

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 10 September 1987

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 11.10 am, and read prayers.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: CHILDREN

Sexual Activity: Petition

The following petition bearing the signatures of 345 persons from the Port Hedland region was presented by Hon Tom Helm --

To the Hon President and Members of the Legislative Council in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned call upon the members of the Legislative Council to do all in their power to prevent the recommendations reported in the Western Australian Newspaper of the 14th July 1987 under the headline "Report backs sex for children" from being implemented in our state.

The report commented that a currently favoured option allows children between the ages of twelve and sixteen to engage in consensual sexual activity with their peers.

We believe that laws should not be enacted that may replace parental values or be seen to promote sexual promiscuity.

Your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

(See paper No 345.)

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

Consideration of Tabled Paper

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Minister for Budget Management)[11.16 am]: I move, without notice --

That pursuant to Standing Order 152(c), the Council take note of tabled paper No 319 (Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and related papers), laid upon the Table of the House on 10 September 1987.

This motion is to enable the Legislative Council to examine and debate the Budget papers associated with the Appropriation Bills which are now before the Legislative Assembly.

The Premier and Treasurer is outlining the economic and financial background to the Budget in his Budget speech which accompanies the Budget papers.

Point of Order

Hon G.E. MASTERS: Have the relevant documents been tabled or are they not available?

The PRESIDENT: The documents were tabled during the course of papers being tabled earlier.

Hon G.E. Masters: Are they available to us?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, all papers are available as soon as they are tabled.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: I think the point of the question is whether they are available for distribution, and I understand they will be distributed to members within the next few minutes.

Debate Resumed

Hon J.M. BERINSON: As the papers are now available, I do not propose to cover that ground in detail again. However, it may be said in summary that under this Government's administration the Western Australian economy continues to outperform the national economy, especially in the crucial areas of job creation, investment, and building activity. The State is in a sound financial position.

The favourable budgetary impact of the State's solid economic performance, and the tight expenditure discipline that has been exercised, have led to 1986-87 being the fourth successive year in which a surplus has been recorded.

The highlights of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget and capital works programme are as follows --

For only the second time since 1944-45, the CRF Budget aims for a surplus. A modest surplus of \$1 million is provided for, with recurrent outlays projected at \$3 546.9 million against expected recurrent revenue collections of \$3 547.9 million.

A capital works programme of \$1 088.6 million, an increase of 2.8 per cent on actual expenditure last year.

No new taxes or increases in taxes, but some significant taxation relief, including the commencement of the restructured land tax scale, and payroll tax and stamp duty concessions.

A \$12.2 million contribution to the State Employment Strategies Fund to stimulate employment opportunities and to provide relevant training so that Western Australians can acquire the skills necessary to support continuing industrial and economic growth.

Funding priority to meet community needs for public housing and to maintain momentum in the labour-intensive housing industry.

Provision for a significant increase in police operational strength.

A special package of measures to help families most in need.

Revenue

Revenue collections in total are expected to increase by eight per cent to \$3 547.9 million. Revenues from Commonwealth sources are expected to increase by 9.2 per cent and receipts from traditional State sources, other than interest earnings, are projected to rise by 6.9 per cent.

I now turn to the revenue initiatives contained in the Budget. Last year, the Government announced that sweeping changes would apply to land tax scales in 1987-88. The new regime is now operational and is the first such restructuring aimed at providing long-term relief in almost 10 years. The significance of the changes is indicated by their cost to revenue, which is estimated at almost \$11 million in 1987-88 and more in subsequent years. As a result of the new tax scale, land tax collections are expected to be the same in nominal terms as in 1986-87 -- a significant real reduction.

This Government has consistently moved to reduce the burden of payroll tax on small business. The basic payroll tax exemption level has more than doubled since we took office -- more than three times the increase needed to cover inflation. That record of assistance to small business is to be continued.

This year, the Government is proposing to increase the basic annual exemption level by a further 10 per cent to \$275 000, freeing an estimated 300 employers from tax liability. The change will apply from 1 January 1988 and is estimated to cost \$2.6 million in a full year. It will be accompanied by complementary and commensurate increases to other payroll tax threshold levels.

The Government is also proposing to introduce stamp duty concessions in three areas. To provide a measure of relief in the rental market, the stamp duty exemption level for residential leases is to be increased. In 1986 the Government introduced an exemption for residential leases with weekly rentals of \$80 or less and we now propose to increase that by \$45. The cost to revenue is estimated at \$500 000 in a full year.

Currently, stamp duty is payable on the transfer of real property between spouses except where pursuant to a will or at the direction of a Family Court. It is proposed to introduce an exemption for transfers of principal places of residence between matrimonial spouses where the property is being transferred from single to joint ownership. The cost to revenue, and therefore the savings to those families concerned, is estimated at \$450 on an average home.

At present, all rental businesses are required to be registered under the Stamp Act, irrespective of their rental business income. However, the business is exempted from stamp duty if the annual rental business income is less than \$5 000.

To provide a measure of relief to small rental business, it is proposed to increase the \$5 000 exemption level to \$25 000 at an estimated full year cost to revenue of \$400 000.

For administrative simplicity it is also proposed to introduce a monthly rental income limit of \$2 000, and rental businesses with income below this will not be required to provide a return or pay duty. Further details on these tax concessions will be provided when the enabling legislation is introduced.

Commercial goods vehicles currently operating to the north west must apply for single trip permits although annual licences are available for vehicles operating below the 26th parallel. This anomaly will be removed through the introduction of optional annual licences for operators servicing the north west. The move will cost an estimated \$500 000 in a full year and will provide a significant measure of relief to the industry.

Expenditure

Compared with an expected year on year inflation rate of about seven per cent and a projected population growth rate in excess of two per cent, total capital and recurrent expenditure is budgeted to increase by a modest 6.7 per cent after adjusting for various changed accounting arrangements.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the children in the Gallery please move to their seats quickly and quietly and take note that they cannot speak in the Gallery.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: On that basis, recurrent outlays are estimated to increase by almost eight per cent and expenditure on capital works and services by 2.8 per cent.

I now turn to details of expenditure initiatives.

Economic and Employment Stimulation

Employment and Training

Youth unemployment rates in Western Australia have been consistently below the national average and the Government is proud of the initiatives that have been taken in partnership with the business community to accelerate the absorption of school leavers into employment, further education, and training.

This year, a further \$12.2 million has been allocated to the State Employment Strategies Fund to stimulate employment opportunities and to help Western Australians attain necessary skills.

It is also essential that, in an increasingly competitive marketplace, firms and industries explore all avenues of lifting their productivity. For this purpose the Government has set aside \$1.1 million from the fund in 1987-88 for assistance on a selective basis to individual firms and industries.

The Minister for Labour, Productivity and Employment will be providing further details on these initiatives as well as those which will be implemented to enhance the status and participation of women in the work force and the special attention we will give to the development of employment and training opportunities for Aborigines. He will also outline information on our other programmes supporting youth and disadvantaged job seekers, including the first phase of a vocational year programme, the youth employment scheme and Westrek.

Capital Works and Housing

The framing of our capital works programme was especially difficult this year with the importance of the programme to our building and construction industries having to be balanced against the wider need for public sector expenditure restraint as reflected in our reduced Loan Council borrowing allocations.

This year the Government proposes to mount a capital works programme of \$1 088.6 million, funded by an appropriation of \$388.6 million from the General Loan and Capital Works Fund, borrowings by State authorities of \$289.3 million and the balance from internally generated funds and funds carried over from 1986-87.

Despite a \$116.7 million reduction in our Loan Council allocations, the planned programme represents an increase of \$30.1 million or 2.8 per cent on actual expenditure last year. The increase is mainly due to an unusually high carryover of funds from 1986-87 as a result of unanticipated delays in project planning and completion.

Full details of the capital works programme are outlined in the Budget papers, but once again we have given priority to the housing industry, the generator of a significant proportion of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia.

For the fourth year in succession we will channel the State Government's entire Loan Council borrowing allocation into housing, enabling Homeswest to undertake a capital programme of \$164.3 million, an increase of \$8.5 million or 5.5 per cent on the amount spent last year. The programme will keep Homeswest on target to meet the Government's commitment to provide 6 000 units of accommodation in its current term of office.

Other features of our capital works programme include --

an amount of \$10.8 million is to be spent under the Commonwealth-State bicentennial funding arrangements on the Forrest Place-City Station redevelopment, the centrepiece of Western Australia's bicentenary programme;

work is expected to be completed on the magnificent new \$21 million marina at Hillarys which is designed to accommodate up to 1 000 craft within the next decade and which will provide a much needed recreation and boating facility for the northern suburbs;

\$18 million is provided for the Casuarina Security Prison which is due for completion in 1990;

the commencement of the \$33 million Harris Dam project at Collie, which is vital for the continued supply of quality water to the south west.

Agriculture

To meet the Government's commitment to maintain support to our crucial but hard pressed agricultural industries, provision of \$67.5 million has been made for the Department of Agriculture. The allocation gives continued emphasis to support services by way of farm management extension and assistance for farmers and rural families under stress.

