, 1972. On the 13th May, 1974, there is yet another letter on this question. This letter was written by me to the Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, regarding air pollution control within the new terminal complex. I also want to record the fact that in a letter I sent to the Minister for Health on the 18th November, 1974, I said I had recently contacted Mr Slattery of the Public Health Department and had asked him what was the problem with Midland Junction Abattoir. He suggested that I seek permission from the Minister to view the relevant files in his office in preference to his giving me a summary of all the actions taken by the department.

On the 16th January, 1975, an article appeared in the *Swan Express* under the heading, "Mystery odour again". The article stated—

Council received both a written and verbal report on this.

The written report said that a Keith fume condenser that had been creating concern had been cut out on the dry rendering side and that an after burner was being attached to the Alfa Laval fume condenser.

It said these changes would once and for all eradicate all odours emitted by the rendering part of the operation.

With regards to the effluent disposal system that had cost \$1½ million to instal, the report said the abattoir had expressed dissatisfaction to the contractors who had then sent their engineer from Sydney to the plant.

That is the first reference made to doubts as to whether or not the engineers who installed the original plant were competent.

Quite recently I went to the Eastern States where I received information which would certainly indicate that the firm which installed the effluent treatment plant at the Midland Junction Abattoir is incompetent, and I will deal with that in full later.

Then we come to a newspaper article headed, "Tougher stand on smell", and another headed "Crayfish offal to be processed". The latter is dated the 20th December, 1974. Then we have a letter written by the Shire of Swan to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board on the 19th May, 1975, which states—

As you are well aware several complaints of offensive odours were reported during the 1975 year up to the last week in April. Many of these were investigated and it appeared conclusively that the odours emanated from the aerobic lagoons adjacent to the effluent plant.

It is understood that you ordered the cleaning out of the lagoon and it has not been in use since. This has practically eliminated complaints and with this in mind we realise that the whole lagooning set up must be re-examined as this is the area which appears to completely baffle all your consultant engineers.

They did it.

According to the answer to a question asked in this place today, a firm undertook to put in an effluent plant at a cost not of \$1 500 000, but of \$498 500, which was revised to \$513 000 because of modifications. That is \$500 000 for a plant that is as completely inefficient now as it was when it was first installed, and probably will remain so unless a great deal of extra money is spent to bring the abattoir into line with general standards. When the abattoir board spends \$500 000, surely to goodness it should expect something a little better than it received. It was a sell out, and I will prove that my reasons for saying so are valid. I do not lightly say such things, but I think it should be borne in mind that this was the situation.

Next on the file we have a letter from the Shire of Swan acknowledging a complaint I made on the 4th June, 1975. Then we have headlines in the *Swan Express* "Smell strikes again", and on the 11th September, 1975, "Abattoir faces prosecution", and on the 11th December, "Abattoirs: Railway workers complain". The worker is always challenged if he walks out

on strike; that is the worst thing in the world. However, I would suggest to the Minister for Agriculture that he take the members of the abattoir board away from the abattoir while the smell is at its worst and direct them to the Midland railway workshops and see if they are prepared to stand there for 20 minutes. The smell does not affect the abattoir workers because it does not fall at the abattoir; it falls a half a mile away at the railway workshops, where it is so thick it can almost be cut with a knife. As a matter of fact, I have often felt inclined to cut it with a knife and to bring some to the Minister!

The article in the *Swan Express* of the 11th December, 1975, states—

"There has been no greater problem plaguing this shire than the abattoir," he said.

"It is time we stopped this once and for all. Midland is the most stinking town of West Australia and will stay that way if we leave the problem to the abattoir board, and continue to listen to excuses".

Again some doubt had come into the minds of people who were champions of the board. Again the question arose regarding whether what the board did was right or wrong. A \$30 000 condenser was installed, and I will deal with the question of physical plant in a short time.

Mr Thompson: Seeing you are such an expert, what about slipping up there and telling them what to do?

Mr SKIDMORE: I will get to that in good time. In the minutes of the meeting of the Shire of Swan of the 8th December, 1975, there appears a report of the health and building committee, presented by the acting chief health surveyor. When we talk about what the people of Midland have been complaining about, the following are just some of the facts—and this is included in the report of the acting chief health surveyor of the Shire of Swan—

Approximately 500 yards east of Whitemans Road in Stirling Crescent there was a pond on the road verge approximately 12 ft x 3 ft wide and 6 in to 8 in depth of dark brown effluent which was seeping from Midland Abattoirs paddocks which were on the south side of Stirling Crescent.

The pond was heavily infested with mosquito larvae and was overflowing causing effluent to run across the road (Stirling Cres.) and was heading towards the Helena River.

I have no doubt in my mind that the effluent finished up in the Helena River, because it had nowhere else to go. So we have pollution from the abattoir, pollution of the Helena River, and pollution of the Swan River, and nothing is done about it. Not one conscious effort has been made by the board to do something about this.

Mr Old: Of course they are trying.

Mr SKIDMORE: Rubbish! The board members would not even know the time of day unless someone gave them a watch to look at. The following remark is also found in the same report—

The excessive kill causing the long holding period of offal, thus putrifying before entering the cookers appears to be the main source of the foul cooking smells.

Bear that in mind. I will come back to that point later.

Members of the Railway Officers Union and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees phoned the health surveyor of the Shire of Swan on Friday, the 5th December, and complained about the foul smell emanating from the abattoir. In that regard the minutes of the meeting state—

At 10.00 when I arrived at the Railways Workshop the wind was gusty and the smells had dispersed. Mr. Bradshaw said we expect some smells from the abattoirs, but the smell we have been experiencing lately is foul and unbearable.

Mr Bradshaw is employed in an administrative position in the railway workshops. Yet when the workers walked out of the gate in protest they were the world's worst, and it was a shocking thing to do!

The minutes go on to state—

As to rendering odours the after burner which has caused concern at the time of the meeting is now under strict scrutiny by the makers who are taking tests to see why the variations are caused to our operations when continually this unit is falling due to mechanical problems. They have since been on the works continually investigating this situation.

This is that great piece of machinery which it was said would operate efficiently and get rid of the problem. Finally it was suggested that the shire ask the Premier to investigate the ability and competence of the board.

So we had a progression from 1969 to the present time. Finally the Shire of Swan began to wonder whether the board was competent, and decided to ask the Premier to consider the matter. I say there is no question at all that the board is incompetent.

Mr Thompson: Would you be a good judge?

Mr SKIDMORE: I would be a better judge than the honourable member who made the interjection, because he has sat on the rear portion of his anatomy and has not bothered to do anything about this problem.

Mr Thompson: Read my maiden speech in this House.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: What good has it done?

Mr SKIDMORE: I have reams of correspondence and papers on this subject. It is a pity they could not be photographed, because each and every paper shows the concern of various people involved. Some of these are most pertinent, so perhaps I should mention one or two of them. Here is a beauty! It is dated the 29th July, 1974, and was written by the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to the Shire of Swan. In part, it states—

On the other hand we have been in touch with a company in Mexico who have since opened an office in Perth, by name Oxygen Water Controls Pty Ltd, and their suggestion is to use the existing machinery and add a flocculant as well as an acid additive and completely eradicate the equalisation basin.

It goes on to say—

In summarising the situation, I personally favour the second proposal put forward by the Mexican consultants in that the Board has nothing to lose in making our plant available to them on a pilot plant basis, and if they come up with a potable water with Nil B.O.D. and Nil suspended solids content, then the problems associated with the equalisation basin will be eradicated.

I suggest that the people of Midland are sick and tired of being guinea pigs for experimentation like this. They are the guinea pigs for experiments without fact or substance by consultant engineers who do not know what they are talking about. The abattoir board mentioned a Mexican company. That firm came over here, and I have reason to believe it conned the abattoir board into accepting something which, in my opinion, will not solve the problem at all.

I have copies of correspondence sent to me from the Railway Officers Union and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees; a letter I sent to the shire clerk on the 16th April, 1975; and another letter written by the present Minister for Agriculture to the Shire of Swan, acknowledging a letter written by the shire regarding the offensive odours on the 4th June, 1975. In his letter the Minister stated that he had requested the general manager of the abattoir to provide the Minister with a copy of his reply so that the Minister may be kept informed on the matter. And so it goes on and on.

On the 24th December, 1975, a letter was sent to the Premier (Sir Charles Court)—bless him! That letter was written by me, and it lists the people and companies who had made complaints regarding the unsatisfactory state of affairs at the Midland abattoir. In addition to those,

some 50 or 60 people had contacted me at various times in respect of this matter. The list is as follows—

Deering Auto Electric
J. J. Brady, ex M.L.A.
Bassendean Shire Council (many complaints)
Jack Skidmore M.L.A.
Parry's Department Store
H. D. Evans, Minister for Lands
W.A. Amalgamated Society of Railways Employees Union (several complaints)
Guildford Grammar School
Helena Valley Progress Association

I have here a petition dated the 11th December which states—

Proposal to be made. Abattoir faces prosecution.

It was prosecuted, and quite rightly so. When one looks at the whole sorry story it reveals a lack of competence on the part of the board. I shall read part of a letter from the present Minister for Agriculture to myself which is dated the 27th January, 1976. It reads—

Currently management has asked the suppliers of the afterburner—

It is not the condenser any more; now we have got on to the afterburner. To continue—

—to increase its capacity as well as making a close inspection of all areas where odours emanate within the rendering process; and at the present time, as I understand it, have reduced the odours emanating from this area quite considerably and will do everything in their power to see that the problem is overcome.

I suggest to the Minister that he has been grossly misled by the board of management and that he has been fooled for many years by these people who have failed to measure up to their responsibilities by attacking the problem in a right and proper way. That letter is indicative of what has taken place on the question of abattoirs.

I have many more quotes but I do not wish to weary the House with them. I should like now to come to the very pertinent question which a member of the Government raised as to what I believe is the solution. I suppose I could have done as a lot of other members have done which is to sit on the rear portion of my anatomy and do nothing. But recently at my own expense I undertook a trip to Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney for the specific purpose of looking at abattoirs. I looked at abattoirs and treatment plants. I should like to give a very brief rundown of my visit. Mr Speaker, could you indicate to me how many minutes I have left?

The SPEAKER: You have 7½ minutes.

Mr Thompson: Plenty of time for you to solve the problem.

Mr SKIDMORE: If the member would like to move an extension of time I would be most grateful; I can see that I am going to be in great difficulties because of the time factor. During my travels I went to Adelaide and visited an abattoir at Gepps Crossing. I found that the situation there is that there are no smells emanating from the offal treatment plant which affect the residential areas. Basically the process is similar to that which takes place now at Midland with one great exception in that in Adelaide they have done what the Health Department inspectors suggested to the shire some three years ago, which is to vent all gasses to the afterburners. That is done and there is no smell. But the effluent is passed into the sewer as distinct from our effluent which has to be treated because we have no sewer.

I should like now to refer briefly to the abattoir at Newmarket. I was informed there that the offal was treated at a place controlled by Pridmore Holdings. I saw a new plant which cost \$1.3 million. One could eat a meal off the floor. During the inspection I said to the engineer, "Where is the opening through which the gasses pass to the atmosphere?" He said, "You are standing within two feet of it, Mr Skidmore." I said, "Remarkable." He said, "As a matter of fact if you put your hand over there you can feel it." I put my hand over the egress point. He said, "I will put my head in it." He did so and I did likewise; and it was not smelly.

It is remarkable that in Melbourne there is a plant which has completely eliminated smells. The plant concerned has been commissioned in the last six weeks and Pridmore's have a very competent engineer who is prepared to give his expert knowledge to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board, if it requires it; and it is about time it sought somebody with some knowledge. The plant has an afterburner which has injected into it chlorine gas which neutralises some of the obnoxious smells. Then the gas is propelled through a caustic soda wash and again it is completely washed. It is then burnt and is passed into the air and meets the requirements of the area, which is purely residential. The guarantee given by that company to the council was that if the plant did not work it would not turn the damned thing on. It worked all right; it worked very efficiently.

There is one big difference apparent in that plant—it is a continuous operation. It has no offal remaining in bulk bins for putrefaction, which is the problem here. There is a complete breakdown at the abattoir at Midland because offal is held putrifying in bins. Let us take the situation where killing starts at 7.00 a.m. and by 4.00 p.m. there is quite a stink from the meat which then gets cooked and everybody there is subjected to the smells. The afterburner is useless.

I have been there. The afterburner is supposed to operate at a temperature between 700 and 800 degree fahrenheit. In fact I have been there on numerous occasions when the temperature has been 550 degrees fahrenheit. It is completely inadequate at that temperature and it should be replaced. There should be a continuous plant operation so that offal is not held in storage. That should be done immediately. I suppose my time is running out.

The **SPEAKER**: The member has 3½ minutes.

Mr **SKIDMORE**: As I see it, the problem is very simple to answer. There is a plant in Melbourne that runs efficiently. I suggest that we get somebody to go and look at it. I understand that somebody from the board has been over there. The information given to me led me to assume that somebody had been over there to see that showpiece. It is regarded by consultant engineers in the area to be one of the best offal treatment plants in Australia. It is brand spanking new and the whole factory is in a residential area, just as the Midland plant is.

When I went to Sydney I visited the Homebush Abattoir. The system there dates back some 15 years and it is an open digestive system. The offal goes in through elevators, is tipped from a hopper at floor level, and goes down into a digester which is like a pressure cooker. The meats are cooked and they are tipped into a container which wheels them to a grill and the meat meal goes away for packing. It is a continuous operation. All the smells, gasses, and odours from that plant go into the air. It is 15 years old and there is no complaint. Around the area is a buffer zone of paddocks which extends half a mile. There are no complaints. It is an old-fashioned system and it is a continuous system which does not allow offal to putrify.

I am very grateful to the two board members from the Homebush Abattoir with whom I had lunch. I should like to express in *Hansard* my thanks for the courtesy they extended to me on my visit. The secretary of the board said to me, "How is your effluent plant going in the West?" I used a term which does not endear itself to this House; I indicated to him that I did not think it was too good and I suggested that we were having trouble with it. He said, "Did so-and-so have anything to do with it?" I said that it did. I have asked the responsible Minister who did our job. This particular engineering firm, to the best of my knowledge, was the firm that applied to become the prime contractors for a similar plant at Homebush; and their consultant engineers rejected the firm, even as the prime tenderer, on two grounds. One was that the company had very little expertise in the field and, secondly, it did not

have the capacity to carry out the contract to its ultimate conclusion. We are in the situation of employing these people and I am very happy to see that the board has at last determined that it will engage somebody with a little knowledge who knows something about the matter. I am not unmindful of what takes place in abattoirs, having been a works engineer for three years.

Sir Charles Court: Who engaged that man?

Mr **SKIDMORE**: As I understand it, the Premier is asking me who engaged the engineer here.

Sir Charles Court: The engineer you are complaining about.

Mr **SKIDMORE**: The Homebush Abattoir?

Sir Charles Court: Who engaged the engineer you are complaining about?

Mr **SKIDMORE**: I am not sure where the question is leading me.

Sir Charles Court: You know.

Mr **SKIDMORE**: Ask the question and I will answer it. What is it?

Sir Charles Court: Who engaged this man who was rejected by Homebush and other people in the Eastern States?

Mr **SKIDMORE**: Who engaged him?

Sir Charles Court: Who engaged him to put the plant in the Midland abattoir?

Mr **SKIDMORE**: As I understand it, it was the Midland board.

Mr Thompson: Who was the Minister for Agriculture at the time?

Sir Charles Court: Who provided the money?

The **SPEAKER**: The honourable member's time has expired.

Sir Charles Court: Saved by the Speaker.

MR GREWAR (Roe) [5.56 p.m.]: I welcome this opportunity to raise again in the Address-in-Reply debate matters which affect my electorate. During the past 12 months many problems have manifested themselves and I wish to bring these before this Parliament. However, before I broach the subject I should like to congratulate the member for Greenough on his excellent speech when moving the motion which initiated this debate. Most members remember with fear and trepidation their first speech in this House and some continue to experience great anxiety in later speeches. The member for Greenough handled his subject particularly well and echoed many of the sentiments of other members from country electorates.

I should like now to add my support to those members who have spoken in recognition of the Hon. John Tonkin for his service to this Parliament, his record achievement in terms of years and all

that he has done for Western Australia. My electorate consists predominantly of supporters of the Government and it contains a very small Labor vote, but wherever I go in my electorate the praise for John Tonkin is ever present. He is regarded most sincerely, and as a man of great dedication for his State. I wish the newly-elected Leader of the Opposition the same success as has been enjoyed by the Hon. John Tonkin.

I should like now to turn my attention to the concerns of my electorate. A very important problem which is developing in my electorate and in the electorates of quite a few other members is the plight of new land farmers. Unless financial help is on the way very soon for some of these people many will be reduced to the level of the peasantry. There have been many articles in the Press in the last few weeks concerning this problem with headlines such as, "Liquidity a problem for many"; "New land farmer problems in the spotlight"; "We must keep the men on the land"; "Hard times on the farm"; "New land farmers will stick it out but they need financial help". Generally the Press reports are gloomy. As one with knowledge in this field I should like to say that some of the reports are true but some are grossly exaggerated. I have lived with these problems for 20 years, and I have been a new land farmer myself, hence I feel I can speak with some knowledge of the subject.

