

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 12 August 1980

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by the Hon. M. McAleer, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. C. E. Griffiths (President) due to ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 6 August.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [5.17 p.m.]: Firstly, I wish the President of the Legislative Council well and hope we see him here in the very near future; I understand his health is improving rapidly.

It is traditional during the Address-in-Reply debate in this place for members to comment on some of the problems being experienced by people in their electorates, and I do not intend to deviate from that tradition this afternoon.

Probably the greatest problem being faced by country people at present—and, most likely, in the foreseeable future—is that of transport costs. We know there are several reasons for high transport costs to country areas. However, many people do not fully understand the direct implications of increases in transport costs on people in country areas, and the suffering they cause. Certainly, the world parity pricing policy has resulted in increased costs in all country electorates.

Quite frankly, I do not know what is the solution. I know it is all too easy to stand in this place and criticise something without offering alternatives. However, when one considers what is taking place around this State, one wonders exactly where we are going.

Let me refer members to the railways situation. If a person were to stand alongside the railway line going through Kalgoorlie, he would see long rakes of empty wagons careering on over to the Eastern States. Those wagons originally carried motor vehicles and other products to Western

Australia, and they always seem to return empty. However, if that person were then to transport an item such as a refrigerator by rail from Kewdale to Kalgoorlie, he would be staggered by the bill he received from Westrail; he would wonder what life was all about, and I would not blame him.

We are fast reaching the stage where, if we do not consider utilising other forms of transport, people in country areas will be placed at a tremendous and increasing disadvantage. I acknowledge it costs money to transport something from point A to point B, but we do not seem to be going the right way about solving the problem. The Government says, "If we make a special allowance for that fellow, somebody somewhere else in the State will want that same allowance." So, the Government believes it is better to do nothing for anybody, and allow empty rail wagons to run all over the State in a ridiculous manner.

The Government withdrew the freezer transport service from the railways, and gave it to road transport. Since then, the freight rate has escalated to more than double the rate charged by rail. Passenger trains travel between the Eastern States and Western Australia in both directions every day of the week; we see flat-topped trucks, with one or two passenger cars on the back. Surely it would be possible to carry roll-on roll-off wagons to cater for refrigerated goods. But no, the Government seems to turn a blind eye to these problems. It is prepared to allow people living in country areas to be grossly disadvantaged, and takes no notice of the situation.

The major cause of increasing transport costs, of course, is the world oil parity price policy adopted by the Federal Liberal Government.

Unfortunately, that is not the only area creating havoc and hardship in my electorate. At the moment, power generation in the goldfields is catered for by diesel generators under the control of the Kalgoorlie Town Council. Because of the policies of the Federal Government in relation to oil prices, these power generating plants in Western Australia are being forced out of the hands of the local authorities and are being swallowed up by the State Energy Commission. In fact, only two power generating plants in Western Australia are still outside the control of the SEC—one in Carnarvon, and the other in Kalgoorlie.

Some months ago, the Kalgoorlie Town Council made representations to have the SEC take over its power generating facilities. For some time, negotiations and arguments have been taking place between the SEC and the town

council as to when the unit will be taken over, what will be paid for it, and the general, run-of-the-mill conditions to be laid down.

I note in this morning's newspaper that the State Energy Commission has decided to take over the Kalgoorlie Town Council's diesel power generating unit as from 10 September this year. However, the point which startled everybody reading this small article in the local newspaper is that an interim tariff will be charged to goldfields' consumers from 10 September this year to 1 January 1982; the tariff will be set somewhere between the 10.26c a unit which they pay at the moment and the 5.3c a unit the rest of the people of Western Australia—apart from those living in the Shire of Carnarvon—currently pay.