In addition, special funding supplementation of \$460 000 will be made available to the Department of Agriculture in 1987-88 to help combat the danger posed by chemical residues to the meat export industry and community confidence in the meat industry.

A special allocation of \$200 000 will be made to buy back from farmers supplies of DDT and Heptachlor, and additional facilities are to be developed for the testing of soils and fat samples.

An amount of \$120 000 will be made available to the Department of Agriculture to facilitate a soil sampling programme out of Bunbury and the department's capacity to test samples from livestock in quarantine and on properties believed to be at risk is to be increased at a cost of \$140 000 this financial year.

Industrial Development

So as to concentrate and rationalise our efforts in the important area of industrial development, the Government recently created the Technology and Industry Development Authority and an allocation of \$15.6 million is proposed for the authority in 1987-88.

After allowance is made for losses to assisted industries, the allocation represents a significant 21.6 per cent increase on expenditure last year. The Government will also spend a total of \$7.7 million from our capital works programme this year and next to complete Technology Park.

Tourism

Although the development of a strong and healthy tourism industry lies largely in the hands of the private sector, the Western Australian Tourism Commission will be allocated \$14.1 million this year to enable it to maintain and build on the awareness created by the America's Cup and to capitalise on the Government-sponsored investment in Fremantle.

Regional Development

In recognition of the importance of regional development, the Budget this year makes allowance for an amount of \$516 000 for the recently created Great Southern Development Authority. The allocation will facilitate the implementation of "Albany Tomorrow"; and a 42 per cent increase in funding for the South West Development Authority. The allocation will enable stage 2 of the highly successful Bunbury 2000 concept to proceed, and the authority to take on an increased coordinating role in a number of promising potential developments in Bunbury and the south west.

Social Development and Community Services

It is indicative of the importance which the Government places on assisting the disadvantaged in our community that funding for the Department for Community Services has increased by 123 per cent over the last five years. This year allocations to the department have been increased by \$10.8 million, or 13.9 per cent with emphasis being given to help children and families in need through a special family assistance package.

The Minister for Community Services will be announcing further details of grants totalling \$645 000 under this new initiative which includes annual allocations of \$200 000 for family counselling in rural areas, and \$75 000 to meet a pressing need in the south-west region for short-term home care for children in emergency family situations.

To assist church groups, local government authorities and other incorporated bodies in the provision of improved facilities for children, an amount of \$300 000 has also been provided for a scheme of matching capital grants.

This year we will also build upon the policies already in place to help the poor, the aged, families with young children and other community groups most in need of our special attention. In particular, expenditure of \$10.4 million is planned in 1987-88 under the joint Commonwealth/State funded Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme and the Family Support Services Programme.

Funding will continue for the anti-poverty package to offset the daily costs which must be met by low income families and to selectively expand services to support them; and an additional \$10 million has been allocated under the Aboriginal Communities Development Programme, a joint Commonwealth/State initiative to provide a total of \$1 million over five years to materially improve the living standards of our Aboriginal people, many of whom have been living in intolerable conditions for too long.

Education

The Government plans to allocate \$839 million to the Education Department, an increase of \$51.1 million on expenditure in 1986-87.

The Government remains committed to its policy of progressively providing parents with the option of a place in preschool education for their four-year-old children. In 1988, 2 600 more places for four-year-olds will be made available as a result of the additional staff provided in the Budget at an estimated full year cost of \$1.2 million. This will mean that a total of approximately 9 000 places will be provided for four-year-olds in 1988.

Computers will be installed in schools for educational purposes at a cost of \$5.5 million. The computers will be generally supplied on the basis of three per primary school and one for every 40 students in secondary schools.

In addition to the new directions we are taking to improve the quality of education in Government schools, the Government is committed to an integrated public sector/private sector system in which parents have the right to choose the type of education that suits their children's needs. To enhance this approach the Government has approved, on a three-year trial basis, a direct loan scheme of financial assistance to non-Government school building programmes to replace the current 7.5 per cent interest subsidy scheme. Many schools have had difficulty in taking advantage of the present scheme because of the significant interest gap between commercially available interest rates and the 7.5 per cent subsidy.

The new assistance arrangements will mean that loans for eligible buildings in new non-Government schools will attract a maximum interest rate of 4.5 per cent for the first 10 years and a maximum of six per cent thereafter. A maximum interest rate of up to six per cent will be paid on loans for eligible new buildings at existing schools, except schools in levels one,

two and three as defined by the Commonwealth, which will pay a maximum of 7.5 per cent. The loans will be repayable by 15 equal annual instalments and loans to individual schools for expansion or upgrading will be limited in total to \$3 million. Provision of \$5 million has been included in the 1987-88 capital works programme for the scheme which will operate from 1 January 1988.

Health Services

To meet the high priority we give to the development of a modern and comprehensive health system accessible to all Western Australians, the Budget this year provides recurrent funding of \$797.6 million to the Health Department, an increase of \$70.2 million or 9.7 per cent on expenditure last year.

Although this increase seems high, it occurs at a time when there are substantial flow-on costs from previous years. Cost escalation in the health field is also traditionally much higher than in other areas. Accordingly, the department, like all others, will need to impose tight expenditure discipline to maintain its services to the public.

Special attention has been given this year to a series of steps directed at alcohol and drug abuse. The Minister for Health will be providing further details of these measures which include \$500 000 for a major public education campaign and \$360 000 for the Alcohol and Drug Authority to support community-based initiatives aimed at decreasing Aboriginal alcohol abuse.

Law and Order

This Government has made sustained efforts to improve the enforcement of law and order throughout our State. The latest comparative State information from the Commonwealth Grants Commission confirms the results we have achieved in boosting our policing capability. At 30 June 1986, Western Australia had the second highest number of police officers on a population basis -- a welcome improvement on the situation that existed when we took office.

This year the Budget provides for the retention of 67 police officers employed during the America's Cup in excess of the authorised police strength and the appointment of another 33 police officers. It lifts the number of new police appointments to 333 in the three financial years ending 30 June 1988. To counter the impact of the 38-hour week, allowance has also been made for 112 extra civilian staff so as to free an equivalent number of police officers for operational duties.

Other features of the Police Department budget which will increase by a substantial \$19.1 million or 11.9 per cent include a special allocation of \$1 million to help combat crime through the acquisition of specialised and technologically advanced equipment and \$1.3 million for a significant expansion of the police computer network. This will bring another 31 metropolitan and country police stations on line.

The Government is also concerned that the Western Australian Police Force has come under considerable unwarranted attack from various quarters in recent times. We believe that there needs to be a better understanding of the efficiency of our police and the invaluable role they play in the community. The Government has therefore decided to mount a \$500 000 advertising campaign to promote these positive aspects and the effective way the police force operates in Western Australia.

Other Activities

The Budget includes many other important initiatives and there are a number of items of interest which impact on the Government's financial position. Time does not permit me to do more than briefly mention a few.

The State's timber industry is critical to the employment prospects in the south west and, for the first time in the industry's history, this Government has developed a long-term plan which provides for security of the resource on which it is based. Provision for the implementation of the new strategy is included within the planned recurrent and capital expenditure programmes of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, which amount to \$78.3 million in 1987-88. At the same time the water catchment, conservation, and recreation opportunities provided by State forests will be protected and maintained.

Although the new strategy was launched only a few months ago, it is encouraging that proposals have been received which would result in over \$100 million being invested in our timber industry. The proposals include a major new softwood and hardwood sawmilling complex in the lower south west and the development of facilities to process our unique hardwood into value-added products.

In 1986-87 the Western Australian Development Corporation earned a profit of \$9.1 million, of which \$4.1 million returns to the State Development Fund. It is pleasing to note that the corporation's new trading division, GoldCorp Australia, contributed \$2.5 million to WADC's profit in only seven months of active trading. Since its inception less than four years ago, the State has subscribed \$15 million in capital to the corporation while \$23 million in dividends has been paid or is payable. The corporation's net assets now stand at \$40 million and promise a continued level of profits to help support the necessary activities of government.

It is important that safeguards and responsibilities associated with the new legislation concerning occupational health, safety, and welfare in the workplace are widely known and that the necessary training of employees and employers is undertaken. An amount of \$500 000 is included in the Budget for these purposes.

The Government is worried about the rising number of young cyclists sustaining head injuries, and \$100 000 has been provided to subsidise a safety helmet acquisition programme for school children.

The budget for the Department of Consumer Affairs includes \$324 000 for the continuation of our successful Price Check campaign and \$533 000 for the establishment of a computerised securities register. The register will protect both motor vehicle purchasers and the motor vehicle and finance industries, as it will enable both purchasers and traders to ascertain whether vehicles are encumbered. The register should be self-financing within two years.

The Government considers that adequate sporting and recreational facilities are essential to the overall health of our community. An amount of \$2.8 million has therefore been provided in the Budget as a contribution to the Community Sporting Facilities Trust Fund, an increase of 40 per cent on our contribution last year.