Western Australia has always had new land farmers. For 70 years or more there has been a frontier in Western Australia for people wishing to carve farms out of the bush. Pioneers have always endured hardships. Some have been luckier than others. Times have been better. Sometimes new land farmers have had more material and cash resources. Sometimes their soils were more fertile. Sometimes prices were better. Many were lucky; others were not. We can all remember the disillusion of the 1930s when many simply walked off the land.

Since 1959 a total of 4.5 million hectares or 11 million acres has been released for agricultural settlement. This represents 15 per cent of the total land available for farm development, the total being 24 million hectares.

Since 1959, 3 000 new farm units have been established. Actually there have been more but some have been amalgamated, some have been sold and some farmers have walked off their farms. Most of the farms are in the cereal and sheep areas extending from Geraldton to Esperance on the eastern fringes of the settlement. A great number of these farmers live in my electorate.

The new land farmers of the 1960s have had more difficult conditions with which to contend than have those of former times. They have been dealing with extremely poor soils—possibly the poorest

in the world—high input costs, etc. Their returns have been low because of the soil poverty.

However, to keep the story straight, I must say that it is not one of all gloom and despair. Many of the farmers have been successful, but some have not been so successful. In these days, with the continuing demand for land, most of those who wish to leave the industry have been able to leave agriculture with some dignity and some cash in their pockets. Today the farmer has been able to build up his equity in his property and leave with some reward. In many cases the farmer is better off financially than he would be had he sought other employment. However, this is only a just reward for the years of privation and hardship he and his family have undergone while living in a shed and working extremely hard during the best years of his life—years during which he would probably have reached a senior position in another occupation.

Since the main release of land in the 1960s the returns from agriculture have dropped and prices escalated. Governments have been criticised most unfairly for releasing the land, but at the time budgets and projections indicated that agriculture was in for better times than has been the case.

Mr H. D. Evans: Did it follow the expert advice given it?

Mr GREWAR: Most farmers followed the advice given and there were sources of budget information—

Mr H. D. Evans: Did the allocating committee follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture and the light lands committee?

Mr GREWAR: I would say that in most instances it did. It depended upon the applicant himself. Many applicants often presented a false story to the board, and the board had no way of proving the information presented.

Mr H. D. Evans: On particular areas did the Government follow the advice tendered and did it follow the advice on the class of applicant?

Mr GREWAR: Not being a member of the board, I cannot say, but I would imagine it did its best.

I would like to reveal to members the case of a typical new land farmer from Esperance, although he has parallels in other areas. He commenced development of his conditional purchase block during the 1960s. He may have been one of the 30 per cent who had a capital of less than \$10 000 or the 50 per cent who had a capital of less than \$20 000.

In 1972-73, after five to 10 years on his farm, his net income was \$3 000 and his total commitment debt was \$50 000. Today this is possibly higher and would include a large component of hire-purchase finance.

He has developed 50 per cent of his holding and has used up all his available credit. He is now extremely vulnerable to further increases in costs and in the short term has little likelihood of obtaining a price increase for his product.

He needs help now, and this has been borne out in the IAC report on new land farmers. That report contains some excellent suggestions with which I will deal later on.

However, I would like to make the point that agriculture is a long-term business, and short-term funding is of no use to the new land farmer.

The new land farmer needs to develop the base of his operations, either by increasing the area on his own block or by extending onto another property with developed land. He may need help to transfer the emphasis from his main type of production to that of another; for instance, he may wish to change from livestock farming to cereal growing. He may need assistance to provide a home on his property. We all know the story of the new land farmer who has never been able to obtain finance for a home; fortunately with legislation which may be before the House soon, this situation could be altered and a settler may be able to obtain a house on terms comparable with those of his city counterpart. In this regard I would like to thank the Minister for Housing for all he has done in helping the parliamentary committee to make this a reality for these people.

Many a new land farmer—and I am referring to approximately 1 000 of them—is in need of additional funding if he is to stay on the land. If he is typical of more than 50 per cent of the farmers in my area he will now be unable to raise further credit from his trading bank either by term loan or overdraft. The Rural Reconstruction Authority has classified him as non-viable; the Development Bank is no longer interested in him; and the stock firms, because of declining returns from livestock, are not advancing any more money.

What does he do? He intends to stay on the land, despite the fact that his farm has been classified as being nonviable. He is prepared to accept a lower standard of living. He is already doing contract work, shearing off the farm, or running a school bus, or his wife might be a nurse or a school teacher. It is interesting to note that the IAC has recorded that 50 per cent of the farmers have an outside source of income from salary or property. In fact, 20 per cent of farmers' net incomes is obtained off the farm. This is a rather deplorable situation. The industry should be able to stand on its own feet.

This farmer, with no chance of obtaining a ready source of long-term credit, must obtain short-term credit at high interest rates. A Government which allows people in the business of agriculture to use this

source of finance is heartless and shows little sympathy for people engaged in an industry of such vital importance to this country.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr GREWAR: I would urge the Government to look very closely at the recommendations of the IAC in its report on new land farms. Those recommendations are—

1. initiate discussions with the Western Australian Government on terms, conditions and financing of re-establishment assistance to new land farmers who wish to leave their properties.
2. review with the Western Australian Government the administration by the Rural Reconstruction Authority of the States Grants (Rural Reconstruction) Act 1971 in order to provide adequate coverage of new land farms which are substantially undeveloped.
3. examine with the Western Australian Government, the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Development Bank the most appropriate method of restructuring the existing debt, and of structuring the future borrowings of new land farmers so as to correspond more closely with the term appropriate for farm development.

The IAC has also dealt with other matters, and I refer to its report on rural reconstruction and income fluctuations. I urge the Minister to follow up the recommendations in these reports with his own State departments and the Commonwealth Ministers to try to bring some sanity into agriculture.

The IAC report on rural income fluctuations made some points pertinent to the new land farmer. These were—

1. To allow the primary producer tax averaging provisions but with no income limit.

Previously a limit of \$16 000 was imposed. The IAC suggests that no limit be imposed. To continue—

2. To establish an income equalisation deposit scheme which would enable income to be taxed in the year in which it is spent.

In my opinion it would be desirable for these income equalisation deposit funds to become the basis of funding for a rural bank. Over a period of years this fund could increase considerably, and the rural bank could then place less importance on Government provisions. It would be a bank owned by primary producers which would serve an industry with which it was sympathetic, which is not the case with the current commercial and Government banks which have no sentiment with agriculture.

Mr H. D. Evans: Have you taken this proposition up with the Minister for Federal Affairs?

Mr GREWAR: No, I am raising it for the first time now.

Mr H. D. Evans: Have you looked at the policy speech lately?

Mr GREWAR: I look at it all the time.

The other report to which I wish to refer is the report on rural reconstruction, and again I urge the Minister to follow up the recommendations submitted in the report. Six of them I feel are important, and they are as follows—

- (1) That the rural reconstruction scheme be continued beyond 1976.
- (2) That the interest rates be set to match enterprise expectations.

The IAC suggested that at the commencement of a loan interest rates could be reduced, increasing eventually to the long-term bond rate. I am not altogether averse to the long-term bond rate being the interest rate on a loan, I know farmers would desire it to be less, but I feel that agriculture is a business and must be able to stand on its own feet.

To continue—

- (3) That short-term credit be made available in times of serious liquidity problems occasioned by marked downturns, drought, or various other disasters.
- (4) That short-term credit be made available to a settler whose case is prolonged in assessment.

Farmers know that frequently their cases take many months to be finalised, and even then they may have to appear again and submit further information. During these investigations short-term credit would be of great assistance to them. Continuing—

- (5) That a revolving fund be established to make it a continuous type of loan.
- (6) That there be a moratorium on principal repayments if there is a downturn in prices, or the industry suffers a major setback.

This would give the loan a greater flexibility.

I am very concerned that 75 per cent of my new land farmer constituents have been rejected by the RRA on debt reconstruction, and most of them on the ground of nonviability. This compares with an Australian figure of 38 per cent. The grounds for nonviability must, in my opinion, be more thoroughly and carefully thought out.

These farmers were told four or five years ago that they were nonviable, but they are still on their farms. This indicates either that the RRA was wrong, or that the people are prepared to accept a lower standard of living.

I would urge the RRA to develop better communication with its applicants. At the moment a farmer is simply told that his application is not successful. There should be negotiation between the rural economists carrying out the loan study and the farmer in order that they might decide on a better mixture of enterprises than the farmer has contemplated.

Mr H. D. Evans: Things have deteriorated in the last two years.

Mr GREWAR: They will get better.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr GREWAR: During the tea suspension I found that my arithmetic was not as strong as I thought it was. In my speech I said that 75 per cent of farmers applying for debt reconstruction in my electorate had been refused; this figure should have been 65 per cent.

Mention was made in the IAC report that an applicant who is not in working occupation of his property is frequently rejected in his application for financial help. For many new land farmers it is vital that they work off their properties and I feel that this clause rejecting applicants on the ground of working occupation is a most unfair one. I do not see that a farmer need actually till every acre of his land to be able to manage it efficiently. In many cases, by working off the farm a farmer is able to bring in cash—something that he would not otherwise be able to do and, as a result, practise better agriculture.

It may be some time before the IAC recommendations are accepted finally, and in the interim period I would suggest that the State Government consider the implementation of a new land farm loan finance scheme similar to the beef finance loan scheme whereby credit could be granted to farmers relatively easily, cheaply, and quickly. Such a scheme could be operated on the basis of a farmer's anticipated production. It could be disbanded once the IAC recommendations are implemented. In the event of these recommendations not being implemented, I suggest that a new land farm finance scheme could remain in operation. If the State Government can find \$2 million to back the goldmining industry to support several hundred people working in that industry—

Mr Hartrey: A big "if"!

Mr GREWAR: —I feel that similar assistance should be contemplated for the thousands of people engaged in agriculture.

Mr T. D. Evans: The first-mentioned assistance has not been given at all.

Mr GREWAR: Some guarantee was given that it would be available if it were matched by Commonwealth money.

Sir Charles Court: A lot of cash was advanced. What is the member for Kalgoorlie talking about?

Mr T. D. Evans: Not Commonwealth money.

Mr GREWAR: I would like to leave that matter now, and to bring before the House some problems that exist in our beef industry. Members are all aware of the plight of the beef farmer, as this subject has been raised in the House many times. Various schemes have been presented, and an Honorary Royal Commission has been formulated to endeavour to find a solution to the problem.

At the present time Australia is selling a record quantity of beef meat as carcasses on the world market. The price being obtained on these markets is reasonably satisfactory. However, between the farm gate and the retailer's counter in the overseas countries, the high costs involved in transporting, killing, dressing out, and shipping, are forcing the producer to accept a low price. It is not economical for him to stay in business at this rate. In fact, he is now receiving less than half the return he achieved several years ago, and his costs have increased 100 per cent or more. The problem is that the Australian component of cost between the farm gate and the retail store in overseas countries is much higher than that of our competitors due to our inflationary situation. A solution to this problem would be for Australia to export cattle live. This is now a big trade in the world, and I would like to refer to an article written by Douglas Berry in *The Australian Financial Review* of February, 1976, Mr Berry, a marketing consultant and cattle breeder, says—

At latest census our cattle population exceeded 33 million. Our cattle population grows faster than any other country.

But we are the only major cattle producer that does not have unrestricted cattle exports. The most cattle Australia has sold overseas in any one year was less than 20,000. In most years it has been less than 5,000 in some years 2,000 head or less.

I would like to compare this figure with the figures for other countries. France, with a cattle population of 22 million, exports one million live cattle. Germany, with a cattle population of 14 million, exports 700 000 live cattle. Mexico, with a cattle population similar to ours, exports one million live cattle. The total live world trade in cattle is nine million. To continue—

These countries all have smaller cattle populations than Australia; yet each enjoys a healthy export trade in cattle as well as beef. Their cattle industries are generally healthier than ours as a result and their individual cattle-growers more stable year by year.

Italy imports over 600,000 cattle per year. Of these at least 400,000 come from Germany.

The income Australian farmers earn from the sale of live cattle amounts to \$1 million, but it should be something like \$400 million.

We have millions of surplus cattle on our farms now. The producers are forced to hold them because the meatworks cannot handle the large numbers of cattle available. If these cattle remain on the farms, poor seasonal conditions could spell disaster for the Australian producers and could also be responsible for the denudation of large areas of our pastoral holdings.

It has been indicated that many importing countries prefer to purchase cattle alive as they have their own slaughtering facilities. They have limited cold store, they are unable to receive large numbers of carcass meat. These countries would welcome our entry into the live cattle trade. It is my hope that our Minister will follow up this suggestion and consult with his Federal counterparts in alerting the market places of our ability to supply live cattle, and our desire to enter this trade.

Negotiations will be necessary with the unions. I believe the Meat Industry Employees' Union is not very happy about live cattle exports, but I do not think it has a great deal to worry about. We have a large home market for meat, and we always will have. Also, we have a large carcass export market; hence I cannot see that there would be any loss of work opportunity.

The Waterside Workers' Federation would welcome the trade as it would give a greater port throughput than at present and this would flow-on to transport industries, port authorities, and the like. This trade would considerably improve the viability of our beef producers today.

In a recent Press release originating from the Minister for Industrial Development, reference was made to the possibility of an overseas firm being interested in the establishment of a wool-tops processing plant in Western Australia. It was indicated that a country location would be a suitable place for such a facility.

In the event of negotiations being successful, many country towns will vie for this facility, and I would like to put the case for Esperance. We produce eight million kilogrammes of wool per year in the Esperance region; the facility would require six million. We produce all ranges of quality and types of wool. In the event of our types not being suitable, we have access by road and standard gauge railway to the other agricultural areas of Western Australia. We have standard gauge railway access to the Eastern States which would facilitate export there or to our own capital of Perth. We have a good port which is working under its capacity at present, and it would welcome additional

trade. We have the land close to the port, and serviced by a good transport system. We have the labour, or we could obtain it easily. I believe the requirement of a wool-top facility would be for 100 workers, and if we cannot obtain these people locally, they could be attracted from the mining areas. Many people use Esperance as their seaside resort, and many would welcome the opportunity to live and work there.

We have ample power capacity, and a feature I consider most important is an abundance of water. We have an aquifer which has been partly tested only at 16 million cubic metres a day. Water is becoming a scarce commodity on the west coast with the expanding population and industry, and the use of our water source would not impose a further drain on the metropolitan supply. Esperance needs the industry; we need a balanced economy. We had hoped that an abattoir would be established by now and we would welcome it. However, until the abattoir is a firm proposition, we would like to put our case for the wool-tops industry in Esperance. It would employ 100 people which would result in possibly 500 more families in the area. The industry would give us stability, and it would encourage further development of other industries. I see Esperance as the logical centre for such a facility, and I urge every consideration be given by the Minister.

In a former speech in this House I referred to the injustice of probate duty as a taxing medium. I am aware that Governments, both State and Commonwealth, need taxing revenues, and I am not averse to some form of death tax collection. However, it must be borne in mind that this tax is a tax on the thrifty, who, after paying taxation, have put their money into some form of investment. It is these people who are subjected to the tax.

Due to the buoyant economy and inflation, even the man on the street may find himself in dire straits because of probate duties. Farmers and property owners are disadvantaged seriously, and many may have to sell their properties if inflation of estates continues at the present rate. Many farming enterprises could be crippled because of probate duty.

I would like to illustrate this by giving details of a typical wheatbelt property, and this information is presented in a paper entitled "Death Duties—It's Time to Act", by Peter Hackett. The example cited is a typical wheatbelt farm of 2 000 hectares which at today's values would attract a probate commitment of \$121 000 on the farmer's death. In 1973, due to lower valuations, the same property would have attracted only \$18 000. That is an increase of \$100 000 probate on an average wheatbelt farm in the last three years. There are ways to reduce the probate load, but one should not have to look for loopholes in legislation to overcome this

problem. Often this information is available only to those with the money to investigate it, and the people who are not so knowing or so able financially, are the ones usually caught unprepared. We in the State Government have criticised our Federal counterparts in regard to the escalating tax rate on higher incomes and we have urged tax indexation, but in the field in which we have some responsibility, we have not done much about it yet.

I would like to quote another typical situation of a wheatbelt farm valued at \$200 000. If the owner of such a property dies leaving a wife and two children, the probate duty is \$49 000. For an estate with a valuation of \$300 000, the probate duty is \$120 000; that is, an increase of \$70 000 for every \$100 000 in the property valuation. Admittedly, the State probate in the first instance is only \$31 000, increasing to \$64 000 in the second instance.

If we do not do something about death duties now, the families of many farmers will be in serious trouble if in the near future the breadwinner dies. I should like to make some suggestions on this subject. If an estate is left to a spouse, death duties should be waived. If an estate is left to dependants, the allowable deductions for these dependants should be increased by 100 per cent.