As far as I am concerned, if this is allowed to occur it will be a criminal act without precedent in this State. No other community has been charged an interim tariff after the SEC has taken over a local authority power station. However, due to the ridiculous world parity oil price policy insisted upon by the Federal Liberal Government, this sort of thing is forced upon the people in my electorate.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Of course, the Arabs have nothing to do with the price of oil?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Mr Moore should not talk; he would not know a bee from a bull's foot! If he did, he would be up on his feet screaming about these things. It will be a criminal act for the SEC to charge the people of the goldfields an interim tariff higher than that paid by other SEC consumers throughout Western Australia. There is neither justification nor precedent for such a charge. If the Government condones this tariff, it will be sinking to the very depths of political depravity. As far as I am concerned, if it is condoned it will be because the people of the goldfields do not vote the way this State Government would like them to vote.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: That is absolute nonsense!

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: It is a penalty on the people of the goldfields.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: We have spent millions of dollars in Kalgoorlie.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: If this is what democracy is all about, I do not know why I am standing here. It is the most blatant thing which has ever happened to the people of Kalgoorlie in many a long day—and, my goodness, those people have had some terrible things happen to them!

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: If what you are saying is true, it is tantamount to blackmail.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: That is exactly what it is.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: That is absolute nonsense! More money has been spent in Kalgoorlie than anywhere else in Western Australia.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: It just does not make sense. The people of Menzies, Leonora, Wiluna, and Laverton pay the same price for their power as do metropolitan consumers.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: That is one of the policies of our Government.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: That is right. Then why does the Government not implement that policy in Kalgoorlie?

The Hon. N. F. Moore: We are reducing the price paid by half. You mentioned the people of Kalgoorlie currently are paying over 10c a unit, and that that charge will be reduced to just over 5c a unit.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I said the current rate was 10.26c a unit and that the rate paid by the rest of the State was 5.3c.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Then there will be a reduction.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: What is the interim charge going to be?

The Hon. N. F. Moore: I do not know what it is all about. You mentioned it was in today's newspaper; I did not read the article. However, in the long run the effect will be to reduce the cost of power to 5.3c a unit, which represents a benefit to the people of the goldfields.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: In the long run, yes. However, I am talking about the 16 months leading up to 1 January 1982, during which time an interim charge of somewhere between 10.26c and 5.3c a unit will be imposed upon the people of the goldfields. An interim tariff has never been imposed on any other Western Australian local authority; there is no justification or precedent for such a move. It is laughable to think that people living in isolated places like Wyndham, Wiluna, Menzies, and Esperance are paying less than the people of Kalgoorlie will be required to pay by the same power generating authority. The people of Kalgoorlie will be made to suffer because of a policy of the Liberal Government.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Wait a minute. Was it not the Kalgoorlie Town Council which decided it did not want to hand over its power generating facilities to the SEC? Did it not refuse to hand them over? Now the council has decided things are getting too hot to handle, and it wants to hand

over these facilities to the SEC, yet you are standing here and moaning about it.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I am making this speech.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Yes, and you are getting into hot water.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Minister may think so, but I am not. The Kalgoorlie Town Council has never been asked to hand over these facilities. However, Mr Lewis should know that under the country towns assistance scheme, they can be handed over on a voluntary basis. That is exactly what the council did some months ago.

Obviously, the local authority has put a great deal of money, work, sweat, and guts into building this power station and it would not hand it over unless it had to. It has been forced into giving it away because of the policies of the Federal Liberal Government. It is all right for members opposite to laugh. We talk about oil policies, petrol prices, and things members opposite would not know anything about—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are referring to twice as much being charged. What do you reckon it is worth if they want to give it to the States?

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: They are not getting very much, but the Minister for Lands is one of those people who make the decision on interim charges. Are we thrilled about that! Fancy having the Minister for Lands making the decision! However, he helps to do so, but he could not give a damn.

Four or five members opposite were up in Kalgoorlie, including Tom Knight.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I do not know why they went up there.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What would you do then?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Government must take it over.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You have taken over in most other places.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. Neil McNeill: You would be safer to change the subject.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I want to protest most strongly about this sort of situation. It should never have been allowed to happen. Both the Government and the State Energy