The Government is committed to improved management and conservation of the public estate, as is evident by our recent actions in creating the State's first marine park; the reservation of the spectacular Bungle Bungle massif in the Kimberley as a national park; and the reservation for conservation and recreation of 58 000 hectares of forest centred on the Murray Valley, 25 000 hectares of our northern jarrah forest, and a 13 000 hectare addition of forest area to the Lane-Poole Reserve. During 1987-88 the Government will also create national parks in the Shannon basin and in the Ludlow tuart forest, and will make major additions to the D'Entrecasteaux and Fitzgerald River National Parks. The declaration of the State's second marine park -- based on the Ningaloo Reef tract adjacent to North West Cape -- will also take place, including a \$1.5 million information centre funded jointly by the Commonwealth.

An allocation of \$100 000 has been made to address some of the negative aspects of junior sport. Particular attention will be directed towards developing a code of ethics, improved coaching, and strategies for increasing and retaining participation rates.

It is also proposed to increase the maximum amount of compensation payable under the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) Act to victims of criminal injury, or close relatives in the event of death, from \$15 000 to \$20 000. The increase will apply from 1 October 1987.

Public Sector Management and Accountability

I draw attention to some changes in budgetary control which are reflected in the printed Estimates and to some aspects of public sector management and accountability. As members would be aware, a major cost-saving initiative introduced by the Government last year was the three per cent reduction in public sector employment. Substantial savings resulted in 1986-87 but the full year benefit will be felt for the first time in this Budget.

To monitor these staff reductions the Government has moved away from the previous concept of staffing establishments to the more effective system of average operative staffing levels based on full-time equivalents.

While giving considerable flexibility to departmental managers, the new system provides the Government with more effective control of both staff numbers and financial allocations for wages and salaries.

Apart from imposing tight staffing limits on our departments and authorities, we are determined that taxpayers get value for money in the delivery of Government services and that the cost of new initiatives is met to the maximum possible extent by greater efficiency and effectiveness across the public sector.

With regard to this objective, the following items will be of interest to the House --

the current financial year will see the continuation of the Functional Review Committee's work of systematically analysing Government organisations to ensure that appropriate functions are being efficiently performed;

to improve management performance within the public sector and to provide increased opportunities for the development and mobility of senior officers across all areas of Government, a senior executive service for the Western Australian public sector is to be introduced; and

over the coming months, departments and statutory authorities will be reporting to Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the recently introduced Financial Administration and Audit Act which gives effect to the Government's commitment to greater accountability in the public sector. The legislation also gives the Auditor General a mandate to undertake examinations of the efficiency and effectiveness of departments and statutory authorities, and a value for money audit team comprising 12 officers is to be established within the office of the Auditor General.

Budget Overview and Summary

There is no better demonstration of the restoration of the State's financial fortunes and the Government's responsible financial management than that this Budget aims for a surplus. This is only the second time this has been achieved in over 40 years. The first such occasion was this Government's second Budget -- a Budget which marked a remarkable turnaround following the deficit we inherited in 1982-83.

Hon N.F. Moore: If you say it often enough, people might believe you.

Hon J.M. BERINSON: In bringing down the Budget, we are mindful that the nation's economy is at a sensitive stage of recovery and that the actions that Governments, unions, and the business community take in the coming months may well be crucial in determining our longer-term economic future.

This Budget is one for the times, and is designed to achieve a proper balance between the achievement of important new policies and financial responsibility.

I commend the Budget to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon G.E. Masters (Leader of the Opposition).

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES

Privatisation: Motion

HON N.F. MOORE (Lower North) [11.46 am]: I move --

That in view of the great benefits that will accrue to all West Australians, this House:

- (1) supports calls by the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, and the Premier, Mr Burke, for the privatisation of Australian Airlines, Qantas and the Commonwealth Bank;
- (2) calls on the Premier to provide forthwith a list of those State Government assets whose proper management includes privatisation; and
- (3) calls on the ACTU, TLC and State branches of the ALP to support the Premier's call for "the proper and profitable management of government assets".

I put this motion on notice on the opening day of this session in order to give members the opportunity to express a view about a very important issue within the current debate about the economy of this country. The motion seeks to indicate support by this House for some of the more progressive views of the Premier and the Prime Minister. It seeks to have this House express support for those progressive views, and goes further in seeking to express a view to the opponents of these progressive views that this House in fact does not support their anti line with respect to privatisation.

The motion itself is worded quite deliberately so that there can be no misconstruing of the intent of the motion. I will quickly go through the words of the motion and explain to the House how those words were arrived at and how they are legitimate in the context of this debate.

Frequently in recent times we have heard calls by the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, for the Federal Government to go down the path of selling off certain Government enterprises and bodies, and in *The West Australian* on 27 August this year there was a story entitled "Hawke spells out the future", in which it says --

"The Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, last night outlined Labor's future under his historic third-term Labor Government -- with privatisation on top of the list.

Since Mr Hawke started spelling out the new future of the country we have heard him make comments frequently about such enterprises as Qantas Airways Ltd, Australian Airlines, and the Commonwealth Banking Corporation. He has also made comments on a wide variety of other Government agencies, but his views have varied somewhat over the period of the debate.

Mr Burke aired his views on the Prime Minister's new scheme in a speech he made in Port Hedland on 31 August this year. He said that he failed to see what ideological function Qantas fulfilled on behalf of the Australian Labor Party or on behalf of those people who would retain it for ideological purposes. He said that it was clear to him that Qantas was one example that, if it ever fulfilled an ideological purpose, it no longer did so. He said also that the same applied to the Commonwealth Banking Corporation.

Mr Burke and Mr Hawke have clearly indicated to the Australian people that they see some virtue in the privatisation of Australian Airlines, Qantas Airways Ltd, and the Commonwealth Banking Corporation. Mr Burke indicated that he sees the proposed changes as inevitable. In his speech in Port Hedland he said that the policy changes would take place whether one liked it or not. He described the ALP policy as being, in a sense, out of date and in need of upgrading to take account of modern thinking on these matters. If Mr Burke considers these changes to be inevitable it is incumbent upon him to go further and indicate what he expects is likely to happen. We are entitled to know what Government assets are intended to be sold.

Hon Garry Kelly: Would you advocate something like that for the SEC?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have not finished my speech yet. We have already said what we would do.

In the context of this motion I refer to comments made by Mr Burke in 1985, when we were debating this whole question of privatisation prior to the last election. I quote Mr Burke from the *The West Australian* of 19 July 1985 when he said --

The WA Liberal Party should follow the example of its federal counterpart and release details of its privatisation "hit list," the Premier, Mr Burke, said yesterday.

Mr Burke said: "WA electors and taxpayers have a right to know which of their assets are to be put up for sale or other such treatment.

"State Government employees have a right to know if their jobs are at risk under a Liberal Government."

We are entitled, now in 1987, when Mr Burke has adopted a more sensible and pragmatic view in respect of privatisation, to know the answer to the question he asked the Liberal Party back in 1985. That is why I have included in my motion a call on the Treasurer by this House to "provide forthwith a list of those State Government assets whose proper management includes privatisation". Mr Burke made great play of his views about the proper management of Government assets and the provision of proper management of those assets, and I entirely support him in that. Now that the Treasurer has gone down the path of righteousness, if I may put it that way, it is incumbent upon the Treasurer to indicate what he has in mind. After all, he is the Treasurer, it is in his hands, and he has the ability to implement his proposals.

In a statement to the media in December 1985, five months later than the time to which I referred previously, Mr Burke called on the Opposition to spell out in detail its privatisation plans.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Are you going to provide us with that list?

Hon N.F. MOORE: We have already done so, and all we received was criticism. The member for North Central Metropolitan now has an opportunity to tell this House whether he supports the Treasurer. If he does, I would be happy for him to put his hand up with me in supporting the Treasurer. If he does not support the Treasurer this is his opportunity to say so.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: I don't, and I will give my reasons why.

The PRESIDENT: Order! This House must proceed with reasonable decorum.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is interesting that while I have attempted to be even-handed in this debate and have indicated my support for the Treasurer -- I hope that the House will do likewise -- Mr Piantadosi, on the other side of the House, has expressed opposition to his

leader's point of view on this subject. That indicates a chink in the Government's armour, and perhaps during the debate Government members will tell us why that is.

The third part of my motion calls on the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Trades and Labor Council and State branches of the Australian Labor Party to support the Premier's call for "the proper and profitable management of Government assets". I have used those words because they were used by the Treasurer in his speech in Port Hedland and in subsequent speeches on the subject of privatisation. He has since claimed that when he used those words he did not mean privatisation. Everybody who has commented on this issue -- particularly journalists and trade union leaders -- has assumed that when Mr Burke has talked about "the proper and profitable management of Government assets" he has been referring to privatisation. If he did not mean privatisation, he should tell us. If the members opposite do not believe that phrase means privatisation they should tell us what it does mean. It is apparent to the Opposition what Mr Burke really meant. The ACTU is probably deliberating on this matter at this very moment, although Mr Crean probably wants to be Prime Minister after the next one, and is taking a more even-handed approach to this question than some of the more left-wing members of the Labor Party.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: That is a concession that we are going to be in power for a long time.

Hon N.F. MOORE: When I said "after the next one", I meant after the next Liberal Prime Minister, who will be Prime Minister of Australia for a very long time. I do not for one moment believe that Mr Keating will be Prime Minister, and I do not believe he would be acceptable to the members on the other side of the House, let alone the people on this side of the House.