In many instances, with the death of a breadwinner, families pay probate twice, once on the death of the breadwinner himself, and again on the death of his surviving spouse. Such a burden on inheriting dependants leaves many people in financial difficulties.

I urge this Government to rethink the level of death duty taxes immediately. Delays will have many serious effects on the families of all who unfortunately die in the intervening period. I support and commend the motion.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [7.46 p.m.]: The member for Roe seems to me to be whistling in the dark, if one takes any notice of what the Premier is reported in today's newspaper as having said, because the Premier said that whilst he is going to put forward some amendments to the death duties legislation, he is not going to do very much about them; certainly, he is not going to abolish them.

As the Premier correctly pointed out, he does not intend to abolish death duties because Governments need money to provide social and other services for the people and he does not propose to reduce those services. The Premier has already produced a couple of Budgets and he is yet to reduce one item of socialist content in a Budget. On the contrary, he increases most expenditure, so if one takes heed of the Premier's remarks, one will realise that the member for Roe does not have very much chance of having his suggestion accepted.

Mr Grewar: We will see.

Mr BERTRAM: While the Premier urges people to fight socialism he has currently achieved a socialist content in the Budget of Western Australia greater dimensions than ever before in history. Therefore, it is not very likely that he will go along with the suggestions put forward by the member for Roe.

Mr Grewar: You are mixing social benefits with socialism, two entirely different things.

Mr BERTRAM: That is the opinion of the honourable member, but as another of his colleagues said, "People are wanting more and more from Governments". That is true and will continue to be so; this is an inevitable trend; it will not be stopped, and the honourable member should face up to it. As the Premier rightly said, Governments must get the money from somewhere if they are going to provide services to the people. For the time being the Premier is satisfied to obtain money from death duties, sometimes referred to as probate duty.

In a similar debate a year ago, I mentioned the plight of the Wandarra School. Looking back on what I said then, I notice I commented that it appeared the Minister for Education had given some heart to the Parents and Citizens' Association at the Wandarra Primary School; it appeared—I have never been corrected since—that they had some reason for hope for relief of the predicament in which they found themselves in the little school on the corner of Dodd and Harborne Streets in Wembley.

Very briefly, Wandarra is a relatively small school, situated in nice surroundings, with good teaching staff and excellent pupils. I know the pupils are of good quality because at different times over a period of years I have had the privilege of seeing them in action; one must be impressed by the calibre of the children attending that primary school. I concede that the student population is not very great. However, the position is that in the main they are being taught in buildings which are thoroughly unacceptable by 1966 standards, never mind 1976 standards.

Notwithstanding the debate to which I referred, which took place on the 20th March last year, the school has been given no relief since that time. As members know, the summers are terribly hot and, by the temperature in Perth tonight, this summer is not yet over. These children are subjected to these hot conditions in sub-standard rooms and, I am told, on occasions this year some of the children were taken home because the conditions were intolerable. In the winter, the classrooms are like a freezing chamber. In addition, I am told that if there is a fire in the rooms, the provision for quick escape on the part of the children is inadequate.

There also is a middle menace in the area, created by Lake Monger; I was at the school the other night, and they were

swarming around the place and from a health standpoint, I would imagine that is most unsatisfactory.

Notwithstanding the letters sent hither and thither by the Parents and Citizens' Association, the deputations organised by that group, mention by me in the Parliament and all sorts of other protests over the years, nothing has been done. They have really started protesting only in the last year or so, and I believe their inactivity protest-wise has contributed to this unjust situation. On the other hand, the P. & C. has done a magnificent job and has worked hard and found the wherewithal to provide good amenities for their children.

It is the squeaky wheel which receives the grease, and the P. & C. of the Wandarra Primary School has been left lamenting. I abhor this position; the willing worker gets all the load while the loafer gets none.

Recently, I asked the Minister for Education a short and simple question. It appears on page 194 of *Hansard* No. 2 for this session, and the first part asks as follows—

- (1) Is it the Government's intention to use portion of the recently announced \$10 million of spending on schools to replace the sub-standard school buildings at the Wandarra school?

The answer was, "No". The second part of my question was—

- (2) If not, why not?

The answer was as follows—

- (2) The \$10 million advance is to be used for the commencement of new schools, both primary and secondary, which will be needed to accommodate increasing enrolments for the 1977 school year.

In other words, if a person goes into a new area, he will get everything laid on.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Provided he is in an area represented by a Liberal member.

Mr BERTRAM: I am indebted to my leader; with his vast experience, he is spot on.

Mr Moller: I have found that, too!

Mr BERTRAM: The Wandarra Primary School is not going to get one dollar of that \$10 million. It needs only a few hundred thousand dollars, at the very most, but it will get nothing. The result is that, among other things, some people in that district are having to move from the area into suburbs they do not particularly wish to live in; they are settled and do not want to move.

None of us would like moving for no good reason; most of us like moving like the plague—we are settled in the one area. Very often our children do not want to move, and I would hope we would take notice of them. These people are considering and leaving the area because they can-

not get that to which they are perfectly entitled and overdue in the area in which they live.

Mr O'Neill: How big is this school? Can you give us a description?

Mr BERTRAM: My guess, although I would not be bound to it, is that the school consists of about seven rooms.

Mr Sibson: You have done a very thorough study of the school!

Mr O'Neill: How long has it been built?

Mr BERTRAM: I think it would speak volumes merely to say that most of the rooms are of the Bristol style. I will move on to an area of interest to the member for Bunbury in a moment, so he should not become too anxious. These classrooms are quite inadequate.

Mr Sibson: I wonder why they were not shifted out between 1971 and 1974.

Mr BERTRAM: I ask the Government to examine the situation at the Wandarra Primary School. Let us have a little fairness in this matter. We are not asking for huge sums of money, but merely for a small portion of the recent allocation of \$10 million. I do not know the precise areas to which this money has been allocated, although questions may elicit the answers in due course.

The third and most important matter I wish to discuss is what is known to most people who know anything about fairness in voting as one-vote-one-value. On the 13th December last, the Australian parliamentary elections were held, and the result was inevitable for a number of reasons.

I argue that the primary reasons can be confined to three, although those who feel they can put forward other more cogent reasons may do so at a later stage if they wish.

The first reason is the influence of the media. What a tremendous influence the media has upon the lives of the people, not only in the field of politics but also in all other fields.

Mr Sibson: You did not growl about this in 1972.

Mr BERTRAM: The Press influences the people not only by the blatant declaration of policy, and by telling people what to do, but also in more subtle and more powerful ways, over a protracted period of time.

Mr Young: What an insult to the intelligence of the Australian people.

Mr BERTRAM: The second reason is the huge amount of money which the conservative forces and parties are able to muster and employ.

Mr Sibson: You had no trouble raising the money.

Mr BERTRAM: The Australian Labor Party—the people's party—has never been able to match the conservatives, when it came to wealth.

Mr Young: What about those photographs of Gough stuffing money into his pockets in Martin Place?

Mr Bryce: Could that compare with one cheque from the multi-nationals?

Mr BERTRAM: I thank the member for Scarborough for his observation. It is historically true that during the last election, the little people came in unprecedented droves to support the Labor Party, which had to employ special staff to write receipts, because its normal staff could not handle the volume of money which came forward from these little people.

However, I do not wish to touch on that point; I am talking about the big and powerful people with huge sums at their disposal which can be employed for political purposes. Members opposite are well aware that what I say is true; I do not have to debate the matter now. Even the member for Bunbury, the "Deputy Assistant Chairman of Committees" knows what I say is correct.

We are at the stage now where parties win elections on the length of their pockets rather than on the merits of their policies, and that is disastrous. To a large extent, this position exists in the United States of America in respect of presidential elections.

Mr Young: Did you know that, by and large, the ALP advertising fund was the same as that of the Liberal-Country Parties?

Mr Bryce: That is bilge!

Mr Young: We are not talking about the deficit; the ALP spent about the same amount.

Mr Bryce: Your party spent about \$4 million, and we spent about \$500 000.

Mr Sibson: Your party just wrote cheques.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BERTRAM: The member for Scarborough would have some knowledge of the financial position of the Australian Labor Party. However, of course, the public have very little detail of his party's financial situation because they are not allowed to attend Liberal Party meetings. Even the Press on most occasions is not allowed to attend those meetings.

Mr May: That is why they tipped him out of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr BERTRAM: I thank members opposite for their interjections, although they are rather puerile. The third reason for the election result is the electoral boundaries in respect of Australian parliamentary elections.

In any contest, other than a political election, a win in the context of the win on the 13th December last would cause a person to be ashamed of his win.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: He would be swabbed!

Mr BERTRAM: The reason is the inequity, the imbalance, or the unfairness of the position. Furthermore, people other than those in a political situation would abhor, reject, and despise those who manoeuvred themselves into this position, and/or who took advantage of it. In any other field of competition, by working with such imbalance and unfairness one would be rejected for what one was; but for some reason or other in the political scene thus far it has not occurred in Australia, but let us make no mistake: one day fairness will be required. It will occur.

I submit the time will come when the faceless, non-elective men in the media will be required by law to do the right thing. By that I mean doing the right thing objectively so far as human beings can do it. I say furthermore the time will come when elections will be required to be decided not on the depth of a candidate's pocket or the pocket of his political party, but on his own merits, the policy he follows, and his performance.

The time will come also—I hope in the not-too-distant future—when throughout Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, elections will be fought on a one-vote-one-value basis, and not otherwise.

Mr Clarko: Will you take away some seats in Tasmania?

Mr BERTRAM: The honourable member should be concerned only with Karrinyup. What I recommend that he should do is to explain to the electors of Karrinyup, as I am sure he can most eloquently, how it is that they have one vote while other people in another part of the State have 15 votes!

Mr Laurance: That is not correct.

Mr BERTRAM: It is correct. In respect of elections for another place those people have one vote, whilst their neighbours a few miles to the north—and these may be relatives of the electors in Karrinyup—have eight votes.

Mr Laurance: The same situation exists in Geraldton.

Mr BERTRAM: In a sense the House of Representatives elections are conducted on a one-vote-one-value basis, although for years there has been a 20 per cent variation allowed from the quota. That has been perpetrated on the people throughout the length and breadth of Australia, so as to enable the moribund National Country Party to remain in existence.

Mr Watt: You want two bob each way.

Mr BERTRAM: All I want is fairness and justice for the people. If the honourable member cannot comprehend that,

it is not my fault. In 1974 the Whitlam Government won a mandate from the people of Australia to introduce laws to alter that 20 per cent tolerance to a 10 per cent tolerance. A joint sitting of the Federal Parliament passed that legislation. Certain parties led by the present Government, appealed in respect of the validity of that law; only to be defeated. I do not know what pride we ought to take from that manoeuvring, or what was the cost to the State in that abortive exercise.

Pursuant to the laws passed in 1974 under the mandate I have referred to, by a joint sitting of the Federal Parliament following a double dissolution, redistributions were carried out and presented to the Australian Parliament. Unbiased commentators said at the material time, and not now, that those redistributions were as fair as any redistributions in the history of the Australian Parliament. They were not gerrymandered; they were not malapportioned; they were just and fair.

Mr Clarko: It was not based on one-vote-one-value, because Tasmania is different. It has five seats.

Mr Bryce: How big is the current quota for Tasmania?

Mr Clarko: Below that figure.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt. Hawthorn.

Mr BERTRAM: Notwithstanding the fairness of the proposed redistributions, what transpired? The conservatives in the Australian Parliament rejected the redistributions. So, in effect, in addition to what I have said what happened on the 13th December was that the election was based on boundaries which were wrongly fixed. They were false, because they were not boundaries drawn up under the 1974 legislation. One might say that was the Whitlam Government, and according to the Premier that is his stock answer to all comments when he needs an answer but does not have a good one.

Mr Bryce: He now has another answer; that is, to bash the unions.

Mr BERTRAM: The fact is that in 1959 Sir Garfield Barwick, who in recent times gained a certain amount of justified notoriety, moved that there should be a joint committee on constitutional review. That motion having been carried in the House of Representatives and the Senate, an all party committee was established which did a lot of work and brought down certain findings.

One finding was that the 20 per cent tolerance in the quotas was excessive and could be very unfair. Certain aspects of the report brought down by that joint constitutional committee were carried unanimously. The points I wish to quote were, to the best of my belief, points concurred in unanimously by all the members of that committee.

Firstly, I refer to paragraph 316 at page 46 of the report. It states—

The Committee feels constrained to say, however, that one-fifth margin on either side of the quota for a State which the Act allows may disturb quite seriously a principle which the Committee believes to be beyond question in the election of members of the national Parliament of a Federation, namely, that the votes of the electors should, as far as possible, be accorded equal value. The full application of the margin each way to two divisions in a State could result in the number of electors in one division totalling 50 per cent more than the number of electors in the other division. Such a possible disparity in the value of votes is inconsistent with the full realization of democracy.

Paragraph 320 states—

Compulsory voting makes it possible for a government which the electors have returned to claim quite validly that it represents the majority opinion; it also makes all the adult members of the community participants in the affairs of government and acts as a stimulus to the democratic way of life. These purposes tend to be defeated if electorates can be so arranged that some contain far fewer electors than others.

Paragraph 322 states—

If the Constitution should be altered,—

It is talking about a constitutional amendment, and not an Act of Parliament. That is the significance of what the committee had recommended. To continue—

—as the Committee recommends, to provide that each division of a State should return one member of the House of Representatives and that the number of electors enrolled in each division in a State should be as nearly as practicable uniform, an important step will have been taken amounting in substance to a constitutional assurance or guarantee to each individual elector of a fair value for his vote.

Next I refer to paragraph 330 which states—

One form of gerrymandering is the creation of electoral divisions in which there are substantial disparities in the number of enrolled voters so securing for a political party greater representation than it should have. In all its forms, the device is thoroughly subversive of the democratic process. In making possible minority governments, the majority can be deprived of the government of its choice and the way is opened for arbitrary action impairing the freedom of the individual even though that action stands condemned

by the majority of people who comprise the electors of the Commonwealth.

Because he was mindful of that situation, and notwithstanding the fact that he is recognised as a very moderate, well-read, and objective person, Kim Beazley, MHR wrote to the Press recently and pointed out the sort of consequences which could flow from electoral gerrymandering, malapportionment, and the type of practice currently followed by the Western Australian Government.

The Age of Melbourne is not generally noted for its support across the board of the Australian Labor Party, but it was aware of the mischief of the conservatives in the Australian Parliament, comprising the Liberal Party and the National Country Party known under that name for the time being. *The Age* was aware what the conservatives were up to in defeating the will of the people, and in frustrating and defeating the aims of the 1974 electoral legislation.

It had something to say which members of the National Country Party in this Parliament should listen to. Under the heading of "Liberals Opt for Electoral Folly" the following appeared—

In determining their attitude to the proposed redistribution of Federal electoral boundaries, members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party had the option of adopting two approaches. They could have asked themselves: is this redistribution fair and equitable and in accordance with democratic principle? To which the honest answer would have been—Yes!

I do not know that is necessarily appropriate, when one sees what goes on here from time to time. To continue—

Or they could have pondered: does this redistribution serve our long-term political interests? In which case the wise answer would also have been Yes! The Liberals made a decision which was neither honest nor wise: they decided to oppose the redistribution. In doing so, they opted for a marginal short-term political advantage and for a mockery of electoral justice. The main beneficiary of this aberration will be neither the Liberal Party nor the people of Australia, but the National Country Party.

Further on the article points out that there is no good argument about it. In its final remarks the article states—

We shall not even be spared the mendacious cant with which this cynical expediency will be defended.

Mr Shalders: You agree with those comments because it suits you.

Mr BERTRAM: I accept that report because I share the view that it expresses, and I suggest most thinking Australians share the same view. Furthermore, Sir

Garfield Barwick and his committee in 1959 expressed the same view. They were in good company. This view also happens to be in accord with that of the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the USA. So, I am not relying on a few ordinary people, but on people who have great weight, because by and large their views are entitled to be given credence.

Mr Shalders: Are your arguments valid just because that newspaper says they are valid?

Mr BERTRAM: Those people who have not studied the position will be forgiven if they thought that the House of Representatives election held on the 13th December last was held along democratic lines, when as a matter of fact it was not on a one-vote-one-value basis; therefore it was not democratic. It was held on the basis of one-man-one-vote gone rotten.

Let us have a look at the figures, and I am not quoting them on the basis that they should not be properly adjusted in certain ways. What I am saying is that all the adjustments which might be made would not give enough numbers to answer the serious questions which these figures put up. There is a huge gap or difference in the figures which calls for prompt action, and that gap should not have been accepted by the people. There is nothing which could be done at law, but I am speaking on the basis of justice.

The figures show that the Australian Labor Party won 3 313 004 votes; that is to say, 42.8 per cent for 36 seats. In other words, 92 027.8 votes for each seat. The Liberal Party won fewer votes, namely 3 248 130 giving a smaller percentage than the Australian Labor Party. Instead of winning 36 seats with that magnificent victory the Liberal Party won 68 seats!

Mr Young: You are kidding. Why not add the National Country Party figures to see how many voted against the Labor Party?