Commission have been so vague about the situation when giving anyone any information. I know the mayor up there is still trying to find out exactly what the position will be. I want to make the situation quite clear because the people up there should not be made to suffer more than do the rest of the people of Western Australia. The position is ridiculous. We are all residents of the State and should all pay the same amount.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You have never asked to be part of the State. You wanted to run your own show.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Government was asked to take it over.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: But up until now you wanted to run your own show.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Up until six months ago, when the Town of Kalgoorlie asked that the facility be taken over by the SEC. Now the SEC is going to do so.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You cannot do it in a day.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I am not talking about the time taken, but about the price to be charged for the electricity once it is taken over. That is the point which concerns me.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Does the article say what the interim charge will be?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: No. Rumour is that it will be half-way between the existing charge and the State charge.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Does rumour say why?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: No, rumour does not, and certainly these people do not.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Direct the question to everyone in this Chamber because they will foot the bill or pick up the tab.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Yes, but the Minister for Lands is one of those who will make the decision. He will suffer from his actions as will the other members of this Chamber.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: They have been suffering over the years.

I hope I have made my point although I might as well talk to the wall. I have done my best on behalf of the people I represent and a great deal more will be said about this problem in the very near future in this place and in other places. I do not know what other places, but it will be raised in other places.

I want to raise another issue, and once again I might as well talk to the wall. Thank goodness we have *Hansard* and the Press, anyhow. Some two years ago representation was made by the mining companies, members of Parliament, and people in general regarding the establishment of a type of custom mill on the goldfields for the treatment of prospectors' ore. This facility was to be in addition to the State Battery. After a great deal of discussion the Government finally latched on to the suggestion, probably because it had in mind that an election was in the offing and it, the Government, might be able to pinch a vote here and there.

After the feasibility study was completed and a plan costed, it was decided that such a mill would cost between \$3 million and \$5 million. North Kalgurli approached the Government and indicated it was treating nickel, but had to close down its operation. It desired to convert to gold treatment so that it could treat prospectors' ore. The Government asked the company to make a submission which it did, and it was agreed that the Government would lend \$500 000 to assist in the conversion of the plant so that it could treat gold ore instead of nickel. North Kalgurli was happy and so was the Government because it had to pay out only \$500 000 which would be paid back anyway.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: It provided a good facility.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: It did. However, now the company has indicated that it does not want to treat any more ore from prospectors as from July next year. It intends to reopen its gold mine and will consequently treat its own ore. The company is treating something like 5 000 tons—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: During the debate on the Mining Bill you walked out.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: It is pathetic.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It was pathetic. You were not prepared to be counted.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I will get onto the Mining Bill before I sit down.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Good.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Is that a promise?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The company is treating 5 000 tons of prospectors' ore a month, but it has the capacity to treat 15 000 tons or more. Therefore, the plant has the potential to treat more ore from prospectors. Originally there was concern that the facility might not be used to its fullest capacity. In fact it was felt that it might not even get enough ore for the plant to get off the ground. However, it was found that there was

sufficient ore and the mill is doing a magnificent job; and it is quite plain that the Government was conned by North Kalgurli. Let me get it right.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Don't forget what you said; that is, that there is a *Hansard* reporter here. Get it right.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Certainly some of the prospectors were conned into believing that they would have a full-time mill for many years to come. Because they believed this they opened up large prospecting shows and employed many people. Things are very rosy. However, now they find that after June next year, they will not have the crushing facilities.

The State Battery is very slow. It is just like a giant dolly pot and does not crush very much ore. In addition, the State Battery does not extract sufficient gold from the ore it crushes. The extraction rate can be as low as 50 per cent.

With regard to crushing facilities the prospectors are back to square one.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Isn't it a good idea for North Kalgurli to recommence operations and again employ people?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Of course it is.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Isn't North Kalgurli going to use the facilities?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: That is another story and could involve a further hour's debate. However I will deal with that later on. I certainly agree with North Kalgurli starting up again and employing another 350 men which is what it intends.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is tremendous.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: However, I also want a custom mill which can be used by prospectors in the area. In 12 months' time they will not have one because of the short-sightedness of the Government which loaned a lousy \$500 000 to enable the company to get itself back into production so it can treat gold ore from its own mine.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Wasn't it you a few years ago who said the Government ought to encourage the mines to open up?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Of course, and the Government did so.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is right.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Liberal Government closed the mines down in February 1976.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: And ever since you have said they should have encouragement to open up. Now you are criticising the Government for the

encouragement which resulted in the mines opening up.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: We desperately need a custom mill, but we must start from square one again. We must ask the Government to help fund a scheme for the establishment of a custom mill. It would not matter whether this was a Government-private enterprise mill, a private enterprise mill, or a Government mill. However, it is required as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, a great deal of time as well as money will be needed. Even if such a mill were commenced now, it would not be established by the time North Kalgurli closes its facility to the prospectors.