I also call on the TLC, the Western Australian organisation of trade unions, to support Mr Burke. We have already heard Mr Clive Brown say that the ALP has been seduced by the Government. I cannot imagine anything worse than being seduced by the Government, and particularly by the Treasurer. That is an absurd and ridiculous prospect and the mere thought of it is horrifying. *The West Australian* of 2 September states --

The Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council, Mr Clive Brown -- a member of the Broad Left -- said yesterday that it was clear that some senior ALP officials had been seduced by the trappings available to high fliers in the business community.

He went on to say --

"The debate will sort out those in the Labor Party who are closer to business than ordinary wage-and-salary earners," Mr Brown said.

It is an extraordinary comment by Mr Brown to say that the debate will sort out those in the Labor Party who are closer to business than ordinary wage and salary earners. Perhaps the motion we are now debating will sort out which side of the argument the members of the Labor Party in this House are on. Mr Brown would probably be interested to know who supports him and which of those people on the other side of this House are members of the ALP who have been seduced by the trappings available to high-fliers in the business community. Are they the people who go on trips around the world from time to time? It is a fascinating scenario, and it will be interesting to discover who supports what on this question of privatisation.

As a House we should do our best to convince Mr Clive Brown, a man I hold in high regard --

Hon T.G. Butler: What about Wally?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I hold him also in high regard in respect of his non-union activities. I have some difficulty in respect of his union activities, as he knows, and so does Mr Butler.

Mr Brown is entitled to know what the House thinks. It is important to tell him we do not agree with him, and that we support the concept of privatisation as expressed by the Prime Minister and the Premier, and by doing that we may convince the TLC that its attitude to this matter is out-of-date and old-fashioned.

The State branches of the ALP -- I am not sure what the situation is in Western Australia, but in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania the branches have passed resolutions opposing what the Prime Minister is seeking to do. Perhaps members opposite can tell me the State branch of the ALP's view. I have to confess that I do not know.

Hon T.G. Butler: Come to the next meeting.

Hon N.F. MOORE: At least three States have passed resolutions indicating they do not support the Prime Minister and the Premier, so this House should also tell those ALP branches that this House, which represents some progressive views on the economy, does not agree with their old-fashioned ideas about the way in which Government assets should be utilised.

Hon Tom Stephens: I think the motion might be counterproductive.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Does Mr Stephens think that he might support it? I would be delighted to have his support, and I am sure Mr Burke would also be delighted to have his support.

I have deliberately used the words "the proper and profitable management of Government assets" in part three of my motion because that is the sort of terminology Mr Burke has been using in this debate. I know he has said that he does not consider what he is talking about to be privatisation, but everybody else thinks that is what he means, and it is up to him to counteract the views which other people have.

They are the bona fides, if you like, of the motion. I believe the wording is correct. It seeks to get this House to support the sale of Government assets, or part thereof, which has been supported and promoted by both Mr Hawke and Mr Burke. It seeks to ask the Premier, because he asked us when we were putting up the proposition on privatisation, to outline those State Government assets which he thinks should be partly or fully privatised. Thirdly, it calls on the organisations in the community expressing a view contrary to privatisation to change their mind and support what the Premier calls the proper and profitable management of Government assets.

It is important in this debate to look at the very brief history of the recent debate on privatisation in Western Australia so that we can see clearly where we are at present in respect of this whole matter and how things have turned and changed, and how people's views have changed over a couple of years. How refreshing it is that even when there is entrenched opposition to a view, it can change. So there is hope for the economy of this country when its leaders are prepared to change from ideological positions to take up a more pragmatic, sensible, and realistic approach to the development of the economy.

Hon Tom Stephens: It will be nice to see you being pragmatic.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I have always been pragmatic, as Mr Stephens would well know, and I have always been a great supporter of the concept of privatisation. I believe that is the way to go, and I am not the only one who believes that.

Looking at the immediate history, privatisation was first made an issue in this State by the then Leader of the Opposition, Bill Hassell, who, following visits to Western Australia by Dr Madsen Pirie from the Adam Smith Institute in London, took up the propositions put forward by Dr Pirie and suggested Western Australia had a lot to learn from his views and the way some of Dr Pirie's views have been implemented in the UK. Mr Hassell went to London in May 1985 and on his return said he felt Western Australia could learn a great deal from what had happened in Great Britain. I want to read what he said when he returned from that trip

so that people know exactly what Mr Hassell's views about privatisation were at the time. In his Press release of 22 May 1985 he said --

Privatisation did not mean selling off all Government services. In many cases it meant contracting work that was done inefficiently by the Government to the efficient private sector.

"The result of this in Britain has been a lowering of taxation and I believe we will achieve the same result in Western Australia," said Mr Hassell.

"There is no hit list of Government services to be privatised in Western Australia but the Liberal Party will certainly hit inefficiency, waste of taxpayers' money, and Government interference in business.

"Our objective is to wipe out those stumbling blocks and provide better essential services."

There is a remarkable similarity between the language Mr Hassell used in that statement and that used by Mr Burke in his speech in Port Hedland a couple of weeks ago.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Has privatisation worked in the United Kingdom?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Remarkably well.

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: With Telecom too?

Hon N.F. MOORE: I believe it has. I am not an authority on the UK, but I believe it has worked well. Next time I go there I will have a better look at those sorts of things.

What Mr Hassell was saying when this debate began in Western Australia in 1985 was very similar to the words being used by the Premier, Mr Burke, in 1987 about the inefficient way in which some Government activities are carried out and the need to make them more efficient so the taxpayer gets the greatest benefit for his tax dollar. That is what privatisation is about -- doing something with Government assets which will make them more efficient and more cost-effective, and provide a better service to the taxpayer and the consumer of the services provided by the organisation. That is what Mr Burke, Mr Keating, and Mr Hawke are talking about now. I hope that in the fullness of time members on the other side will also be saying the same thing, but like most slow-moving bureaucrats, the fullness of time will be a long time for some members opposite, I regret to say.

It was a pity that when Mr Hassell raised the idea of privatisation and making Government agencies more efficient, the Government of the day, the Burke Government, was still in its pre-enlightened era. Those were the days when it said privatisation was no good at all. In fact Mr Burke came out, following a decision by the Federal Liberal Party which at the same time had developed a very enlightened approach to this subject and had provided a list of those things it thought should be privatised, and made the following comments in *The West Australian* of 19 July --

The WA Liberal Party should follow the example of its federal counterpart and release details of its privatisation "hit list," the Premier, Mr Burke, said yesterday.

The federal Liberal leader, Mr Peacock, named targets on his "hit list" at this week's Liberal federal council meeting in Canberra, Mr Burke said.

Mr Peacock committed a Federal Liberal government to a programme of selling many big government bodies such as Telecom and Qantas.

[Resolved: That business be continued.]

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is interesting to note that Mr Burke was criticising Mr Peacock who at that time was talking about selling Qantas and Telecom. Qantas is one of the Government organisations that Mr Burke is now saying should be sold off, and quite rightly. He is saying that the Federal Government should do that. All I am asking is that Government members support him. Does Hon Sam Piantadosi support him on Qantas?

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: No.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Does Hon Tom Butler support the sale of Qantas?

Hon T.G. Butler: No.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I hope *Hansard* recorded that Hon Tom Butler does not support the sale of Qantas, unlike his leader Mr Burke who thinks it should be sold. The newspaper report of Mr Burke's comments continues --

"WA electors and taxpayers have a right to know which of their assets are to be put up for sale or other such treatment.

"State Government employees have a right to know if their jobs are at risk under a Liberal Government."

He said that, if Mr Peacock could be specific two and a half years before an election, there was no excuse for the WA Opposition Leader, Mr Hassell, not to be precise seven or eight months before the State election.

Perhaps we should translate those views into 1987 and tell Mr Burke that he has 18 months to the next election and why does he not do what he suggested the Liberal Party should do in 1985; that is, provide a list of those agencies he has in mind for privatisation, or perhaps, to use his words, a list of those agencies whose proper management includes privatisation.

Not only did Mr Burke start firing shots at the Liberal Party's views on privatisation, but also the Minister for Housing, Mr Wilson, was reported in *The West Australian* on 22 July as follows --

The State Opposition's plans to sell off public housing would be illegal, the Minister for Housing, Mr Wilson, said yesterday.

The article continued --

The Opposition's plans would lead to chaos and waiting periods of up to four years.

In respect of the Hospital Laundry and Linen Service Mr Burke issued the following statement on 12 August 1985 --

The State Government has rebuked the Opposition for studying plans to sell hospital laundry services in spite of evidence that it would be uneconomic.

Again, a Press statement of 19 August 1985 stated as follows --

The State Opposition's privatisation policy would transfer revenue from the State Government to the Commonwealth, the Premier, Mr Brian Burke said today.

He said this would occur because statutory authorities and trading corporations paid their profits to the State, but if they were privatised the revenue would go to the Commonwealth.