Mr BERTRAM: For each seat which the Liberal Party won it had to get only 47 766 votes.

Then we come to the gem of them all—the National Country Party. It won 853 943 votes, which is 11 per cent, and it obtained 23 seats! In other words, the National Country Party had to win only 37 128 votes for each seat.

I will concede willingly that all sorts of adjustments can be made to these figures but no adjustment will approach the sort of position illustrated, which is demonstrably unfair.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: It was a national scandal.

Mr BERTRAM: Clearly, it was a national scandal and it was recognised by supporters of members opposite in 1959—by *The Age* and others.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: And even *The West Australian*.

Mr BERTRAM: The situation I have outlined is not good enough because we are rightfully told that our electoral laws are a mirror of the state of democracy within a country or a State. The Liberal-Country Party Government in Western Australia besmirched and tarnished the mirror—the reputation—of this State in 1975 by the crooked deal referred to during the debates of 1975. Exactly the same thing occurred with the Australian Parliament, and people will not sit by idly forever and allow that sort of thing to be put over them.

It will be remembered that in 1975 the Western Australian Government amended the Electoral Districts Act and the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. However, the Government made no attempt at all to amend those Acts in a way which would produce a one-vote-one-value result; it did not attempt to do that at all.

One does not have to look very far in order to work out why the Government did not take that action. I think the faceless men in the Liberal Party—or the one man band, I would not be sure which—decided at that stage of this Parliament it would not be prudent to risk a second split within the “coalition”—the “coalition” in quotation marks. There are many members in this Parliament who do not believe it is a true coalition, but merely a bogus one.

Notwithstanding that the Government had no mandate, asked or given, it decided to tamper with the electoral laws in a way which would give the appearance to the public that all was good. By taking that action the Government was not running into a head-on collision. I think it took the view that things were looking fairly good so it thought it could continue with what probably could be aptly described as a Quisling arrangement.

Mr Shalders: You would make a fortune writing novels.

Mr BERTRAM: I suggest the Liberal Party calculated that there were men in the National Country Party who wittingly or unwittingly would allow it to carry on with the coalition in the way it has been stumbling along, and they would not rock the boat but let the Liberal Party fall over the line at the general election, whether it is in 1976 or 1977.

The Liberals—so-called—in this Parliament—the conservatives—calculated at that time that with a little luck and with plenty of money—and with the media on side—they would get an absolute majority. This is the majority they are looking for.

I would like to remind members of the National Country Party that if, by some good fortune, the Liberal Party does get that absolute majority at the next election, it will not be the Labor Party which will be sending them into political oblivion, but the Liberal Party. That party will

have the numbers not only in this House, but elsewhere and will be able to take that action.

Recently we have witnessed the next instalment of this act—or the scenario as it is referred to these days—because the Liberal Party has announced quite blatantly—and it seems this is the best way if something is cooking—that at the next general election it will oppose National Country Party Ministers. I believe this is the first time such action has been announced, or even contemplated. Certainly, it is the first time the action has been proposed for many years.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: The Premier does not like the coalition.

Mr BERTRAM: He likes it like a hole in the head. One can imagine what is happening at the Cabinet table. People who are sitting at the Cabinet table must have a rough idea what has happened, and it is a pity the members of the National Country Party who are in the Cabinet do not take heed of the advice and warnings given to them by those who clearly see what is going on and who for the time being do not happen to be in the Cabinet. In practice, three Ministers who are members of the National Country Party are propping up the coalition, so that in due course one member of the coalition—that is, the Liberal Party—will gobble up the other member of the coalition. If one were not sitting here watching, listening, and taking note of what is going on, one would find it incredible.

Mr O'Connor: Does it worry you?

Mr BERTRAM: Not at all. It would worry me if I were one of the three Ministers to whom I have referred, and I hope it would worry the Minister for Transport if he were in that position.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has six minutes more.

Mr BERTRAM: The Australian Labor Party has decided that one-vote-one-value will prevail in the relatively near future, and the party will work for it on the national scene and in Western Australia. Unfortunately, as with other reforms, one can only be amazed that it takes so long to achieve justice and decency in law reform. Equality of voting rights is fundamental. It ensures fairness, equity, and government by the majority.

When speaking about and in support of one-vote-one-value, Chief Justice Warren of the Supreme Court of the United States said—

Undoubtedly, the right of suffrage is a fundamental matter in a free and democratic society. Especially since the right to exercise the franchise in a free and unimpaired manner is preservative of other basic civil and political rights, any alleged infringement of the right of citizens to vote must be carefully and meticulously scrutinized.

Legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests. As long as ours is a representative form of government, and our legislatures are those instruments of government elected directly by and directly representative of the people, the right to elect legislators in a free and unimpaired fashion is a bedrock of our political system.

Amendment to Motion

In the light of what I have said, I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion—

However we are mindful of the extremely urgent need for our electoral laws to equate with justice and for our State to be and to be clearly seen to be truly democratic. In these circumstances it is regretted—

- (1) That the principal of one vote one value whilst obtaining in the House of Representatives and within the States so far as the Senate of the Australian Parliament is concerned and in comparable countries including the United States of America does not apply in Western Australia.
- (2) That in Legislative Assembly elections the value of one vote varies by as much as 8 times.
- (3) That in Legislative Council elections the value of one vote varies by as much as 14 times.
- (4) That in local government elections many people who are entitled to vote in Australian and State elections have no right at all to vote whilst others have the right to plural votes.
- (5) That the Australian Labor Party's attempts to rectify these gross anomalies have been frustrated by the conservative forces of the Liberal and National Country Party.
- (6) That whilst the Australian Labor Party has often held a majority in the Legislative Assembly it has never held a majority of the seats in the Legislative Council because realistically it is impossible to do so and in consequence has always been denied the right to govern with the same power as that enjoyed by the Liberal and National Country Party when it is in Government.

(7) That the Australian Labor Party, the senior political party in this State, should continue to be permanently disadvantaged by the existing malapportionment and gerrymandering of boundaries within this State, it being our belief that any election should be contested on an equitable and fair basis and not in such a way as to be manifestly unfair and unjust, and in a manner which will as nearly as practical ensure that the result will reflect the opinion of the majority.

(8) That you and the State of Western Australia should be embarrassed by the circumstances as they now exist in respect to the electoral laws of this State, particularly since there is still no intention on the part of the Liberal and National Country Party Government to remedy the electoral laws but on the contrary the Government has tampered with the electoral laws without seeking or having any mandate from the people to do so and without attempting to achieve a one vote one value result.

In conclusion, as we are addressing our remarks to His Excellency the Governor, it is worth while to say that when one is aware of His Excellency's war record it is perfectly clear that he was prepared to go to great lengths and take great risks, as many other people did, to ensure we enjoyed democracy—not the "shamocracy" which we currently enjoy.

For the Premier to insist on democracy outside the Parliament and not to care two hoots about democracy within the Parliament is clearly a sham. It is unworthy of the State and unworthy of the men who, like His Excellency, were prepared to fight and give their lives for something better.

MR MOILER (Mundaring) [8.29 p.m.]: As a country member, I have pleasure in seconding the motion. I believe in a truly democratic Parliament. The basis of the debate should not be whether we can level accusations at one side or the other in relation to possible malpractices by either party in past years, but whether a practice is democratic, just, and right at the present time.

I make these remarks because I am fully aware that in all probability once again, in trying to defend the position this Government has taken in regard to this malapportionment, the Premier will raise the issue that previous Labor Governments brought about malapportionment in

boundaries in favour of the goldfields area. This may or may not be correct, but it has no point in the debate tonight. We should be debating whether the proposed electoral boundaries are just and fair to the people of Western Australia now, and I believe it is quite clear that they are not. That is the issue we should be debating.

The simple fact is that democracy demands all people should be equal. We do not consider that 50 cows or 100 sheep or 50 pigs, plus possibly 100 acres of land, equal one resident in the metropolitan area. That is just not on. We are considering people. We are elected to this place on the votes of people, and it is only fair and just that these people should, as near as possible, have equal voting power. Under the present arrangement, they obviously do not have this.

It has now reached the stage—and I emphasised this earlier—where we should take cognisance of public opinion. Even the Editor of *The West Australian* suggests that something is wrong with our electoral laws, so obviously it is time for this Government to take heed. In the editorial of the 29th March, when referring to the Legislative Council weighting, we read the following—

Council members could refuse to grant Supply to a government, yet be immune from the consequences of such a step. At the least the State Parliament needs double-dissolution machinery that could be invoked if that course were ever taken.

That is logical. As I say, even *The West Australian* believes such a step should be taken. The editorial continues—

These are all matters to which the Court government should be giving attention.

Of course the Government is not doing that. In about the centre of the same editorial, we see the following comment—

That does not mean applying the principle of one vote-one value, which would lead to absolute domination of the State by the metropolitan area.

The editor made the point that while he felt there was a need for improvement in the present electoral laws, he was not in favour completely of the principle of one-vote-one-value. The reason given for this view was that such a system would give complete domination to the metropolitan area. Obviously, however, the editor sees nothing wrong in the fact that at the present time our Parliament is dominated completely by people living in the country areas. If one is critical about giving domination to the majority of people, surely one should be critical of giving domination to a minority group! Of course, that is the very situation we have here at the present time; we are dominated by 33½ per cent of our population who reside in rural areas. Those residents are represented by 51 per

cent of the voting power in this Assembly; that will be 28 seats in the new Parliament. In the metropolitan area, 66½ per cent of our population is entitled to elect members to 27 seats, or 49 per cent of the seats in this House. So the Editor of *The West Australian* notes that there is gross malapportionment, and he even comes to the point of suggesting that the Premier should take heed of public opinion—the natives are getting restless—and that he should make a concession in regard to residents in the metropolitan area who have been treated so unjustly in the past. The editor does not agree with the one-vote-one-value system as majority rule could be the result!

The Premier, along with other members of his party, and in particular a member who represents the West Province in another place—

Mr Nanovich: Is he worrying out there?

Mr MOILER: Not a bit!

Mr Nanovich: I think he is.

Mr Thompson: Not half as much as he is going to worry from here on.

Mr McIver: Never been so safe!

Mr MOILER: I certainly hope he does worry, because then he may concentrate his efforts on my electorate, and that allows the people whom I represent, and who are represented so well, to gain some benefit if he can bring about some improvements. On behalf of my electors, I welcome his efforts on any occasion that they may bring benefit to the area.

To my knowledge the Premier and this particular member have implied that the electoral boundaries were decided by the Electoral Commissioners, and of course, that is a complete falsehood. The Premier felt the matter of the electoral boundaries was so important that it warranted a mention on the first page of the Governor's Speech to Parliament. The Governor stated—

Electoral Boundaries

Amendments to the Electoral Districts Act approved last year by State Parliament provided for four additional Metropolitan seats in the Legislative Assembly, and one additional Metropolitan Province in the Legislative Council.

The electoral Commissioners have submitted proposals for re-distribution of State Electoral Districts and Provinces.

The implication is that the decision was made by the commissioners. Why does not someone have the courage to say that the Government gerrymandered the boundaries in an attempt to ensure that it remains in office? In the local newspaper of the area which I represent, on one of the occasions when I and the member representing the West Province in another place—

Mr Nanovich: It must be worrying you!

Mr MOILER: —clashed, the gentleman concerned stated exactly the same thing. When trying to answer one of my criticisms about the proposed electoral boundaries, he stated that even the Labor Party said the Electoral Commissioners had done a good job. We did say that, and I repeat that the commissioners did an honest job. However, it was not the Electoral Commissioners who decided the boundary between the rural and metropolitan areas. To this date we have not been told who decided this shocking boundary. I challenge members such as the member for Darling Range and the Minister for Local Government—who deserted the people they came here to represent—to state a reason for supporting this boundary. They supported this proposal simply to save their seats. The Premier, along with other members of his party, has attempted to hide behind the Electoral Commissioners, blaming them for this decision. The Electoral Commissioners did an excellent job on the material they were given.

The Labor Party in this State has never controlled the government of the State, because the control rests in the Legislative Council. During the term of the Tonkin Government, some 23 Bills were rejected by the upper House; yet not one Bill has been rejected in that Chamber during the term of the present Government.

Mr O'Connor: It might be better legislation.

Mr MOILER: It might be because it is better legislation, but it might be because the Liberal Party has the ability to make members cower in the party room.

Mr O'Connor: You should talk.

Mr MOILER: When the amendment to the Liquor Act is again presented to the Parliament we will see that those members of the Liberal and Country Parties who had the temerity to act as if they were in a House of Review and as if they were able to hold individual opinions, will again be brought into line. We had a disgraceful exhibition in the other House last year when the House adjourned for a while so that Government members could be called together and told to toe the line. That is the reason that Bills presented by members opposite are passed in the upper House—because members are cowered in the party room.

Sir Charles Court: Funny man.

Mr MOILER: The boundary to which we on this side of the House are so strongly opposed is the boundary dividing the country area from the metropolitan area for the purpose of voting. One of the districts which falls within the country area is Kalamunda, which is so urbanised and so heavily developed that it has even applied to the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board to have sewerage installed in the district.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: The whole thing smells.

Mr MOILER: Yes, but not to the same extent as the Midland abattoir!

The bulk of the people in the Kalamunda area commute to Perth daily; and it is so heavily urbanised that it is naturally part of the metropolitan area. Yet this region has fallen outside of the metropolitan area because of the predominance of Liberal votes in the ballot boxes. However, areas in the same shire such as High Wycombe, Forrestfield, and Maida Vale have fallen within the metropolitan area because at times they show a predominance of Labor votes. The votes of people in those areas have been successfully diluted to less than half their previous value.

This action was supported by members of the Liberal Party, who claim to represent the people in this Parliament. Of course they do not represent them.

The same thing has occurred in the electorate of the Minister for Local Government; the boundary divides a very urbanised area.

Mr Rushton: Come and look at my boundary; it is split everywhere.

Mr MOILER: Yes; and undoubtedly we would find it is to the advantage of the Minister.

Mr Watt: Are you suggesting he had some influence over that?

Mr MOILER: I certainly would suggest that. The member for Albany must be naive if he is suggesting there is any other reason.

Mr Watt: I am talking about the metropolitan boundary, not the internal boundaries.

Mr MOILER: We are not worried about those.

Mr O'Neill: What are you worried about?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Why don't you listen?

Mr O'Connor: It is very hard to follow.

Mr O'Neill: I think you are worried about the fact that you haven't got a decent argument.

Mr MOILER: Paragraph 4 of the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn states that in local government elections many people who are entitled to vote in Australian and State elections have no right at all to vote, while others have the right to plural votes. I would like to devote a couple of minutes to this matter. In my opinion we should be taking action in respect of this issue. It is quite unfair that a person's entitlement to vote should depend on whether or not he owns a property. If one owns property within a local authority area, one is entitled to a vote in the election of that authority.

If we are to use as the sole basis for entitlement to vote in local government elections the fact that a person should own or occupy property, it is equally fair that if a person is not naturalised and is

not a British-born subject, but owns property, he should be entitled to vote. However, even under the present law such people are deprived of that right. I would say that situation would be reasonable if adult franchise were the case. A person would have an opportunity to be naturalised and could then vote; property would not come into it. Why does the Government prevent these people, many of whom contribute greatly to the community, from casting a vote in local government elections? That is completely unfair.

Mr O'Neill: Could you explain to me the card voting system you use?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: That represents people; that is the whole point you have missed.

Mr O'Neill: Does this happen in your Caucus? Does a person who gets only 51 per cent of the vote get only one vote compared with someone who got 100 per cent of the vote?

Mr MOILER: Card voting is used at our conferences as a democratic system. There are people at conference representing vast numbers of other people.

Mr O'Neill: They have multiple voting; a delegate can have more than one vote.

Mr MOILER: They have multiple voting because they represent multiple people.

Mr O'Neill: So it is all right in your system, but not in ours.

Mr MOILER: Members opposite have not got it in their system.

Mr O'Neill: Do you believe that a person who lives in a local authority area but is not a ratepayer, should vote in elections?

Mr MOILER: If we had a card voting system in respect of this Parliament—

Mr O'Neill: Explain how it works.

Mr MOILER: Obviously the metropolitan area would have a greater influence than it has at present.

Mr O'Neill: Do you do that in Caucus? Does a member who represents a Council province in Caucus get more votes than an Assembly member?

Mr MOILER: The Minister is not fair in debate; he interjects but will not listen to the answer.

Mr O'Neill: Tell us the answer.

Mr MOILER: Obviously if we were able to put into effect our principle of one-vote-one-value, every member of the Caucus would have an equal vote.

Mr O'Neill: You could put the principle to work in Caucus; that is your decision. You could give a Council member four times the voting value of an Assembly member.

Mr MOILER: How do members opposite vote in Caucus?

Mr O'Neill: We don't have a caucus.

Mr MOILER: Members opposite vote in the manner the Premier tells them to vote; that is obvious.

Mr O'Neil: We are not regimented like you are.

Mr MOILER: This digression was caused by the Minister asking about card voting. He now has his answer, but he is not prepared to accept it. The answer was honest, unlike this Government. I told the Minister how the card voting system works, but he is too dense to understand it.