Then we heard from Mr Dowding. I am not sure what Mr Dowding is a supporter of, because I find that at times he supports one point of view and the next time he opens his mouth he says quite the opposite. It depends on where he is and whose votes he is trying to win at the time. I remember Mr Dowding being a great supporter of Aboriginal land rights; I recall his being a great supporter of stopping drilling at Noonkanbah, yet when he became the Minister he allowed drilling to proceed at Noonkanbah. Mr Dowding's actions depend on the circumstances at the time.

Hon Tom Stephens: The Aboriginal people were the ones who allowed the drilling to go on because he was able to bring some sense into the debate. You are a dill.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Mr Dowding, as Minister for Mines, allowed drilling at Noonkanbah which Hon Tom Stephens and his mates tried to stop.

Hon Tom Stephens: You are a confrontationist.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Government members were lying on the road at Noonkanbah trying to prevent legitimate people going about their business, yet Hon Tom Stephens calls me a confrontationist. What an incredible about-face. Hon Tom Stephens and Mr Dowding were lying on the ground with their white mates at Noonkanbah, stopping companies from drilling holes in the ground because of a sacred site and the moment Mr Dowding became Minister for Mines -- as somebody said it was like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank -- he allowed companies to start drilling at Noonkanbah. It depends on which side of the argument he is on. On 21 August 1985 Mr Dowding was reported as follows --

Visiting British economic theorists should stay in their ivory towers, according to the Minister for Employment and Training, Mr Dowding.

"We are seeing a group of gurus from overseas, particularly Britain, economic theorists in their ivory towers coming to Australia and trying to say how we should run our country", said Mr Dowding who recently visited Britain.

The article continued --

After the lunch Mr Dowding said that political parties should be challenged to say precisely what they wanted to do ...

Mr Dowding was saying that Dr Madsen Pirie and Mr John Burton were economic theorists who should stay home because they were promoting privatisation. That is the theory the Premier and the Prime Minister have now partially, if not totally, embraced.

Hon Tom Stephens: Your attitude to privatisation is that you should be able to strip down the assets of organisations and flog them off to your mates at a discount.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That is not so at all. The member will hear my attitude about privatisation ad nauseam from now on and he will know exactly what I mean.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! I ask the member on his feet to ignore the interjections and if those interjecting will listen to the member, they will have an opportunity to speak later.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is extraordinary that I am getting these interjections, these anti-views from the other side of the Chamber when I am asking them to support their leaders in the Federal Parliament and the State Parliament, the Prime Minister and the Premier. All I am getting from Mr Stephens and his colleagues is criticism of what I am saying. I am trying to get a motion passed that this House agree with the Premier and the Prime Minister. I am quoting people such as Mr Dowding who said in 1985 that privatisation was simply a theoretical view of some visiting overseas economic experts who should stay in their ivory

towers. Mr Dowding is now sending people to those ivory towers to find out what is going on so that they can come back and tell us in Australia what we should be doing based on the views in the overseas ivory towers that he regards as being appropriate.

At the same time, on 30 August 1985 Mr Burke called on the Opposition to say whether it would sell State assets into foreign ownership under its privatisation policy. I can assure members that that would not be the case. However, the point needs to be made that assets should not be sold simply to raise funds, as happened with Mr Keating in the last mini-Budget when he sought to gain revenue from the sale of assets. If Government assets are to be privatised, the resources obtained should be used to lower the Budget deficit or to get rid of debts. Privatisation should not be used to strip the assets and sell them to a friend.

Mr Grill got into the act in 1985. One can see that all these Ministers thought they would jump on the band wagon in order to get their names in the paper and get some support from their union mates. He said on 5 September 1985 that Stateships was not for sale.

On 13 November 1985 in a dorothea dixer in the Legislative Assembly Mr Burkett asked Mr Burke what he thought about privatisation. Mr Burke replied --

I am in a quandary as to the answer to this question because no-one is quite sure about what privatisation is or what it means.

He said that privatisation was the new word for selling off the State and making the people pay for it. I wonder how his view has changed between 13 November 1985 and August 1987 when he now embraces the concept by suggesting that what the Prime Minister is doing is correct. He went on to say --

There can be no guarantee in any of the pronouncements about privatisation that I have seen that anyone who is privatised will have a job, let alone have the conditions and terms of employment presently enjoyed. The best boast that can be made for privatisation is that it has brought the UK to its knees and has engendered social hatred and conflict, practised as it is by the Thatchers and Hassells of this world, that we want to avoid in our community.

We want to maintain within our community the sort of character and colour about which we can boast, not the sort of conflict and confrontation that we were ashamed of when it was so thoroughly practised under previous Liberal Governments in this State.

Those words of the Premier in November 1985 indicated quite clearly to me and to anybody else listening that he was not supporting privatisation.

One can get the message from those rather colourful words that the Premier saw no virtue whatsoever in any attempt to privatise State assets. In December 1985 the policy division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the policy secretariat, was commissioned by the Government to do an exhaustive study of the likely impact of privatisation in Western Australia. The Premier said in a media statement of 2 December 1985 --

... the conclusions were that privatisation could only work if jobs were lost, the quality of service was reduced, charges increased especially in country and outer suburban areas, or taxpayers heavily subsidised the profits of private operators.

The Premier said that the policy division had concluded that there would be a significant increase in costs if half the State Government Insurance Office were sold.

I might add that I can find evidence -- which I do not have here -- where the Premier actually supported the sale of the SGIO, or part of it. The Premier continued --

"Opposition leader Hassell and his colleagues have been remarkably reticent about spelling out their privatisation plans.

It is time they did so to enable the community to judge their merit."

I call on the Premier to do the same thing now. I wonder where the report from the policy secretariat of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is, which said that privatisation in Western Australia would not work. I hope Mr Burke will read that again and then say to the people who prepared it, "You are no longer working for this department because you have got it all wrong." That is what he should say if he has changed his mind about privatisation.

The Premier went on to say in *The Kalgoorlie Miner* of 4 December --

STATE Energy Commission charges in the country would increase by 200 per cent and pensioners' bills by 500 per cent if the SEC was privatised, WA Premier Mr Burke said in Kalgoorlie yesterday.

One gets the impression that at that time Mr Burke was not a great supporter of privatisation. It is good to see that he has changed his mind and that the future of this country may be more rosy now that the Premier and the Prime Minister have seen the error of their past ways.

In January 1986 the Deputy Premier, Mr Bryce -- and remember there was an election about this time -- got into the act by putting out a media statement of 9 January 1986 which said --

Deputy Premier Mal Bryce has called on the State Opposition to state clearly what Government agencies it would axe under its election economic policy.

Mr Bryce said Opposition Leader Bill Hassell must remove the confusion and double-speak as to which agencies he would retain, and which he would scrap.

That is surely not an unreasonable request. The WA public have a right to know, and I am sure the employees of the relevant bodies would love to know.

I am sure they would still love to know in view of the new position of the Government.

I have given the recent history of the argument, which concluded when the Liberal Party realised that it could not win the argument publicly because of the opposition of the Government and the opposition of the unions, particularly the public service unions, so it did not persist with its views during the last State election; it did not seek to try to shove privatisation down people's throats. In fact, the issue was not debated during the last State election, which is a bit like the debate on the Australia Card in the last Federal election.

What we have had since that election has been a remarkable change. We have had a series of people coming out and supporting privatisation, and on the other hand we have had a series of people coming out and opposing it. The interesting thing is the way in which some people have now seen the light and have come to realise that privatisation is a good thing. I have already talked about Mr Burke and Mr Hawke, who have said that they believe Qantas and Australian Airlines ought to be privatised, and they have indicated support for the general principle in other utterances they have made.

Mr Keating, who some people think may be the next Prime Minister, has also come out and publicly supported his Prime Minister. He believes that the stance of the Labor Party on the sale of major Government assets needs to be changed.

We also have the executives of Qantas and Australian Airlines coming out and saying that the future of those two airlines is dependent very heavily on their capacity to raise extra capital, and the best way for that to happen is for them to be privatised.

A poll taken by *The Western Mail* also indicated that most Western Australians favoured the selling off of Telecom, although they did not want to sell off the Commonwealth Bank. There were divided views on the question of Qantas and Australian Airlines.

Hon Tom Stephens: Is selling Telecom a view you share?

Hon N.F. MOORE: Yes. I think there are a lot of things one can do in Telecom to sell it off. No-one would buy it en masse, but it is very easy to privatise many of the functions of Telecom.

Hon Tom Stephens: I will tell that to your constituents.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I hope the member will because what he does not understand about privatisation -- as a lot of people do not -- is that country people are not going to be disadvantaged, because the question of subsidies and assistance to remote people is a question for Governments and not private companies to decide, and if we privatise Telecom or parts thereof, it is a question of whether the Government makes the subsidies to assist people in remote areas.

I would be a great supporter of assisting those people, but let Telecom do its business as a private, efficient, capable company, subject to competitive forces within the economy, and then if the Government wants to help people in remote areas, it is up to it to make that decision up front so everybody knows where the subsidies are and where they are coming from. I would be the first to support assistance to country people, and I always have been. That is the argument, and the member should give some thought to that because it is important in this day and age for us to know -- and the Premier would agree with this -- where the subsidies are, whether they are built into the system or not, or whether they are up front. They should be up front so that everybody can know.

Hon J.M. Brown: Or whether it is a cross-subsidisation.

Hon N.F. MOORE: One should not have Government policies on social issues interfering with the way in which a company operates in the market. If one has a cross-subsidy, that should be up front, and the Government ought to pay Telecom the money instead of having one group in the community subsidising another group. It should be done as an up front subsidy by the Government, using the taxpayers' dollars.

It is interesting that a union official -- who is obviously seeking endorsement for whichever section of the Labor Party Mr Hawke belongs to -- came out and said on 31 August that he supported what Mr Hawke was trying to do. The official was Mr Rob Arndt, the Federal Secretary of the Australia Postal and Telecommunications Union, and I quote from *The Australian* of 31 August 1987 --

Speaking from Papua New Guinea, where he was attending a telecommunications conference, Mr Arndt told *The Australian* he was fed up with the uncompromising attitude of trade unions towards privatisation.

I commend Mr Arndt, and I am sure he will get a job with Mr Hawke whenever he wants one.

In *The West Australian* of 31 August 1987 Professor Michael Porter argued that some tertiary institutions ought to be privatised. I think he will find support for that view from the Prime Minister, following the Prime Minister's support of Mr Bond's university in Queensland.

Mr Unsworth, the Premier of New South Wales, gave cautious support. He said he was in favour of the selling of Australian Airlines and minority shares in Qantas, but he was against privatising the Commonwealth Bank, which he said should pay dividends to the Govern-

ment, like the New South Wales State bank. This is perhaps a bit like the R & I Bank, which Mr Burke does not believe should be sold either.

Hon A.A. Lewis: He gets all that information.

Hon N.F. MOORE: It is no wonder Mr Burke does not want to sell off the R & I Bank because what better way to find out about the personal financial details of members of Parliament and other citizens than to have one's own bank which tells one that information, or is forced to.

I was scandalised to find out that the private banking details of some people in the community have been tossed about in the Legislative Assembly Chamber. I am interested to know when the Government will be telling the community what my banking details are, because I actually had money with the Teachers Credit Society, and in fact I still do. Some people think I am nuts, but I still have money with the Teachers Credit Society. I have been banking with it for the last 15-odd years.

I expect in due course all those details will be made public. Perhaps the Attorney General, who is an honourable man, will say that it will not happen again, and should never have happened. Certainly, it should never happen again. How would the Attorney General like it if his banking details -- with whom he invested and from whom he withdraw money -- were made public in the Legislative Assembly Chamber by the Premier? How would the Attorney General like his private financial details --

The PRESIDENT: Order! I missed the connection between your motion and this matter.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The reason I mention that is that Mr Burke said he does not want to see any privatisation of the R & I Bank; he has actually said the Commonwealth Bank should be privatised but not the R & I Bank. The Premier would deem it important to have his own bank so that the Government can get hold of the details of the investments of the individual citizens of this country and use them in a most scurrilous and disgusting way. What happened last night was the absolute pits. It was the most disgusting piece of politicking I have witnessed since I came here.

Hon P.G. Pandal: And they say they are not corrupt.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Exactly; I have never seen anything like it in my time here and I am absolutely mortified --

The PRESIDENT: Order! With respect, I suggest that the comments you are making now are getting away from the subject matter of the motion which was moved. I think the member ought to talk about the other subject; this is a matter for a different motion.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Thank you, Mr President, for your guidance. I have said what I wish to say on that and I will continue with my comments on the current situation in Australia in respect of privatisation, and the current views of people throughout the world to it, and indicate to the House that Mr Burke and Mr Hawke are not alone in their views. There are many people who now support their enlightened approach. The *Australian Financial Review* of 1 September 1987 reads as follows --

The privatisation movement has begun to gather force in continental Europe and cuts across all political and ideological divisions. It reflects a growing dissatisfaction with performance of nationalised industries and budgetary drain which they often represent.

The *Australian Financial Review* of 1 September 1987 contained an article as follows --

This year the citizens of Japan got their first real taste of the joys and pains of privatisation.

I am the first to admit that if it is not done properly, it can cause trouble. The article continues --

Fares on the soon to be wholly privatised Japan Air Lines flights were on some routes slashed by up to 45 per cent as the bloated juggernaut confronted real competition for the first time.

On 1 September 1987 the Leader of the Opposition, Mr MacKinnon was reported as follows --

But the Opposition Leader, Mr MacKinnon, went further yesterday by urging a bipartisan examination of State Government activities with the potential to be privatised.

He said there were many Government activities in Western Australia whose operations could be successfully converted.

He would be happy to work with the Government to achieve more choice for Western Australia consumers through the application of free-enterprise principles.

That indicates there is support from the Liberal Party as well. Mr Hawke, Mr Keating and Mr Burke favour privatisation as do some unionists, professors and the management of Qantas and Australian Airlines; it is happening in Europe, Japan and the United States. The Liberal Party -- for what Government members think it is worth -- is prepared to support the Government on this issue in a bipartisan way in order to do something about some of the moribund State assets that have been achieving less than their capacity over many years.

Regrettably, as one always finds in these arguments, there are people opposed to privatisation. I have already said the State ALP branches in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania have indicated opposition to privatisation; I do not know about Western Australia, New South Wales or Queensland but I expect they would take the same view, although I am happy to be told that is not so. Even Don Dunstan, making another reincarnation into politics, is quoted in *The Australian* of 31 August as follows --

Although reluctant to speak about the plans of the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, to sell off public assets, Mr Dunstan said: "I wouldn't like see any of the public organisations that I set up sold off."

Then there is the argument of the extreme left of the Labor Party; an article in *The West Australian* of 31 August reads as follows --

Former Labour Minister Tom Uren has lashed out at the Government's push to sell major assets such as Qantas to the private sector.

He told a young Labor meeting at Lidcombe, a Sydney suburb that the direction of the Government needs to be examined in the wake of the election result, which showed that the ALP vote fell in many traditional Labor seats.

I would say it will fall a bit further as a result of the path now being taken by the Prime Minister.

Then there is a variety of union leaders, particularly the leaders of organisations such as the Trades and Labor Council -- Mr Clive Brown and Mr John MacBean in New South Wales -- who are also opposed to what is happening. The Commonwealth Bank unions have come out and expressed their opposition to any form of privatisation of that institution. The Public Service unions, predictably -- because they gave us a hiding, I have to say, on the subject of privatisation before the last election -- have adopted a view which is the opposite of that of Mr Hawke and Mr Burke. In *The West Australian* of 2 September Mr Clive Brown said --

... he was appalled by the State Government's "about-face" on the issue since the last State election -- when the unions funded a television and newspaper advertising campaign against the Liberal Party's privatisation plans and supported the ALP.

Mr Brown said debate within the Labor Party would determine if it intended to serve the interests of business over the interests of ordinary Australians -- those who were employed by or who used Government services.

I think Mr Brown is in fact asking Government members whether they support a Government leader who he says is taking an opportunity to make a fast buck out of privatisation or whether they support the views of the union movement, particularly the Public Service unions, which are opposed to what the Prime Minister and Premier are seeking to do.

That is some indication of people on both sides of the argument. I hope that when the House votes on this subject -- because I am sure we will since it is important that members on the Government side are given an opportunity to express their views on this matter -- we will be able, for once in a long time, as a unified House to express a view that we all agree with on an economic issue. Here is an opportunity to say, because the Prime Minister and Premier of Western Australia have come out in support of privatisation, that we, as members of Parliament representing all sides of the political spectrum, can take the same view. We can realise that privatisation, or if one likes, the "proper and profitable management of Government assets", is good for the country; we can demonstrate a bipartisan approach to something which is good for Australia. That would be a rather pleasant turn of events considering the arguments we usually have on economic issues.

I ask the House to support Mr Hawke and Mr Burke, and to take privatisation out of the political argument; let us make it a non-party political issue and say it is an economic issue on which all sides of the political spectrum can find areas of agreement. It is an opportunity for members on the other side of the House to jettison --

Hon S.M. Piantadosi: Will you do the same for industrial relations?

Hon N.F. MOORE: If Hon Sam Piantadosi puts up a good argument.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: My argument on this issue is the same as that of none other than the Labor Party's leader, Mr Burke. If Hon Sam Piantadosi can present me with an argument about industrial relations which is the same as the one put up by my leader --

Several members interjected.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am putting up the argument of the Prime Minister of this country. Hon Sam Piantadosi should take off his ideological blinkers and vote for a motion which expresses support for a new vision, which we have been given by the Prime Minister and Premier of this State.

Here is the chance for members opposite to get rid of those ideological blinkers I just mentioned and make a decision on an economic issue which, if they believe the arguments of the Premier and the Prime Minister, will lead to greater efficiency in Australia and a rejuvenation of our economy in a lot of ways. Here is their chance to indicate that they have become true pragmatists, that they have not just been pretending, and that they can jettison their philosophical and ideological views they have had ingrained in them ever since they joined the Labor Party. Here is their chance to show that they are capable of taking on board a new economic order and can see that the future of Australia and indeed of the world is dependent on our capacity to get Governments out of things and get the private sector into them, to get

back efficiency, accountability and competition, all those things that make things work, the things that Mr Burke and Mr Hawke have been talking about. If we can bring in private enterprise we will achieve a great improvement in Australia. Let members opposite support us in supporting their leader in this way by supporting this motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Fred McKenzie.