Mr O'Neil: I am perfectly prepared to admit that I am too dense to understand your explanation of it!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MOILER: Even under the arrangement instigated by the conservatives, where one must own or occupy property to be able to vote, if we were in any way decent we would at least allow unnaturalised people who own or occupy property to exercise some influence in the area in which they live or own property.

Of course, that is not the answer. The answer is that there should be adult franchise, and it should be in accordance with the State and Federal rolls, in which any one over the age of 18 years is entitled to cast a vote. Although this is not in Labor Party policy, I also believe that a person owning property within a local government area also is entitled to a vote; however, it should not be the overweighted vote which we see being employed at present.

It would be quite reasonable for a person who owns property within an area to exercise some influence on what goes on in the local governing body of that area provided also there is adult franchise; everyone over the age of 18 years also is entitled to have some influence on what happens in a particular area.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn moved this amendment because we on this side believe this Government has treated the public of Western Australia in a shocking manner; it is deceiving the public. The Premier is trying to imply that this Government has not done the damage but that is the fault of the commissioners. That is quite unjust and is a cowardly attitude to adopt.

Mr Nanovich: Why do you not quit muck raking, and talk about something constructive?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: Are you not allowed to speak?

Mr MOILER: The member for Toodyay has just interjected again. As he has such strong views on this matter, I hope he will enter the debate later and explain why he intends to oppose our amendment and why he supported the boundary changes which the Premier introduced last year, separating the country from the metropolitan area. He might even be able to enlighten the House as to who drew the

boundary. I hope the Premier is about to give us an explanation on this point, and do the State of Western Australia the decency of divulging who drew this boundary.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: The Minister for Local Government drew the boundary.

MR A. R. TONKIN (Morley) [8.54 p.m.]: The electoral laws of the country mirror the public morality; that being the case, we have a very sorry system in Australia at present, and have had all this century. If the people do not take action, this situation will continue into the 21st century. This is a national scandal which the Australian Labor Party is determined to end. The Australian Labor Party will never accept this situation.

Mr Speaker, is it in order for members of the Legislative Assembly to leer across the Chamber in the manner they are now doing, or am I to be permitted to continue with my speech in a proper manner?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morley.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. A little more decorum is needed, I would think.

The SPEAKER: Order! Am I to understand that the member for Morley is reflecting on the Chair?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Of course I was not, Mr Speaker; the gentlemen concerned are behind you, and you are not in a position to see them.

The people have never asked for this system which has been imposed upon them; never once has there been a referendum, never once have the people decided that this would be a better system. It is a fact that the control of this Parliament has never gone out of the hands of the conservative forces. So, from time to time, as situations change, there have been changes to the electoral laws.

In the 1960s, because it was no longer possible to defend the fact that certain people did not have a vote, the law was changed; but it was changed in such a manner as to see to it that no advantage could accrue thereby to the Australian Labor Party.

Nevertheless, changes were made as a result of people in the community including, but not exclusively, members of the Australian Labor Party, demanding some form of democracy. I believe what has happened in this regard is a cynical exercise. We see Armadale cut into two, and the only reason all those people are now outside the so-called metropolitan area is that they usually vote Liberal in elections, and therefore have the right to have double the vote of a metropolitan elector. We have Darlington, which is about 16 miles from the metropolitan area, and whose inhabitants for the most part regularly commute to Perth, being classified as a country area.

We hear people from the other side of the House talking about the special disadvantages experienced by country people. I concede that they are very real disadvantages, and the disadvantages facing their representatives in this Parliament also are very real.

But instead of trying to solve these problems, we have the Liberal Party classifying Darlington, Mundaring, parts of Armadale, and Kalamunda as "country". This does not assist in any way in solving the problems experienced by people in genuine country electorates and brings into disrepute the whole attempt to contend with the special problems experienced by these people.

I am quite prepared to admit—I do not know about my colleagues—that members of the Australian Labor Party have not always been the most sympathetic to certain sectors in the country.

Mr O'Neill: Hear, hear!

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I am quite prepared to admit that. However, I would also say that members and supporters of the Government also have disregarded many of those problems and have cynically exploited them, as in this particular case.

It is claimed that people in Darlington, 16 miles from Perth, experience these special problems of isolation, and all the rest. Camel trains are irregular and the Flying Doctor does not always get there! This comment is regularly made by the Government in respect of country people, but how can it be made of the people of Darlington?

This exposes the sham of this Government's electoral policy and shows that the Government is not concerned with the problems of country residents, but instead has sought to draw the boundary on a map to achieve the maximum political advantage and to see to it that the government of this State does not pass out of the hands of those who draw the line on the map.

Quite clearly, as I have said before, the people have never decided this for themselves. We talk about electoral laws as though somehow they were sacred, that they are the law of the land, and must be obeyed. Why on earth should they be obeyed? They are corrupt and tainted; they have been devised by a corrupt Parliament, because that Parliament itself is not representative of the people.

Point of Order

Mr O'NEIL: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, the member for Morley has referred to "corrupt laws, devised by a corrupt Parliament". I regard that as being a reflection upon the Parliament. I regret that unfortunately, due to certain circumstances, you did not hear what was said. Might I suggest that the honourable member be advised as to the position? As

a member of Parliament, I object to the terms, "corrupt laws" and "corrupt Parliament".

The SPEAKER: The member for Morley has been requested to withdraw the words which, unfortunately, I did not hear because I was speaking to the Government Whip. I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I withdraw those words, Mr Speaker. Of course I do so because we do not have the numbers in this place.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member really knows better than to say that. I ask him to withdraw those words which on one other occasion were found to be unparliamentary. I ask him to withdraw those words without any qualification. Would he do that please?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Mr Speaker, I withdraw.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr A. R. TONKIN: The Government may have the numbers in this place but it has no moral right to impose upon the people laws which have no basis in equity or in justice. For a time it may have the numbers here and in the Council so that it can perpetrate any kind of electoral laws that it wishes upon this hapless State; and it knows that the people, who are decent and ordinary people and have a respect for the law because they have been told that these laws have been passed by good and virtuous men who are representative of the people, will obey these laws. Having controlled this House through the very system I am describing and having controlled the other House, it can perpetuate that system. We have a *Catch-22* situation. We have a situation in which laws cannot be changed until the laws are changed. That is absurdity; it is a disgrace. I know jibes have been thrown at me from time to time that I do not wear an RSL badge, I did not fly low and win the DFC or the VC and things of that nature. Members opposite will be amazed to know that the reason is that I was a schoolboy at the time of the second World War. I realise that is rather hard to believe.

Mr O'Neill: You still are.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: If that is the kind of interjection which the Minister can make—

Mr O'Neill: About the only one you can understand.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: —It indicates the paucity of his ideas. I thank him for condemning himself out of his own mouth. However, my father and my three older brothers did fight and they believed that they were fighting for democracy against nazism and fascism. I believe tens of thousands of Australian boys who did not

return would have been bitterly disappointed, as those who have returned must be disappointed, to think that they went to fight against fascism and nazism and yet democracy still will not be introduced into this State. We have seen the Vietnam situation used for cynical purposes and to win elections, as happened in 1966. I am proud to belong to the Australian Labor Party which in 1966 nailed its flag to the mast and said, "We will not strike our colours. We will insist on principle." We went down the drain; it was a landslide. I am proud to say that we will put principles before votes as we did on that occasion. Yet the very same political party which pretended that it was conscripting young boys to go and save democracy—boys who did not understand world politics or local politics but who were loyal to their country, as most of us are—will not introduce democracy to this State.

Mr Davies: They did not have a vote.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: They did not have a vote, but if they had had a vote it would have been degraded if they lived in the metropolitan area on the wrong side of that magical line. In any case, that vote would have been discounted.

Mr Clarke: Tell us what you think democracy is.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Under the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act we had a situation in which every two men used to represent every one man. As is my wont, I had a great deal of fun by carting that Act around with me on every possible occasion and reproducing it in pamphlets to show people that this really was the law of the land. I had quite a bit of fun explaining that the Liberals cannot count because they should have been counting one when they were counting two. I know that kind of system was removed because it was patently ridiculous and unjust. I mention this matter to indicate that the campaign to democratise this Parliament, of which I would be proud to be a member if it were democratically elected, is taking effect. It is having effect because in the last Electoral Districts Act Amendment Act the provision which was so blatantly wrong was removed from the principal Act. We are aware of course that the end has been reached by another means. Nevertheless that indicates the Liberal Party is aware of the force of our arguments and I believe the day will come when we will see a democratically elected Parliament.

At present 30 per cent of the people of this State can control the Legislative Council because they are represented by a majority of seats in that Council. In addition, 33 per cent of the people control the Legislative Assembly. So 30 per cent of the people and 33 per cent of the people respectively

are running the State. This is patently unjust. I suggest that the conservatives who sit opposite, and who have always sat opposite in another place of power, have stolen from the people an inalienable right to fair and just representation.

This Government attacks unions because it says that union elections are not fair and yet it is a Government with a sorry record of electoral injustice such as that. It is a remarkable situation. I believe that if this Government's track record on electoral affairs were explained to the people they would not be so sure that they want this Government to control elections in unions. After all, how are we to know that similar things will not be perpetrated upon the unions? The same kind of argument can be used about disadvantages in the country branches of the unions as about the State as a whole.

Why do we not say that the poor, people below a certain income, who are undoubtedly especially disadvantaged, people with less education, people who are less articulate and people who are less able to make their way in life should be given weighted votes? Why do we not decide to give extra votes to the less educated, the less articulate, and the poor? That has as much merit as the statement that country people are disadvantaged and should be specially assisted. I suggest to you, Mr Speaker, that no Government and no Parliament can be trusted to tamper with the electoral laws in this way and that, because once we agree with the principle of tampering with the electoral laws we have to give weighted votes, I believe I would not trust any politician to say that he would not tamper with them in some way to advantage himself. This is obviously what has happened, as can be seen by the way that the metropolitan boundary line has been drawn. The only safe way is to say, "one-vote-one-value", so that everyone in Western Australia has equal representation.

Injustices may arise, and it may be that certain people will be disadvantaged in some way, but we suggest that the disadvantage arising from that will be much less than the disadvantage in the present situation whereby the majority of people can vote how they like and it would not matter. In the metropolitan area it does not matter how 66 per cent of the people vote; they would still not control either House of the Parliament. Really we have a situation in which the minority is given special privileges.

Of course, our opponents have capitalised on this. They have gone to the country and said, "What the Labor Party wants to do is take seats away from the country." I would say that tactically the Liberal Party and the National Country Party have won that battle. We on this side have not dealt with it adequately, but I believe we can deal with it adequately.

I believe that if we go to the country people and the city people and say, "We are not trying to take seats away from you. We want to treat everyone equally by giving every person an equal vote of equal value", we will be successful. The same people who responded to the call to arms in 1914 and 1939 will respond to this call. Once we have said to them, "We believe in democracy, and if you are being preyed upon by a Government which does not like you because you vote in a certain way we will oppose it too", they will accept our point of view. We will not be a party to anyone having an advantage in votes because of where he lives or the way in which he votes.

I want to return to the argument about the country having disadvantages. If that was the whole argument there would be more credibility, but in any case we would not accept it. We would not accept anything which departs from the one-vote-one-value basis. What I am saying is that if the parties in Government had honestly attempted to draw a line around the metropolitan area which could be regarded rationally as a genuine metropolitan area, we might believe the argument that they are really concerned about the disadvantages to country people. However, the way in which they have drawn the line excludes Kalamunda, Darlington, and parts of Armadale. This shows that they are punishing people who dare to vote Labor.

The parties in Government are saying to such people, "You on this side of the line have turned in votes consistently in favour of the ALP. You will be punished for that, and your vote will be devalued." We cannot countenance that kind of immorality. The kind of thing I should be able to say in this Parliament I cannot say because of the Standing Orders. You, Mr Speaker, have ruled that I must withdraw comments which I believe to be true and to be borne out by fact.

History—this is a judge I revere far more than this Parliament—will judge that what I have said is correct. So, to some extent I am fettered in this debate, because of our quaint Standing Orders which say that we, must speak in certain terms which to me are hypocritical. I cannot express my contempt and disgust, with the electoral laws to the full extent, because of the fact that we have Standing Orders and the Opposition does not have the numbers in this House.

The recent amendments to the electoral laws have made the position worse as far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned. We will have four extra members in this House, but the metropolitan area has been enlarged, and the ratio between metropolitan and country is worse. We will go on opposing the tampering with our electoral laws.

I fear I am beginning to repeat myself, but I will allow myself the luxury of one more repetition. We believe that any departure from the one-vote-one-value principle will invite people in power—these are ordinary people not some unprejudiced judgelike person—somehow to rig the electoral laws so that those laws will advantage them. We reject such amendments to the electoral laws, and when we are in Government we will certainly press for a repeal of those laws. Whilst in Opposition we will do all in our power to oppose them.

Sometimes, unfortunately, demonstrations and the staying away from the opening of Parliament get lost, and they look like some kind of childish prank.

Mr Coyne: As it was.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: That is the honourable member's opinion. If one were to write a doctoral dissertation upon the electoral laws of this State I fear the news medium would not print it. What we have to do is to make the people become aware of what is happening. The people are becoming aware. I have found a remarkable increase of interest in my own electorate and beyond, during the past couple of years. So, I believe we are making inroads.

I think that the form of the last amendment to the electoral laws, although far from satisfactory, paid some kind of lip service to the fact that the ALP campaign, and the campaign of people outside the ALP were beginning to have some effect.

I hope the people of Western Australia will take note of this: Mark my words, we in the Opposition will not rest until we have introduced democracy into Western Australia. We will not give up, we will keep on going, because without democracy we would rather not be in this place. Without fighting this kind of fight, politics would not be worth the candle; and without attempting to correct these laws we do not deserve to be in this place.

I sometimes wonder whether members of Parliament realise the tremendous honour that has been placed on them to come here and represent thousands of people. That is our only importance, the fact that we represent the people, and not haystacks, acres of wheat, numbers of sheep or cows. That is the important aspect. If we do not try to give proper representation to the people we are betraying our trust.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [9.17 p.m.]: On listening to the speakers who have addressed themselves to the amendment it surely must become clear to the Government that there is wide discontent amongst many people regarding the gerrymandering of electoral boundaries. I realise that able speakers before me have pursued this question very thoroughly, and therefore I

have no desire to weary the House with a repetition of what has been said in this debate.

Mr Coyne: You are the greatest.

Mr SKIDMORE: I thank the honourable member for that compliment! I do not mind being called the greatest. The honourable member can place that accolade on me, and I accept it. I am the greatest. The humility in me is astonishing!

Mr Watt: We notice that.

Mr SKIDMORE: I suppose when one is the greatest, one finds that wisdom is thrust upon oneself, and not bestowed on oneself.

The question which we have raised is surely a matter which must be pertinent to all the people of Western Australia. As a party we have consistently advocated and we will continue to advocate the principle of one-vote-one-value. Many arguments have been put up in an attempt to destroy the validity of that principle by drawing red herrings across the trail as to what the Labor Party means by one-vote-one-value.

I assure the House it certainly does not revolve around the question before us at the moment; that is, the complete gerrymandering of the electorates of Western Australia, when it comes to the question of voting in the Legislative Council.

Year after year speakers have proved that under the present system we will never be able to control the Legislative Council in this State. Unless we can get some sanity and honesty in a democratic electoral system, the parties which are in Government will hear us on this side of the House speaking on this question for the next 20 years. Because of that electoral dishonesty we are placed at a disadvantage that is not faced to the same extent by any other party, or in any other country.

I refer to chapter 8 of the book entitled *The Sovereign People* which deals with indirect democracy. I suggest that it be read by all members opposite, so that they may reflect on what we have said and agree that what we have said is correct, so far as the electoral boundaries are concerned.

I will not quote from it, but rather suggest that those on the Government benches enlighten themselves by going to the library and reading chapter 8 of that book. It is an eye-opener and will make them realise that what we say is not a whisper or voice of this party only, but of many people in Western Australia. When we find that even *The West Australian* is attacking the Government on its attitude to electoral boundaries, we begin to think that maybe we are getting the message through to people; that maybe in Western Australia the continual drip of the water may wear rock away—

Mr Watt: Drip, drip, drip is right!

Mr SKIDMORE: —and will eventually force the Government of the day to do away with this gerrymandered electoral voting system.

Mr Sodeman: There are a few drips on that side for sure.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have been praised as being the greatest and now I am a drip. Members can cover the whole spectrum; I could not care less. Personal attack on me is like water on a duck's back; it will run off just as fast and still be perfectly clean.

I find myself unable to subscribe to the statement that there is any justice in the present situation. What we as a party are saying to the Government of Western Australia—and we have been saying it not only to this Government, but to previous Governments also for so many years that it has almost become a creed with us; a pattern of continuing activity—is that it should give to every elector in Western Australia a right and value of one vote; not give a country elector 15 options with his one vote.

We have only to study the present situation to realise that there is no shadow of doubt about its stupidity, and I will give some percentages in a moment to confirm what I am saying.