RESERVES AND LAND REVESTMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon Graham Edwards (Minister for Sport and Recreation), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan -- Minister for Sport and Recreation)
[12.42 pm]: I move --

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is similar in intent to many other measures brought before the House each year to obtain the approval of Parliament to vary Class "A" reserves for whatever reason and, in this case, to remove the trust and change the purpose of a trust existing in certain Crown grants as well as closing certain pedestrian accessways and a right-of-way situated in various suburbs and locations. Apart from the final three clauses, the balance of the provisions of the Bill relate to Class "A" reserves.

Class "A" Reserve No 7516 at Southern Cross in the Shire of Yilgarn, electoral district of Mt Marshall and electoral province of Central is set aside for the purpose of "hospital" and is vested in the Minister for Health with power to lease. To permit leasing of a portion of this reserve to the Yilgarn Homes for the Aged Inc for a "frail aged lodge", it is necessary to change the purpose of the reserve to "hospital and allied purposes". It is further considered unnecessary to retain the Class "A" status over this reserve. The "A" classification was provided in 1900 when it was normal practice to classify all such reserves, but this is now inappropriate. Parliamentary approval is required to change the purpose and to cancel the Class "A" status of Reserve No 7516, and this Bill seeks that approval.

Class "A" Reserve No 24937 at Manjimup in the Shire of Manjimup, electoral district of Warren and electoral province of Lower Central, is set apart for the purpose of "national park" with vesting in the Shire of Manjimup. The shire has advised that, as the reserve is located in the centre of town, it is intended to regenerate and develop the area as a park and recreation area. The council has requested that the reserve purpose be amended to reflect this usage and remove the Class "A" status, this being considered no longer appropriate. Parliament's approval to the change of purpose of Reserve No 24937 to "park and recreation" and cancellation of the Class "A" status is accordingly sought.

Class "A" Reserve No 25036 at Boulder in the Shire of Boulder, electoral district of Esperance-Dundas and electoral province of South East, is set aside for the purpose of "recreation" with vesting in the Shire of Boulder with power to lease. The land is currently leased to the Boulder Golf Club (Inc). The Shire of Boulder has proposed the excision of that portion of the reserve identified as Boulder Lot 3996 for inclusion into the adjoining Lot 3390, thus "squaring off" the latter lot and allowing the expansion of the caravan park on that land. It is the council's further intention to relocate the Boulder Golf Club to a site further south and redevelop Reserve No 25036 for residential purposes. All affected authorities are agreeable to the proposal but detail on the redevelopment is still being resolved. It is therefore proposed at this stage to cancel only the Class "A" status of Reserve No 25036. Parliament's approval is required for the excision of Boulder Lot 3996 and the cancellation of the Class "A" status, and the Bill seeks that approval.

Class "A" Reserve No 10980 at Mundaring in the Shire of Mundaring, electoral district of Mundaring and electoral province of West, is set aside for the purpose of "recreation" and is vested in the Shire of Mundaring. As a consequence of the council's request to close a portion of the adjoining Fenton Street, the closed portion of road has been surveyed and identified as Mundaring Lot 279 for inclusion into Reserve No 10980. Parliamentary approval is required for the inclusion of Lot 279 into Class "A" Reserve No 10980, and the Bill seeks that approval.

Class "A" Reserve No 32376 at Augusta in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, electoral district of Vasse and electoral province of South West, is set apart for the purpose of "national park", being Leeuwin National Park, and is vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. In accordance with the Environmental Protection Authority's red book recommendation 1.4 and the Leeuwin-Naturaliste working group's recommendation, it is proposed to include that area of vacant Crown land described as Sussex Location 4689 into Reserve No 32376. As Reserve No 32376 is classified as Class "A", Parliament's approval to the inclusion of Location 4689 is required, and the Bill seeks that approval.

Class "A" Reserve No 20610 in the Shire of Pingelly, electoral district of Avon and electoral province of Central, is set aside for the purpose of "timber (mallet) and the conservation of flora and fauna" with vesting in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, being the Boyagin Nature Reserve. Subsequent to a land-exchange agreement between the Department of Conservation and Land Management and Messrs J.A., J.C. and A.A. Messenger, adjoining land owners, it is proposed to include the surrendered freehold land, identified as Avon locations 28744 and 28745, into Reserve No 20610. The Bill seeks Parliament's approval to the inclusion of the locations.

Class "A" Reserve No 27956 at Two Peoples Bay in the Shire of Albany, electoral district of Stirling and electoral province of South, is set aside for the purpose of "conservation and fauna", being the Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, and is vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. In accordance with current standard practices, it is proposed to extend the reserve boundaries to low water mark to assist in the more effective management of the reserve. In addition, it is proposed to include the surrendered fisherman's lease, now identified as Plantagenet Location 7132, together with the island named Rock Dunder, identified as Plantagenet Location 7608. This Bill seeks Parliament's approval to the extension of the reserve boundaries to low water mark and the inclusion of Plantagenet Locations 7132 and 7608 into Reserve No 27956.

Class "A" Reserve No 39276, near Wokatherra Hill in the Shire of Chapman Valley, electoral district of Greenough and electoral province of Upper West, is set aside for the purpose of "conservation of flora and fauna" with vesting in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. As part of a consolidation process to protect rare flora endemic to the region, the areas identified as Victoria Locations 11215, 11557, 11558 and 11731 have been acquired from a former reserve, discontinued railway and freehold property. The Department of Conservation and Land Management has requested that those areas be now included into Reserve No 39276. The inclusion of these locations requires Parliament's approval, and the Bill seeks that approval.

Class "A" Reserve No 9633, at Mandurah in the Shire of Mandurah, electoral district of Mandurah and electoral province of Lower West, is set aside for the purpose of "recreation" with vesting in the Shire of Mandurah, which has power to lease the reserve. To allow for the rationalisation of the boundaries of the adjoining Reserve No 28472, which is vested in council for an "administration and civic centre", the Shire of Mandurah has requested the excision of 4 334 square metres from Class "A" Reserve No 9633 and the inclusion of this area into the adjoining Reserve No 28472. As Reserve No 9633 has Class "A" status, Parliament's approval to the excision is necessary, and the Bill seeks that approval.

Reserve No 36789, Swan Location 10112, at Craigie in the City of Wanneroo, electoral district of Joondalup and electoral province of North Metropolitan, is held under a Crown

grant in trust for the purpose of "school and convent site" by the St Brigids Convent of Mercy Perth Incorporated. The convent has requested that the trust purpose be changed to "Hostel and Convent Site" to more accurately reflect the usage of the land. Parliament's approval of the change of purpose of this trust is sought through this clause.

Reserve No 13843, Ora Banda Lot 2, at Ora Banda in the Shire of Boulder, electoral district of Kalgoorlie and electoral province of South East, is held under a Crown grant in trust by the Ora Banda Hall Association Incorporated for the purpose of "miners hall site". The land is no longer required for this purpose. In fact the hall has been removed, the Ora Banda Hall Association has disbanded, and all trustees listed have since deceased. As all registered trustees are deceased, normal surrender of the title to the Crown is not possible. This clause therefore seeks the approval of Parliament to discharge the trust and revest the land in Her Majesty as of Her former estate, that being Crown land.

Class "A" Reserve No 9528 at Ludlow in the Shire of Capel, electoral district of Mitchell and electoral province of South West, is set aside for the protection of "tuart timber" with vesting in the Minister for Mines. In accordance with a request from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the recent public announcement by the Premier, it is intended to create a new national park over the Ludlow tuart forest. Portion of the proposed park is, however, affected by Reserve No 9528. It is therefore necessary to cancel the Class "A" status of this reserve to allow creation of the new park. In view of its Class "A" status, Parliament's approval of the cancellation is necessary, and this clause seeks that approval.

The latter part of this Bill seeks approval for the closure and revestment of five pedestrian accessways and one right-of-way situated in various locations. These accessways, as described on the table to the clause, were created from private freehold subdivisions under section 20A of the Town Planning and Development Act and, as a condition of subdivision, are vested in Her Majesty. Passage of time has indicated that, in these instances, the accessways are no longer required or are causing problems through misuse, vandalism, intrusion into family privacy, and antisocial behaviour. In all cases, the closure applications have been submitted by the relevant local government authority after adequate publicity and provision of time for submission of objections.

The need for this legislative measure arises from the lack of existing legislation to close these types of accessways. While amendments to existing legislation are being prepared to establish permanent powers to deal with these accessways, this revestment clause is intended, as a short-term solution, to provide the legislative authority necessary to resolve these particular cases, where closure is considered to be an immediate requirement. Existing machinery established under part VIIA of the Land Act will be used to enable disposal of the land to adjoining landowners with reasonable time being allowed for payment for the land.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon A.A. Lewis.

WILLS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 8 September.