There are 66½ per cent of the electors residing in the metropolitan area and they in turn elect to the Legislative Assembly 49 per cent of the members and to the Legislative Council 37½ per cent of the members. The picture is completely different in the rural area. The figures I am quoting are based upon the redistributed boundaries recently determined by the commission appointed for this purpose and which resulted in the creation of four new seats.

Whereas in the metropolitan area 66½ per cent of the electors reside, only 33½ per cent reside in the rural area.

In the Assembly those electors elected 51 per cent of the members, but in the Council they elected 62½ per cent of the members.

When we study this situation we realise there is no doubt about the inequality of the votes of the people. The value of the vote of the country elector almost doubles, within a few per cent. Yet some people try to tell me it is not a gerrymandered vote.

People might suggest that we should not go out into the rural areas to fight the battle. It might be suggested that as a party we should not go out into the rural areas and win a majority in the Council. Members opposite know what the result would be as well as I do. The people out there are certainly not sympathetic to us and because of the sparsity of the population who would vote for us we could not

hope to win. This is because decentralisation has been a myth with many Governments. Of course, when it is put into operation and industry moves into country provinces, we find the situation is different. It will be only by this means—a population increase as a result of decentralisation—that a growth of understanding will occur and electoral support will increase for the ALP. It will be only because workers will be living in those areas where industry has been established. Therefore in time, if we can only hang on long enough, the inequalities will disappear. However, we will probably have to wait another 100 years or more before there is any change in the representation in that august body referred to as another place. When the situation is studied closely, how can anyone wonder whether those on the other side of the House are fair and reasonable in their attitude?

No-one, and least of all I, would like to hear members of the Government over the years complaining about an issue as bitterly as members on this side complained about this one. There is no question about the fact that the present situation is unjust. Members opposite can quote statistics, pull rabbits out of hats, and do all sorts of things about percentages. Each and every one of them leads to the conclusion that the electoral boundaries are gerrymandered and that this State has nothing like a democratic vote in the Legislative Council.

The situation is rather strange. Following the recent redistribution, in Mundaring there will be 7 483 electors and 8 289 in Kalamunda, making a total of 15 000-odd electors. They are classified as being in an agricultural, mining, and pastoral area, the statutory quota for which is 7 950.

On the other hand, in the electorate of Swan which is adjacent to those two electorates and which has a tremendous length of its boundary contiguous to the Kalamunda boundary there are 15 829 electors. Is it not passing strange that an area which, under many other Statutes of this Parliament, is classified as being in the metropolitan area, is, for the purpose of electoral boundaries classified as being in the country? I am referring to Mundaring and Kalamunda.

Mr Watt: What about Boigart, Toodyay, and so on? They are not in the metropolitan area.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am referring to the outer fringes of the metropolitan area. Those places mentioned by the honourable member are not in the metropolitan area and no-one said they were; certainly I did not.

Mr Thompson: You have to have a cut-off point.

Mr Bryce: You do not need one; that is the point we are making.

Mr Thompson: That is one point on which we disagree and will forever.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swan.

Mr SKIDMORE: Sure there should be a cutoff point. Under the present system no-one would be game or naive enough—and I am not—to suggest that we could do away with a cutoff point. However, is it such an impossible task to do away with the metropolitan area altogether, thus doing away with boundaries which cause such dissension in Western Australia? I do not believe it is a physical impossibility or impractical. All we need do is take the totality of the State, work out the number of electors in it, and divide it into appropriate seats, giving all the electors the right of equal representation. It would not be very difficult at all, then we would have a true reflection of one-vote-one-value.

Mr Watt: Your party is insincere. When you held seats in the north-west and other country areas it was good business.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know how many times I must tell people, but I want to make it abundantly clear that I am not concerned about pointing the finger at you, him, her, it, or them. I am interested only in a democratic electoral system which I maintain does not exist. I do not point the finger at anyone. If a Labor Minister were in office I would challenge him as much as I would a Liberal Minister. Let us get that clear in the mind of the member for Albany. I do not play politics when it comes to the right of electors to vote.

Sir Charles Court: Not much.

Mr Bryce: Do you remember your party opposed the introduction of a widow's pension?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SKIDMORE: Under my proposal it is obvious that a great deal of difficulty would be faced by some members in properly looking after their electorates. That is a problem recognised by the ALP and in regard to which certain proposals have been made to overcome the sparsity of population in country areas. For instance, the member for Murchison-Eyre obviously would have a problem associated with his electorate.

Mr Coyne: No problem.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am sympathetic enough to say that he would have a problem and that I would be a little sympathetic to him. The ALP proposes that relief should be given to country members under those circumstances. They should have electorate allowances commensurate with the difficulties and disabilities involved in representing their electorates.

Perhaps members might think that is rather unusual but on examination it will be found that that is exactly what the

Salaries Tribunal determined recently. It increased the degree of electoral allowances from three grades up to five grades, if my memory serves me correctly. The tribunal recognised the difficulties of some members in being able to look after their electorates properly. We propose that system should be extended in a much greater way so that equality of voting can be given to people in country areas. Many members require additional staff and I do not doubt that other matters have been raised. I am quite sure that speakers who follow me will be prepared to mention them.

On the 29th March last, *The West Australian* headed its editorial, "Electorates and equity". We agree exactly with that policy. We say there is a case for reasonable behaviour by politicians; one which should not be based on politicking for votes. The behaviour of a politician should be based on the democratic process which we all cherish, but which we give lip service to only. The editorial stated that the present system of weighted votes might have been appropriate many years ago. It certainly was when the only people who could get into the other Chamber were landowners and people who were very wealthy. They had the right by birth; it was not the right of a working man, but the right of the gentry to become part of that august body and be able to laud it over everybody else who did not have the same birthright.

We have come a long way since then to the stage where all people—rich or poor—are equal. Surely they should be equal also when it comes to their right to vote. They should all have equal representation in order to elect one member to look after them.

The new boundaries of the Kalamunda and Mundaring electorates are staggering in the extreme. We will never find out who drew them up unless a Government employee or a Minister in the present Government decides to write his memoirs when he retires in order to make a quick buck. At that time perhaps we will find out who was responsible for the boundary redistribution. It could not be said, in fairness, that the proposed boundaries are fair and equitable with regard to the metropolitan area. The electorate of Kalamunda will have 8 000 people represented by one member, whereas the member for Swan will represent 15 000 people—near enough to twice the number of electors.

Can you tell me, Mr Deputy Speaker, that as the member for Kalamunda you will have more difficulty doing your job than I would have? However, you will receive an electorate allowance which members in close proximity to you will not be able to get. I am not objecting to that allowance but it does show that the system is basically wrong. Proportionate allowances are denied the member for

Murchison-Eyre. The Government supports this system and claims there is nothing wrong with it. I cannot see that there is nothing wrong when one member in the Armadale area will get a larger allowance than another member because it is a country electorate on one side of the railway line whereas it is a metropolitan electorate on the other side of the railway line.

I put forward the proposal that Western Australia should be divided into a number of electorates covered by a like number of Council provinces with a representation of one man for each. Each member should have an equal number of voters and an allowance to cover disabilities, which could be adjusted at any time. We would then be getting very close to a democratic system of electoral representation.

I will continue to take every opportunity available to me in this House in an endeavour to achieve the objectives which this party espouses. It is a basic right of the people of Western Australia.

I am not concerned only with the people who vote for us, but also the people who do not because they too are voting under a system which is false and wrong. It is far from democratic.

It is of no use members opposite saying the member for Swan is looking after his Labor voters only. I am concerned with all people because they are disadvantaged in the areas about which I speak as a result of malapportionment. Whether or not members look at the position in that light is a matter of politics and that is where the whole system falls down.

At the risk of repeating myself I would mention the points raised by other speakers and close my remarks to the amendment by commenting on it. I believe it is a good amendment. It should be supported because it merely illustrates the concern—the responsible concern—which this party has for the present electoral gerrymander. I know several members who are concerned. The amendment is concise and well documented, and sets out the problems associated with the present system.

I hope when the final vote is taken the consciences of members opposite may be stirred. However, my hope in that regard is fast disappearing because over some decades we have had this same problem and have failed to convince members opposite of the merits of our proposal which will give us a democratic system of elections, which we certainly do not have under the present gerrymander.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 p.m.): While we have had many debates in this Parliament on the matter of vote values perhaps the genesis of this most recent foray into the realm of fair apportionment

of voting values occurred about the beginning of the month when some of my colleagues determined to combine and send a despatch to the newspapers setting out what they thought to be the faults of the present system.

That despatch brought an immediate reaction and although the letter—or the release—was aimed at the Premier and suggested that the Premier would no doubt launch a tirade against those responsible accusing them of irresponsibility and saying that they could not support their argument with facts, the reply did not come from the Premier. No doubt he deputised one of his Ministers to do the job on that occasion and, of course, the tirade of abuse came from the Minister for Justice.

The Minister had quite a lot to say in his Press release and all of it was quite untrue and inaccurate. I then thought it was time I got into the picture, but that was not the opinion of West Australian Newspapers Ltd. because, despite the fact that I issued a statement on the 5th March, taking the Minister to task for his half-truths, nothing appeared in the papers.

On the 9th March, I put my statement in the form of a letter to the editor but nothing appeared in that section either. So, it can be seen that it is a little difficult to put over a case when it is cut off after half-truths are indulged in by a Government Minister.

I would like to examine some of the statements because I think they should be recorded. Mr McNeill, on behalf of the Government, claimed that the Bunbury by-election in 1973 was fought on the issue of rigged electoral boundaries, and that the ALP lost badly. That was his statement. I do not know about that. Obviously, he had not looked at the statistics.

For the benefit of the Minister for Justice, in the 1971 election the margin for the Liberal Party was 165. In the by-election in 1973—

Sir Charles Court: It was a landslide.

Mr JAMIESON: —with something like 400 more on the roll, the majority was 142. I do not think that was any indication of a great swing to the Liberal Party because the Labor Party had campaigned on the matter of a gerrymander system, and I do not recall that that was a great feature of the election. Some mention was made of it but it was not a great feature. The facts he seemed to see just did not exist.

The Minister for Justice also said that in any province or electorate Labor has an equal chance of winning if it presents policies which appeal to the majority. No matter what policies we put up, we would have as much chance of winning the seat of Nedlands as the Liberal Party would have of winning the seat of Cockburn. That kind of statement is nonsense. There are areas where, because they are

politically polarised, one could not persuade the electors to change no matter what policy was put forward.

The Minister for Justice went on to claim credit for many things which have been done in the past by way of franchise reform. He said his party introduced adult franchise for the Legislative Council in 1985. That statement needs to be examined. I recall rather vividly that Dr Hislop moved a private member's motion in the Legislative Council to the effect that in the opinion of the House it was time adult franchise was introduced for the Legislative Council. Much to the surprise of many members of the Parliament at the time, the motion was agreed to, and it would have left the Government of the day in a very dangerous position if it was not prepared to go along with it when it had always claimed the Legislative Council was a House of Review which should be in charge of its own destiny in relation to franchise matters.

A Bill was introduced into the Parliament and it went through both Chambers with such speed that the Premier, who was in charge of the Bill in this House, caused it to be adjourned so that the Government could have another look at it to see whether there was anything wrong with it.

I stated in both my release and my letter that despite the fact that we knew we would lose seats through it we thought the principle embodied in the Bill was more important than the fortunes of our party, and I attempted to ask through the Press whether Mr McNeill could show where the Liberal Party had ever surrendered seats to achieve electoral reform. I do not think he could. So we must look at other aspects of his abusive type of attitude.

The Press release—written by the Minister for Justice, the Premier, or the Premier's office—made reference to hunting in packs. This was mentioned previously by the Premier in relation to a letter to the Press signed jointly by some Federal members of Parliament. We know what packs are like; in recent times we have seen in the Press references to packs of rapists and so on. That comparison is very unfortunate and should not have been made. Groups of people in legislative office are entitled to make legitimate complaints, but surely the criticism which the Premier and others have levelled at times at joint statements is quite unjustified and unnecessary.

One aspect of the Press release of the Minister for Justice which was quite remarkable was that he saw the upper House system as protecting the people from would-be socialist dictators. I pointed out—and this, again, was not printed—that it would take a long time to convince the Premier of Queensland (Mr Bjelke-Petersen) and the right wing Premier of

New Zealand (Mr Muldoon), where there is only one House of Parliament, that their Parliaments were in danger of being taken over by socialist dictators. This is one of those published statements which cannot be contradicted because the Liberal Party is accorded the protection of the Press.

The imbalances have been in existence for a long time. We have heard various members say, "When you had all the seats in the north you did not do this and you did not do that." Then the Minister for Justice comes out with the classic statement that the Labor Party has never attempted to correct electoral imbalances. If he cared to look back, he would find that in each of the six years when the Hawke Government was in office it put forward electoral reforms which were tossed out, as were all other electoral reforms in the distant past. It is incorrect to suggest that no attempt was made at electoral reform during the term of the Tonkin Government. The subject was badly researched—if it was researched at all—by whoever compiled the statement. The member for Kalgoorlie, when he was Attorney-General, brought in a Bill to establish a unicameral Parliament; and we know how much change that got from the Liberal Party members of this Parliament. It did not get to first base because they were not prepared to listen.

I do not know why they are afraid of the one-vote-one-value system. The Liberal Party in South Australia was inclined to be afraid of this system until the advent of Steele Hall who saw it as a vital principle that each person, whether in the country, a suburb, a port, or a fishing village on the coast, should have an equal vote. He fought a country election on it and won handsomely; and when he vacated his seat to go into the Senate, the next Liberal Movement candidate for a country electorate who adopted a similar attitude in relation to a one-vote-one-value system and put his case to the country people was elected. Why the fear?

In other countries of the world, whether or not they have totalitarian Governments, the Parliament, so far as the elected members are concerned, is undoubtedly dominated by the cities. But are the rural communities of those countries allowed to go to rack and ruin? As far as I know, in Great Britain rural communities are accorded very good accommodation. They are looked after rather well and are subsidised in various ways to ensure there is a fair and equitable return for the produce of the farms—not because they have a predominance of members in the Legislature but because the people of the nation realise the necessity for a viable rural community.

It is the same now in totalitarian countries where it is realised that the food is produced by these people. Despite the dominance of the populous in the cities,

the affairs and welfare of the country people—the producers of the food and primary products—are looked after very well by the representatives elected from the cities. This helps to prove a point which is hard to get across in our community; that is, country people do not seem to appreciate the worth of their city cousins as customers and people with whom they must associate in trade and commerce so that they can survive. City people realise they have a responsibility to see that those producing the food for the communities of the large cities are entitled to reasonable living conditions. We seem to be protecting a method which history has proved we do not need. In other countries we see that no ill effects have come to these people with equal representation.

A one-vote-one-value system has existed in Australia since the time of Federation, although certain electorates have been weighted to favour country people to some degree. Has our rural community done badly out of the various Federal Governments which have been dominated overwhelmingly by representatives of the urban and city dwellers of the Commonwealth? I do not think so. I do not see how a case can be put up against the one-vote-one-value system. Any party which goes beyond that—the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Country Party, or any other party—is only looking after its own interests and attempting to acquire some additional electoral advantages by a manipulation of the system.

The country electorates are large and difficult to look after, but surely they can be handled effectively in this day and age. There may be a need for better assistance for the representatives of these areas. However, the problems are not insurmountable. It is not desirable in these times to give certain areas a loaded vote as against other areas simply because they contain mostly spinifex and not much else.

My colleague, the member for Mt. Hawthorn, is quite justified in moving his amendment. There is a distinct opposition on this side of the House to any system which is not based on the one-vote-one-value principle—the only way to democracy. It would be quite unthinkable to give one member of a football club more voting power than another. In many different clubs we find that one membership gives the right to one vote, and it should not be any other way.

It has been suggested to us that the dramatic change foisted on us last year by the Government in regard to electoral boundaries would alter the ratios significantly. Members know this will not happen. Before the passage of the amending electoral legislation last year, the ratio between the average metropolitan seat and the average rural seat was 2.04. However, with some 25 000-odd new voters in

the metropolitan area, the ratio will now be 2.06—a slight worsening of the situation. However, not all the news is bad when we look at the situation in the Legislative Council. The malapportionment in that Chamber is so bad that it is really laughable. With the new electoral boundaries, the ratio between the average metropolitan province and the average rural province will decrease from 3.35 to 3.17! So that is a very small advantage that the metropolitan electors will gain, although it illustrates that there is room for much more improvement. Until we have some improvement, there will be charges and countercharges of gerrymandering the boundaries, and so there should be.

The public is now reasonably well educated, and they realise there is no justification for the view that a bank manager presently living in Mt. Magnet has a Legislative Council vote value something like 14 times as great as he would have if he were transferred the next year to Karriyup. Such a system does not bear scrutiny in this day and age. The only way to overcome the problem is for the Government of the day to grasp the nettle and to reframe the legislation in regard to electoral districts. It should adopt the principle of one-vote-one-value without different quotas for specific districts. Further confusion arises because of the four seats set out as statutory areas, one of which is so much greater than the other three put together. This is a typical example of what can happen when a Government of the day attempts to use some basis of government other than that of one-vote-one-value to formulate an electoral system.

I believe I have said enough to convince members that I support completely the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn. I feel the Governor should be informed accordingly because he may have been advised incorrectly; he may feel these amendments were for the better, when in fact they are perpetuating the old system, and in many cases the malapportionment will be greater.

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [9.59 p.m.]: I rise to support the amendment because an amendment in this form to this particular motion constitutes a censure on the Government, and if ever a Government in Western Australia deserves to be censured for its attack upon democracy, this Government does. In the two years it has been in office—

Mr Bertram: Too long!

Mr BRYCE:—its three most notorious and well known achievements have been firstly, the fuel and energy legislation—

Sir Charles Court: Welcomed by the public!

Mr BRYCE: Welcomed by the public, the Premier says, knowing full well that it is a blueprint designed for the ultimate destruction of democratic government. Right from its beginning to the end the Premier is aware that the implications of the fuel and energy legislation are designed to destroy civil liberties, and if he decides in his wisdom—

Sir Charles Court: Designed to protect them.

Mr BRYCE:—at any given time that the situation warrants it, this particular piece of legislation can be used to brush to one side all of our cherished traditions and institutions.

Sir Charles Court: Completely wrong!

Mr BRYCE: The second piece of legislation which is equally notorious as a deliberate and contrived attack on democracy, was the amendment to the Electoral Districts Act, which has been discussed by my colleagues on this side of the House earlier this evening. This was a deliberately designed effort on the part of the Government to try to preserve itself in power.

The third part of its most shameful monument in terms of its achievements was, of course, the support and the positive encouragement which this Government gave to Fraser's thugs in Canberra, when its members encouraged Fraser's thugs to bring democratic government on a national basis in this country to the brink.

Mr Nanovich: The people decided that issue, didn't they?

Mr BRYCE: It is very easy for those of us who sit on this side of the House to gain a fair and reasonable conception of where the State Government is heading. I would repeat that those three actions would be the three most important and notorious actions taken by this Government since it has been in office. All three were designed to attack the very fibre of our democratic system of government; there is no question about that.

The most astonishing thing is that now that the Premier and his lapdogs have got rid of the Whitlam Government as an excuse for their incompetence and failings, they have decided there will be another attack on the democratic institutions of this country; and this time the attacks will come in the form of an attack on the trade unions and the system of electing officials in the trade union movement.

Mr Young: It is talking of having secret ballots; they will not be compulsory. You are a ripper!

Mr BRYCE: I would point out to the member for Scarborough that his very own Minister was not able to stand in this Parliament this afternoon and name a single union in Western Australia that does not accept and practise the principle of the secret ballot in the election of its

leaders. The point is that the Minister evaded the question, and the member is aware that he did so. He evaded it when he was asked to be specific.

Mr Skidmore: Is the member for Scarborough suggesting they are a mob of "skulduggerers"?

Mr Young: I am simply saying elections should be controlled by an independent authority and held in private.

Mr Skidmore: For what purpose?

Mr Young: For justice to be done.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ascot.

Mr BRYCE: The most incredible piece of manoeuvring that we might ever expect to see was that after the Government had put through this Parliament legislation such as the fuel and energy Bill, designed to threaten the fibre of our democratic system—

The SPEAKER: Is the member relating this to the amendment?

Mr BRYCE: Yes, Mr Speaker, quite clearly and positively. After the Government had put through the fuel and energy Bill and the Bill to amend the Electoral Districts Act, and after the support it gave to the Fraser Liberals in the national Parliament to threaten the democratic functioning of the national Parliament—after consciously having taken such steps—the Government has now decided to focus its attention on democracy in the trade unions. This is most incredible.

I ask the question I believe we are all entitled to ask: Is the Government going to be consistent with its values in respect of electoral laws? When it takes over the control and the conduct of secret ballots in trade unions, is the Government going to argue in the same way it argues in respect of this Parliament and say that a trade unionist in Mt. Magnet is entitled to a vote which has 14 times more value than the vote of a trade unionist in the city? This is par for the course so far as the State Parliament is concerned.

We are waiting with some anxiety and—as my good friend, the member for Avon has prompted me—with bated breath to see whether the Government will be consistent and apply these principles to its recently discovered interest—for election purposes only—in democracy in the trade unions.

With reference to the question of mal-apportionment, because he is such a fondly regarded member of the non-Labor parties in Australia, particularly with the more conservative members opposite, I would like to take the opportunity to draw attention to a very brief portion of the Senate *Hansard* and quote Senator Steele Hall in a direct illustration of the point I am making in support of this amendment. Senator Steele Hall must be regarded as the black sheep of the conservative family

in Australian politics, because to date he is the only courageous non-Labor politician who has been prepared to accept the challenge and face up to the reality and the honesty of this question of electoral mal-apportionment and the implication it has in electoral laws in the national and State Parliaments. I quote from page 1740 of the Senate *Hansard* of the 22nd May, 1975, on the subject of electoral redistributions.

The SPEAKER: Is it brief?

Mr BRYCE: It is three paragraphs, Sir. These are words of wisdom which I am sure will be savoured by members opposite. I suggest they ought to pay very close attention to them. I could quite easily paraphrase what Senator Steele Hall was getting at, but I have no doubt the senator's own words would have more effect on members opposite. He said—

I have had some very recent and real experience in relation to supposedly conservative areas of the countryside and their views on electoral matters. The seat which I resigned in South Australia to come into the Senate was the seat of Goyder which has always been considered to be one of the most stable, solid and conservative of country areas in South Australia. It is a lesson to all of those who want to know what the community thinks about electoral reform to study the by-election which was held last year in that seat, and to study the policies which the parties put openly and vigorously to that community.

Mr O'Neill: Your deputy leader has already told us all that.

Mr BRYCE: If my good friend the Minister will be a little more patient—which he is not inclined to be—

Mr O'Neill: Don't you think your deputy leader can do it adequately? He has told us all this.

Mr BRYCE: I am entitled to re-emphasise any point that may be made at any stage in the debate by any member.

Mr O'Neill: This is a vote of no confidence in your own deputy leader.

Mr BRYCE: Might I suggest to the Minister who sat stony faced and silent during questions on the boundary-rigging episode in this Parliament that he should be the last one to poke a finger in this Chamber at anyone else on the question of competence.

Mr O'Neill: I did more than that; I amended the boundary in two instances at your request.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister could not stand in his place and answer any of the questions put to him at the time.

Mr O'Neill: I didn't hear any sensible questions: However, at least two amendments were made at the request of the Opposition.

Mr BRYCE: I will continue. Senator Steele Hall went on to say—

The electoral community of Goyder, which consists of slightly fewer than 10 000 electors, was subject to the canvassing of 30 members of Parliament from the Liberal Country League as it then was, from 3 members of Parliament from the Liberal Movement and from a considerable number of interstate visitors from the then Australian Country Party, who were very pleasant and personable people to meet in the field. Whilst it was a vigorous campaign it was not unpleasant in that way.

A big concession. He continued—

The policies were put extremely vigorously and at the large meetings which were held in that district our candidate had to face a question which was quite obviously deliberately put by his opponent. The question was: Where do you stand on electoral reform? His answer was quite clear: I stand as a candidate for the Liberal Movement and my party stands on the platform of one vote one value.

This was highlighted by our opponents of the then Liberal Country League which represents the view of Senator Withers that there should not be electoral equality between the country and the city and that some additional weighting and value ought to be given to country votes. The results speak for themselves. I reiterate that it was one of the most intensive campaigns that South Australia has seen and the party standing for one vote one value received 46 per cent of the votes in the first count and the then Liberal Country League received 29 per cent of the vote.

Mind you, this was in the most conservative, backward part of South Australia. He continues—

That is an extremely valuable lesson and I wish that my side of politics would understand that a vast majority of its own backers and voters approve overwhelmingly the principle of electoral equality.

Steele Hall says it better than I could, and I was quite happy to quote him in that situation and context, because the lesson he is attempting to impart to his colleagues on the non-Labor side of politics is that there is no need to run away from the principle of one-vote-one-value. There is no guarantee that one-vote-one-value will ensure the election of Labor Governments, year after year.

If that is the principal fear of members of the Liberal Party—and I understand from frequent interjections from members opposite that it is—they should do their homework. I repeat that in the only electoral environment in Australia where one-vote-one-value has very nearly been

achieved—in the House of Representatives—the Australian Labor Party has formed the Government for only 20 years out of the last 70 years.

Mr Hartrey: The proportion is less than that; it is the last 75 years.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Boulder-Dundas reminds me that it is 75 years.

Mr Carr: He is rarely wrong.

Mr BRYCE: The honourable member has reason to remember it was that long ago! I understand that 1946 was the last Senate election based on the old system of voting, but even inside our own fair State, since the introduction of proportional representation for Senate elections, every Senate election since that time has produced three non-Labor senators and two Labor senators. Although there have been some close shaves, on not one occasion has the Australian Labor Party in Western Australia managed to gain an absolute majority under this system of voting.

I reiterate to members opposite who may be running scared of the principle of one-vote-one-value that it will not ensure dominance of the political scene or of the Treasury bench by Labor Governments.

On numerous other occasions in this Parliament I have considered the history of this subject, and I do not intend to cover that ground again this evening. On that score, I will satisfy myself by reminding members that this whole system of malapportionment is based on a nineteenth century British concept, and has one major cankered concept running right through it like a rotten thread; namely, that people cannot be trusted, but property can.

This Parliament is based on the understanding that votes shall be given to property and vested interests in preference to people. We on this side reject the suggestion that people cannot be trusted, and that property can. We are more inclined to suggest the roles should be reversed.

The twentieth century, of course, has revealed that in various parts of the western world, the light has been turned on—to borrow the phrase of our friends opposite. In the United States of America and in parts of Europe, people have come to realise ever so slowly that electoral malapportionment cannot be justified, certainly not in the age of advanced technology of the 1970s and 1980s. It is unconscionable that members opposite can sit there and argue that in another place one member who represents 5 600 constituents shall sit next to or immediately opposite another member who represents 80 000 constituents.

On this issue in recent times the Premier, together with his deputy, have refused the opportunity afforded them in this Chamber; the Premier most certainly has refused public opportunity through the form

of the columns of the newspaper to justify the actions his Government took last year in amending the Electoral Districts Act to quite deliberately rig the electoral boundaries in this State to a point where in terms of malapportionment they are now the worst in Australia, and certainly among the worst in the world. That is another feather they can stick in their caps and feel very proud of. So, in the Parliament as well as in the public forum, the Premier has refused to answer the challenges.

In regard to the Western Australian scene, in a nutshell there are at least five specific aspects of the legislation so recently pushed through the Parliament which have created a situation of which very few people in this Parliament could feel proud. In fact, as I have suggested before, the vast majority of members opposite who are not as ultra-conservative as their leader should feel thoroughly embarrassed.

The first aspect of the legislation is that, as I have said, Western Australia now has the worst degree of electoral malapportionment in Australia and, to a very large extent, one of the worst in the western world. The second aspect relates to this devious black line for which absolutely no-one accepts responsibility. We questioned the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister who introduced the Bill or who subsequently handled the Bill and others about this line; we kept asking who was the electoral guru who was responsible for drawing the devious black line of demarcation on the map of Western Australia which separated the country area from the metropolitan area.

Members opposite were so ashamed that their answers were completely befuddling. No-one would accept responsibility for it. They just sat there, stony-faced, and had to accept our criticism.

My colleagues on this side already have indicated that the reason for the Bill was to save the Minister for Local Government from political oblivion. His seat of Dale was in grave danger of being handed over to a Labor candidate because there was an ever-increasing number of pro-Labor people in his electorate. The electorate of Toodyay was in exactly the same position.

So, in the sense that the Fraser thugs in Canberra used the methods they used to bring our national democratic system almost to the brink, we have seen the Court Government in Western Australia prepared to use the same style of political thuggery in putting through this legislation, which is designed to preserve this Government in office.

The fourth aspect to which I refer is the opportunism of this Government, which is revealed in the starkest possible terms in the electoral districts of the north-west. For instance, the seat of Gas-

coyne has 3 588 electors on the roll; the seat of Kimberley has 4 101 electors, while Murchison-Eyre has only 2 101. Yet inside that same restricted area of the State, the electorate of Pilbara contains more electors than those three seats put together. It has 11 430 electors. Mr Speaker, I mean by the phrase "this extreme form of political opportunism" that had the Government been the slightest bit sincere when it talked about the problems which confront people who live in country districts and members who represent country districts something would have been done with the boundaries in those seats north of the 26th parallel. It is sheer political opportunism because at this particular time the Government holds the seat of Pilbara. So the arguments about democracy, a fair go, and consideration for people who live in and members who represent country areas are a great deal of hogwash.

Mr Laurance: Your plea of one-vote-one-value will cost you the only seat you have left up there.

Mr BRYCE: How does the member for Gascoyne ever expect to explain to the people of the Pilbara that the 11 430 electors who live in the Pilbara are equal to less than approximately one-third of the people who live in his electorate? They are about one-third as important. What sort of birthday will we have when we doorknock the Pilbara to point out to the people of the Pilbara the sort of manifestly evil electoral laws which his Government is introducing and which he supports?

Mr Laurance: It is not as bad as telling the people in the Lower North province that your policy of one-vote-one-value will do away with that seat.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Gascoyne has only just re-entered the Chamber. He did not have the opportunity to hear me point out to his colleagues on the other side of the House how fallacious his argument was in terms of South Australia. I sincerely believe that there is not a great deal of difference between the sense and the good judgment of people who live in South Australia and those who live in the north-west. As a matter of fact, an interesting proportion of people who live in the north-west of this State have come from South Australia. That has certainly been my experience.

It says a great deal for the member for Gascoyne that he enters this Chamber at the tail end of the debate not having heard any of the arguments that have been put forward in support of my case and then presumes to make a speech sitting in his place by way of interjection, instead of standing in his place as any respectable representative would do.

Mr Laurance: Rubbish!

Mr BRYCE: The final point I wish to make about the Western Australian situation is that the figures need to be repeated as often as the opportunity arises because the figures are facts which the Premier, his Ministers, and the members who sit behind him cannot run away from. They have refused to justify these figures to the public and to the members of this Parliament. We are still waiting to hear their justification of why, in respect of this chamber of horrors, the Government will allocate 20 representatives to the 212 000 people who live in country areas whilst it deems it necessary to give only 12 representatives to the 420 000 people who live in the city. On the same basis the Government has explained neither to this Parliament nor to the public why it is prepared to allocate 28 representatives in this Chamber to 212 000 people living outside that devious black line whereas the 420 000 people who live inside it are entitled to only 27 representatives of the Parliament.

Mr Laurance: Can you explain to me why 90 per cent of the area of this State has eight representatives out of 81? You want to cut that down.

Mr BRYCE: I suggest to the member for Gascoyne that if he opens his little prejudiced mind for a minute and casts his mind back to the legislation that was introduced by the Tonkin Government he will realise that it was a dual Bill designed to introduce one-vote-one-value and a unicameral system of Government. At that time it was calculated that every one of those 81 seats throughout Western Australia would have a quota of approximately 7 000 to 8 000 people, which is precisely the rural quota. If the member for Gascoyne is really perturbed about where he might get his extra constituents from I suggest that his own Government might be a little honest in the electoral sense and hive off a piece of the Pilbara. The town of Newman added to the seat of Gascoyne might make the member sitting opposite—

Mr Laurance: Rubbish!

Mr BRYCE: —who is interjecting so freely, a rather respectable member of this Chamber instead of somebody who represents a tiny handful of people.

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. I object to the implication that I am not a respectable member of this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr BRYCE: I do so happily, Mr Speaker.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I make the point that has been made by many members on my side of the House on numerous occasions, that as far as our party is concerned—

Mr Laurance: Your leader is on record as agreeing with the present system.

Mr BRYCE: Contrary to the half-truths that are peddled in country areas by people such as the member for Gascoyne we believe country people and city people are equally important—

Point of Order

Mr LAURANCE: Mr Speaker—

Mr BRYCE: You have not given me the opportunity to explain what they are.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Mr LAURANCE: I object to the implication that I speak half-truths. That is not the truth.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: I may have misunderstood, but I think the member for Ascot was speaking in general terms about half-truths, which is an expression which is frequently used in the Chamber. There was not any personal accusation.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I should like to illustrate what I mean, and members can judge for themselves whether it constitutes a half-truth. This particular half-truth is peddled by all our political opponents in rural areas when it is suggested that we on this side of the House, given the opportunity, would reduce the number of members of Parliament representing country seats. Of course I have already explained that in the Bill presented to Parliament that simply was not the intention of the former Labor Government. I have already illustrated the formula that we would have used.

I have pleasure in supporting the amendment that has been moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn because in this form it constitutes a censure of the Government. I said at the outset that if ever a Government were deserving of censure, this Government is deserving of censure because of the outstanding and almost incredible and deliberate efforts it has made in the two years it has been in office to strike at the very heart of democracy in Western Australia.