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Attorney General) [12.55 pm]: I thank the Opposition for its indication of support of this important measure. In my second reading speech I invited comments on the words "a document" in proposed section 34, clause 9, of the Bill. On the basis of comments received the Government has come to the conclusion that the words "a document" should not preclude the possibility of more than one document being considered in order to constitute a valid will. An example of where two documents might need to be considered under proposed section 34 is where one document was or purported to be a will and the other document was or purported to be a codicil.

In such circumstances, the Government considers that the wills legislation should not restrict the operation of proposed section 34 to only a single document, and that the ordinary application of section 10(C) of the Interpretation Act 1984 which provides that the singular includes the plural should apply.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon J.M. Berinson (Attorney General), and transmitted to the Assembly.

[Questions taken.]

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: ORDINARY

HON J.M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan -- Leader of the House) [1.04 pm]: I move --

That the House do now adjourn.

George Chapman Pty Ltd: Employees

HON FRED MCKENZIE (North East Metropolitan) [1.05 pm]: I do not want to hold up the House for long, but I have a matter which affects some employees of Watsonia. They were formerly employed by George Chapman Pty Ltd, and they will become redundant tomorrow. George Chapman Foods was at Bellevue, and Watsonia is at Spearwood.

Some of these people have been offered employment at Spearwood, but members must bear in mind the location of those establishments and the distances the people must travel. Many of them are very low-paid workers, and they should not have to go to work at Spearwood.

I raise the point of the lack of redundancy provisions in this State when people are subjected to this sort of treatment. It has been drawn to my attention that 18 will be affected tomorrow. When the takeover occurred in May and there was a reorganisation by Watsonia, a number of people lost their employment at very short notice and without consultation with the union. I think the union had a couple of days' notice of the changes taking place.

On this occasion the union met with the company last Friday, and the workers were told on Monday that at the end of this week some would be offered employment at Spearwood and the employment of others would be terminated. Retrenchments would be unavoidable.

In view of the time I am allowed, I want to concentrate on one individual. He has been working with the company for 38 and a half years. He lives at Bayswater and is on a gross rate of pay of \$275.75 a week. He is one of the lucky ones who has been offered employment, but he cannot possibly be expected to travel all the way to Spearwood without a travelling allowance.

Another couple will be paid \$30 travelling allowance because no doubt their expertise is required by the company. I am not aware of whether they will accept employment, but this first person is 58 years of age, he has been with the company for 38 and a half years, and he

has been offered 13 weeks' redundancy payment. In my view this is totally inadequate. How do members expect a man of that age to find employment, particularly in view of the fact he has had such long-term employment with this company. He should have received better treatment. Three of the people involved are over 50, six are 40 years and over, and one person is 60 years of age.

I have spoken with the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union. We have heard from members opposite about the muscle that unions use, and allegations that they are irresponsible. On this occasion I claim that this firm, a division of Western Foods, is acting irresponsibly. In the first instance it has not given the union sufficient time to negotiate a decent redundancy package. It has acted very swiftly. Secondly, its treatment of this individual is very poor indeed.

It is high time this Parliament looked at redundancy packages. We must put some legislation in place. It is not the proper thing for industrial commissions to deal with; it should be dealt with by the Parliament. We should be concerned about the little people, because this is one man who has been adversely affected after a long period of employment in his firm. The situation is disgraceful and it ought to be reported to this House, and that is what I am doing.

I apologise for the time I have taken.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.07 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

MOTOR VEHICLES: GOVERNMENT

Second-hand: Purchasers

289. Hon D.J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) What protection is given to the public buying second-hand vehicles, ex State Government fleet, sold by way of auction?
- (2) Is this protection, if any, similar to protection given to purchasers of vehicles from second hand car dealers?
- (3) If not, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1) to (3) Vehicles sold by auction, other than vehicles owned by trade owners -- dealers -- do not attract the warranty provisions of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act.

MS MAUREEN KELLY

Report: Tabling

290. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services:

Further to my questions 237 of Wednesday, 26 September 1984 and 17 of Thursday 12 June 1986, will the Minister advise --

- (1) Is the report of Ms Maureen Kelly now available for tabling?
- (2) If not, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The purpose of Ms Maureen Kelly's visit in 1984 was for her, as an Aboriginal, to gain a practical appreciation of the experiences of indigenous people in other countries. I am satisfied that this was achieved. The report was prepared for internal purposes and is not appropriate for tabling in Parliament.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

Hire Charges: Non-Government Schools

291. Hon N.F. MOORE, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it correct that hire charges for Transperth buses are greater for non-Government schools than for Government schools?
- (2) If so, what are the reasons for this?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1) and (2) The same rate of hire charge is applied to Government and non-Government schools. However, in the case of Government schools, a subsidy of 26c per kilometre is paid by the Education Department.

EDUCATION: AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Minor Works: Allocations

293. Hon H.W. GAYFER, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it correct that only \$41 000 was allocated in the last financial year to defray agricultural education minor works expenses for all agriculture colleges in WA?
- (2) Is it proposed to increase the allowance in the next State Budget, bearing in mind the number of colleges?
- (3) If not, why not?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) No. In 1985-1987 \$71 000 was made available through the agricultural education branch.
- (2) and (3) The information requested will be available when the State's Budget is brought down.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Grimwade: Costs

294. Hon W.N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) What are the annual costs of running the Grimwade Department of Conservation and Land Management establishment for the last three years?
- (2) Is it the department's intention to close down Grimwade settlement altogether and if so, for what reasons?
- (3) Has the Minister been requested to sell the houses and land to --
 - (a) present residents;
 - (b) other persons; or
 - (c) other companies or organisations?
- (4) What has been his response to offers to purchase the above land and houses?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) A firm figure is not available, but the estimate is \$20 000 per annum.

(2) It is intended to phase out Grimwade settlement as CALM's activities are progressively focused on the district headquarters in Kirup.

(3) It has not been suggested that the land be sold. The land involved is State forest and is not available for sale. However, there have been suggestions that some of the present tenants be permitted to buy the houses and lease the land on which the houses are built.

(4) The suggestion that the houses be sold and the land leased out is not favoured.

The department's present policy is to put the houses up for tender as they become vacant, on the condition that they be removed from the settlement. That policy does not envisage the eviction of the present tenants.

MINERALS: QUARRY

Blue-metal: Nippering

295. Hon W.N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the intention of Westrail to reopen the Nippering blue-metal quarry near Dumbleyung?
- (2) If so --
 - (a) within the next 12 months;
 - (b) when; or
 - (c) ever?
- (3) If Westrail does not intend to use the quarry, will it consider leasing or selling it?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) No;
 - (b) and (c) approximately two years hence.
- (3) Westrail has an ongoing long-term requirement for the quarry, and it is not for sale. Westrail is prepared to consider commercial proposals for extraction of stone from the quarry.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TEACHERS CREDIT SOCIETY

Takeover: Attorney General's Role

122. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

Was he, as Attorney General or Minister for Budget Management, involved in any consultation with regard to the takeover by the R & I Bank of the Teachers Credit Society's operations?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

I was engaged in brief consultations immediately before the decisions were made.

TEACHERS CREDIT SOCIETY

Takeover: Attorney General's Role

123. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

Did he have access to any of the documents concerning the new arrangements and particularly the financial arrangements of some people in the public area. I do not think he explained that.

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

No.

TEACHERS CREDIT SOCIETY

Accounts: Confidentiality

124. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

What protection has the private citizen who has made financial arrangements with the Teachers Credit Society against having his personal or confidential affairs publicised as they were in one case yesterday?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The depositors with the credit union can have every confidence in the confidentiality of their material. As to the further detail of this question, I must advise the Leader of the Opposition that I am not the Minister responsible for the administration of credit union legislation.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Definition of Role

125. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

Does the Attorney General agree with the definition in one of the dictionaries which states the following --

Attorney General -- the chief law officer of a government and the minister responsible for the administration of justice.

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

That sounds fairly right to me.

LIBERAL PARTY

Members: Confidentiality of Dealings

126. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

In view of the Attorney General's acceptance that he is responsible for fair play and

justice in this State, and in view of Mr Keith Simpson's confidential and private matters being publicised yesterday, is it likely that the personal and private affairs of other members of the Liberal Party will be published in the same fashion?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The question has absolutely nothing to do with my area of authority as Attorney General.

LIBERAL PARTY

Members: Confidentiality of Dealings

127. Hon G.E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General:

If such information is publicised, would he as the Attorney General administering justice in this State take appropriate action against the people who publicised that information?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

The Leader of the Opposition entirely misunderstands the nature of the office of Attorney General. This has been explained at length on numerous occasions in this House, not least by my predecessor, Hon Ian Medcalf. The Leader of the Opposition would know as well as I that this latest question does not relate to my area of responsibility.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Commissioner: Appointment

128. Hon MAX EVANS, to the Attorney General:

(1) Has an appointment of a Commissioner for Corporate Affairs been made?

(2) If not, can the Attorney General assure us that he will be a man of integrity, not a political appointee or somebody from the WADC?

Hon J.M. BERINSON replied:

(1) An appointment has not been made.

(2) This is an extraordinary question. The position has been advertised and it will be dealt with in the normal way. Applications will be considered and a proper panel will evaluate them and no doubt make recommendations in due course.