Sir Charles Court: You should talk.

Mr BRYCE: That is the sort of quaint interjection which the Premier so often mumbles across to *Hansard*.

Sir Charles Court: I never mumble; you hear them very well.

Mr BRYCE: Take your head out of the newspaper, Mr Premier, look up, and let us all hear.

Sir Charles Court: I am just telling you that you are the last one in this place to talk about democracy if one goes on what you represent in the trade union movement.

Mr BRYCE: As far as I am concerned, not only *Hansard* but also the Statute book will most certainly testify to the truth of the allegation that has been made about the Premier, that he is the man who will go down in history as the man whose Government introduced the fuel and energy Bill.

Sir Charles Court: And we are proud of it.

Mr BRYCE: He is the man who will go down in history—

Sir Charles Court: The public wanted it and still wants it.

Mr BRYCE: —as the man whose Government was responsible for introducing the “Charliemander” of the century—the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Act, 1975. As I was saying before the Premier so rudely interrupted, the reason I support this amendment is that in the terms which have been expressed by my colleague the principle of one-vote-one-value is not only possible but is also feasible and desirable. It is a fact that in the Legislative Assembly some votes have eight times the value of other votes. It is a fact that in the Legislative Council some votes have 14 times the value of other votes. It is a fact that attempts made by the Australian Labor Party to rectify the situation have been frustrated by hostile majorities in the house of horrors.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the member for Ascot to withdraw that remark about the other Chamber. It is something which should not be stated in this House. Will he please withdraw that remark?

Mr BRYCE: I certainly accede to your request and withdraw the reference, Mr Speaker.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I will conclude by stressing in the same terms as my colleague, the member for Mt. Hawthorn, did in moving the amendment that the only reason that the people of Western Australia are not thoroughly embarrassed about the situation which pertains in this State in respect of the electoral laws is simply that they live in ignorance of those laws.

MR CARR (Geraldton) [10.31 p.m.]: This debate in which we are participating this evening is on the amendment moved by the member for Mt. Hawthorn which

deals with the subject of democracy. Democracy is a subject we have heard a great deal about in this State over a great period of time. Democracy is a subject about which I heard a lot when I was at school. It is a subject I studied to some degree at university. The subject of democracy is discussed very readily in the Press and the other media of this State.

Democracy, as so presented to me, appears to be very attractive. In fact, I formed the opinion that I would very much like the opportunity one day to live in a democracy. I do not know whether it will be some time in my lifetime that Western Australia will become a democracy, or whether I will have to go somewhere else to live in a democracy.

Mr Clarko: Give us an example of democracy.

Mr CARR: There are two basic requirements we have to provide in order to qualify as a democracy. Firstly, we need to have electoral democracy. We need to have a situation where all people have an equal say in electing the Government by which they will be ruled.

Secondly, we need to have a process of democracy in government and in our lives generally in the community. Quite frankly, this State falls down very badly on both counts.

First of all, I want to look at the processes of democracy. I am talking about the processes in our everyday lives, such as the freedom of expression, the freedom of information, open government, the rule of the law and Parliament, and not the rule of a single autocratic man as we have in this State—a man who tries to circumvent Parliament and refuses to answer questions put to him.

We can talk about the freedom of association as being a requirement in a democratic country. In other words, we are talking about government by involvement and government by consultation. I suggest it is very important for people at all stages of government and all stages of decision making to be able to discuss, consider, and review various points that can be made; to be able to express opinions; and to be able to seek information.

Perhaps the best example of this we see emerging slowly in Western Australia from the black morass of autocratic government in the past is the existence of voluntary groups in the community. These are groups of voluntary people who choose to meet, to make certain suggestions to Government departments, and to put forward the causes they espouse.

This, in fact, leads to participatory democracy where as many people as possible are able to participate in the processes of decision making. However, this State Government opposes this form of participatory democracy. I can give three

examples, all recent ones, where this Government has opposed participatory democracy.

On the subject of grants by the Federal Government to environmental groups, the Premier has come out in support of making the money available for this type of activity to Government bodies only. He has opposed the idea of giving it to voluntary groups which want to discuss various aspects of policies and issues affecting them. The Premier opposes the idea of providing finance to these voluntary groups.

In fact, he has even opposed one of these groups to the extent that one of his Ministers has taken action to refuse its incorporation.

Sir Charles Court: Are you sure you are correct in saying the Premier is opposed to the principle? What he did oppose was that the State Government was not told by the Whitlam Government about any of these things.

Mr CARR: The Premier is quoted as having said that he was opposed to giving money to these voluntary groups.

Sir Charles Court: And being wasted. Are you not opposed to that?

Mr CARR: I am not opposed to them.

Sir Charles Court: You are not opposed to money being spent without authority or control?

Mr CARR: I support the encouragement of voluntary groups comprising ordinary citizens to take as much active interest as they can in selected areas of Government policy.

Sir Charles Court: You do not understand what the Whitlam Government was doing?

Mr CARR: The second example I give is that more recently the Premier expressed opposition to the Australian Assistance Plan, and a desire for that scheme to be abolished. Whilst I admit there were some problems in the administration of this scheme, his opposition was once again based on the same principle.

People in the community who are interested in the way they live, and who want to make the community a better one in which to live, have put forward points of view to Government departments, seeking to improve the community. That is participatory democracy, and that has been opposed by the Premier.

The third example concerns my electorate.

Sir Charles Court: We have opposed the method of distributing the money. Why do you not get your facts right?

Mr CARR: Will the Premier be replying to the debate on the amendment?

Sir Charles Court: What you are talking about has nothing to do with the amendment.

Mr CARR: It relates to the first three lines of the amendment. We are talking about the subject of democracy.

Sir Charles Court: What has that to do with control of the AAP?

Mr CARR: The third example I refer to of this Government opposing these participatory democratic groups affects my own electorate. Last week the Minister for Housing said in the House that a committee of the Housing Commission, which has been looking at housing developments by the commission in Geraldton, will not meet with the Geraldton Community Forum which is a voluntary group concerned with welfare needs, community improvements, and the like and would be well qualified to discuss this subject. I shall deal with this matter in more detail in another debate.

The Liberals champion freedom in words, but not in actions. They do not support freedom for the people to participate in the government of this community. What they really provide in terms of freedom is freedom for those who are economically strong, fortunate, and privileged, to use the power available to them. They do not provide the real freedoms I have mentioned; such as freedom of expression to the people who make up the community of Western Australia.

They might contend that the freedoms I have mentioned do exist—the freedom of expression, and the freedom of association. The important aspect is that it is of no use having these freedoms in existence unless there is the capacity for the people to enjoy them.

It could well be said that I am free to climb Mt. Everest, but that is not of much use to me if I do not have the capacity to do so. In a democracy not only should the freedoms exist, but the capacity for the people to enjoy those freedoms should also exist.

Turning away from the idea of participatory democracy, or democracy in process, to electoral democracy, this means simply that votes should be equal and that all people should have an equal say in electing the Government under which they live. It means one-vote-one-value. It means we should have the same number of votes per seat, or as near as is practical and possible to achieve that.

Two main criticisms are submitted of one-vote-one-value. The first one is that it is an impracticable idea. If we take it to its extreme, of course it is. If we are to have an equal number of people in each electorate, there will be a redistribution every day to cater for those people who move from one electorate to another. No-one suggests that is what we want. We must be prepared to accept a realistic figure and allowance, and the figure of 10 per cent is most commonly regarded in Australia as being a fair and reasonable allowance for this purpose.

Mr Clarko: Who says it is? You mean it suits the view you hold.

Mr CARR: I will be pleased to hear the speech of the member for Karrinyup, but not while I am speaking.

Mr Clarko: To suggest 10 per cent is pure woolly thinking.

Mr CARR: This variation of 10 per cent which I suggest as being a reasonable one contrasts very interestingly with the situation in this State. I do not want to labour figures because that has been done by other speakers, but I do wish to repeat some which are important.

Murchison-Eyre, with 2 000 voters compared with 16 000 in a metropolitan electorate, has a vote eight times as powerful as the metropolitan electorate while the Lower North Province, with 6 000 voters compared with 80 000 in a metropolitan province, has a vote 14 times the value of the metropolitan province.

I suggest that a practical system is possible. If not encompassing the ultimate of one-vote-one-value, it would at least adopt the principle of one-vote-one-value.

The second argument which is directed generally against one-vote-one-value is that country electorates have special difficulties and require special consideration. We are talking about such difficulties as distance between Perth and the various electorates and the distance between electors and the centres in their areas. This refers to such things as the distance of electors from a member's electorate office. That does not seem to be too important to some country members because some of those who are involved in these isolated communities do not have an electorate office. However, that is their decision.

Mr Laurance: A sensible one too, in most cases. You cannot have one in every centre in widespread electorates.

Mr CARR: The member's is based on one principal town.

Mr Laurance: With STD from most places.

Mr CARR: Please, if I may? I concede that country electorates do require special consideration, but there is no excuse for this consideration being provided in terms of voters. It should be provided in quite a different way by granting the member extra facilities and advantages, and so on, to assist him to do his job just as well for his electors as a member in the metropolitan area can do for his.

An example has been given by the member for Ascot to show what a farce last year's electoral Bill was in relation to special considerations. He referred to the Pilbara with something between 11 000 and 12 000 voters on the roll last September. Probably by now the figure would be something like 13 000 to 14 000 in a widely scattered area with several major centres.

If ever an electorate needs special consideration it is that one; and it is surrounded by three others the combined total of which is less than the Pilbara's.

Mr Laurance: Where would you put the electorate office in that electorate?

Mr CARR: I believe the member has his across the road.

Mr Laurance: You do not represent one of those seats so you would not understand; you would not know.

Mr CARR: The member for Gascoyne seems to be talkative tonight after entering the Chamber late in the debate. I do not know where he has been.

Mr Clarko: Is your seat not close to a pocket burrough? It has only two-thirds the area of my seat and one-third the population.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CARR: The subject of electoral democracy is so important to the Labor Party that it has drawn up a charter to set out the principles it considers to be important and to provide practical suggestions to assist those members in country areas with special difficulties. The charter commences with a statement from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and reads—

The will of the people shall be the basis of authority of Government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures.

The important words are "equal suffrage".

Mr Laurance: Everyone should get a vote.

Mr CARR: Equally important and equally valued votes.

Mr Laurance: You stretch the point. It does not say that at all.

Mr Clarko: So if you have 48 per cent of every seat you would be happy to lose them?

Mr CARR: I did not catch that interjection. The charter then goes on to say—

Equal suffrage or Equal Value Votes are essential to a democracy. Politically, country and metropolitan electors are equally important and equally wise.

We do not believe in any of this *Animal Farm* business. The charter continues—

W.A. electors have never had equal value votes.

The Australian Labor Party believes in political equality and therefore presents this programme, designed to create a truly democratic State Parliament.

One Vote, One Value shall be the principle to be applied in all Parliamentary elections.

The democratic right to an equally valued vote to be written into the State Constitution.

Members representing country electorates will receive the following assistance to overcome their special problems.

- (a) electoral allowances commensurate with the difficulties and disabilities involved in representing their electorate.
- (b) appropriate additional staff to help with visits, contacts and the running of a country electorate.
- (c) free transport for electoral purposes.
- (d) free telephone, with the right of all electors to reverse charges when contacting their Members.
- (e) free postage for up to 100 letters a week and free telegrams.
- (f) provision for more than one office in the electorate where necessary.

When an electorate is based on two major centres, to cater for constituents properly the member should be given two electorate offices when appropriate. The final recommendation reads—

- (g) subsidised city accommodation when required for Parliamentary purposes.

Mr Thompson: How does that make a member more accessible to his electors?

Mr CARR: Such things as providing two electorate offices—

Mr Thompson: Do you split the member in half and plonk half of him in one office and the other half in another office?

Mr CARR: The member for Kalamunda, who is able to drive home every day and spend half his day in his office, is within easy contact with his constituents; but I have to leave my office for three or four days and I am sure this applies to other members also. However, a secretary at an electorate office is able to provide the first point of contact with the member. If there are a couple of major centres in an electorate, an office should be provided at each one, thus providing two points of contact.

The important general suggestion we make is that the special difficulties which confront country members can be compensated for in this way rather than by compromising the principles of democracy by simply giving them fewer voters.

Mr Clarko: The Whitlam Government raised communication charges and made it more difficult for those in the country.

Mr CARR: Mr Speaker, was that interjection of such a nature that I should answer it?

Mr Skidmore: I would say it was irrelevant.

Mr Clarko: You would not be a very good judge.

Mr Skidmore: I am the greatest, according to your side of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Geraldton.

Mr CARR: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As we are discussing the Government's attitude towards the subject of democracy, it is important for me lastly to relate the Government's so-called concern for democracy in the trade union movement to its complete disregard for democracy in the electoral system of the Western Australian Parliament.

I suggest that unions already have a more democratic electoral system than has this Parliament. They already have secret ballots, postal vote arrangements, and votes are available to all members. They also give their members votes of equal value. For example, the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union does not say that a boilermaker at Bunbury is worth two boilermakers in Perth, which is what the Legislative Assembly system does; that union does not say that the same boilermaker in Bunbury is worth four boilermakers in Perth, which is what the Legislative Council system does; the Liquor & Allied Industries Employees Union does not say that one barmaid at Leonora is worth eight in Perth.

The unions acknowledge that their members are equal throughout the State, irrespective of which part of the State they come from. It is completely conflicting to claim that some people have a right to a larger voting power than others.

I repeat: the unions have a democratic electoral system already. It is more democratic than that which applies to this State Parliament. I ask why the Government is attacking the unions and why it has embarked on a spree of union bashing? Is it really because the Government is concerned with justice, with democracy, and with fairness?

The SPEAKER: I think the member is departing from the terms of the amendment.

Mr CARR: If you will excuse me, Mr Speaker, might I suggest we are discussing the whole principle of democracy.

The SPEAKER: No, we are discussing an amendment relating to electoral laws.

Mr CARR: Surely what I am saying is relevant.

The SPEAKER: If you can relate your remarks to the amendment, you can continue.

Mr CARR: I was suggesting that the electoral system for the State Parliament of Western Australia is in the hands of

the Premier, and that it is quite undemocratic. The same man, through the Minister who controls the Industrial Arbitration Act, has been talking about changing the electoral system for unions which are already operating under a democratic system. I am trying to point out that there is an inconsistency on the part of the Government in regard to the two issues.

I also suggest that the Premier has embarked on union bashing without any regard for electoral democracy at all. He has taken this course simply to find himself a replacement excuse since he has lost the excuse of the Whitlam Government. He has to find another issue and has embarked on union bashing.

Sir Charles Court: Why do you have to catch onto phrases which are purely claptrap?

Mr CARR: The Premier seems to be intent on forcing an election.

Sir Charles Court: You are dead scared we might have one at any time. Only 80 per cent of the people are in favour of us!

Mr CARR: If an election were held next year when due the Premier would be judged on his actions without an excuse. Hence, the Premier realises he would have no excuse for his non-performance and incompetence. He is anxious to build up to an election right now so that he will not have to wait until after the Federal Budget and, with that in mind, he has started union bashing in order to create an atmosphere for an election now. Obviously the Premier has no real concern for union democracy—only expediency to serve a political purpose which has nothing to do with electoral democracy at all.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—16

Mr Bateman	Mr Hartrey
Mr Bertram	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Carr	Mr May
Mr Davies	Mr Skidmore
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Taylor
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr A. R. Tonkin
Mr Fletcher	Mr McIver

(Teller)

Noes—22

Sir Charles Court	Mr Old
Mr Cowan	Mr O'Neill
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Dr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Shadders
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Thompson
Mr Laurance	Mr Tubby
Mr McPharlin	Mr Watt
Mr Mensarow	Mr Young
Mr Nanovich	Mr Clarke

(Teller)

Fairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr J. T. Tonkin	Mr Sodeman
Mr B. T. Burke	Mrs Craig
Mr Harman	Mr Crane
Mr Barnett	Mr Blakie
Mr Moller	Mr O'Connor
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Sibson

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Young.

House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 7th April, 1976

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (14): ON NOTICE

1. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Carnarvon Small Boat Harbour

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Works:

When is it anticipated power will be available at the small boat harbour in Carnarvon?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

Progressively from July 1976.

2. MARINE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Tenders

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Justice representing the Premier:

(1) Is the article which appeared in *The Sunday Times* on the 4th April, 1976, under the heading "Ship Builders bid to get Contracts" an accurate report of the Premier's statement on this subject?

(2) Will the Minister advise the House in what way the Premier envisages the proposed Marine Services Association may transgress the Trade Practices legislation if, in fact, it is tendering with interstate competitors?

(3) How does the Government intend to avoid collusive tendering by members of the Association for State Government projects?

(4) What does "full support to the industries objectives" promised by the Premier mean in terms of tangible action that will be taken by the State Government?

(5) Would the Minister explain the apparent contradiction between the following two statements which appear in the article and attributed to Sir Charles Court—

"The organization would be a completely private enterprise project", and

"The involvement of the State Government to protect the public interests should suffice"?