There is no time for the Government to sit down and think about the problem. It must get cracking. It must use the \$500 000 which North Kalgurli owes the Government and add some to it. Apparently the Government is flush with brass according to certain statements. We must have this facility in the goldfields for future use.

I wish to mention one other matter before I conclude. A moment ago Mr Lewis referred to the Mining Act. I was very pleased to read in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that a large number of Liberal members of Parliament who were in Kalgoorlie on the weekend will oppose the mining legislation. The article is interesting and, among other things, states—

An attempt will be made to influence the State Government to make changes to the new mining Act and draft regulations.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: What is the date of the newspaper?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: To continue—

There has been a general feeling among Liberal supporters that the Act and draft regulations cost the party votes in the Goldfields at the last State election.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Now tell us where it states that members of Parliament will oppose the legislation or regulations.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I cannot find the funny bit. Actually the whole article is funny.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: You are doing all right by yourself.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The comics are on the back page.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: That is what the Minister would read first.

Getting back to the Mining Act regulations, it will be interesting to see all those Liberal members who were in Kalgoorlie on the weekend oppose the draft regulations.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: Where does the article say that any Liberal member of Parliament will oppose the draft regulations? It does not say that. It states that some members of the party oppose the draft regulations—not that members of Parliament oppose them.

The Hon. T. Knight: No member of Parliament made that statement.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: You point out where it states that members of Parliament will oppose them.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Of course, if I had to worry about "Charlie" like members opposite do, I would not make silly statements like that.

The Hon. N. F. Moore: You made the silly statement. You said that Liberal members of Parliament would oppose the regulations.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair and ignore these interjections.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I shall certainly do so at all times, Sir. We have an Act which nobody wants. Government members voted for it unanimously when it was passed in this House.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Perhaps the Government allowed one member to cross the floor. I cannot remember exactly.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Mr Gayfer will be hurt, too.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: We have been told that members of the Liberal Party believe votes were lost in the goldfields as a result of the passing of the Mining Act. That seems to me to be a funny situation. Recently Mr Cotter made a statement in a newspaper to the effect that he felt the Mining Act had cost his party a few votes. He was a little concerned about the effect it has had on his electorate. I have no doubt he is worried about it, because he has good reason to be concerned. A Federal election is pending and some members are concerned about the matter. It will be interesting to hear members' comments when the draft regulations are placed on the Table of the House.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Are you going to sit here and listen to them?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I do not intend to listen to the rubbish put forward by the member who has just interjected. I am aware of the comments made by members opposite, both inside and outside this House, over the last two or three years. The people in my electorate will never

forget what members opposite have said. It is heartening to know we can look forward to some great changes after the Federal election has taken place.

I could mention a number of other matters, Sir, but I would prefer to do so at a later date. Many important issues have arisen in my electorate and I intend to do what I can to alleviate some of the problems which are being experienced.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Don't hide them.

THE HON. P. H. LOCKYER (Lower North) [5.47 p.m.]: This is an occasion on which I am sure most members of the Chamber feel some form of anxiety and I am no different from anyone else. I enjoyed listening to the speech made by the previous member, in particular the portion relating to public utilities. I have some knowledge of that matter and I should like to debate it with the member at some other time, perhaps outside the House.

I wish to take the opportunity during my maiden speech to comment on some problems being experienced in my electorate. I believe this is the appropriate time to do so. However, before referring to my electorate I should like to ask you, Sir, to convey my best wishes to the President. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of this House when I wish him an early recovery. I am told the President is now able to accept visitors other than "relations and priests", and it is hoped that he will be back with us soon.

I should like to express my appreciation for the welcome which has been accorded me in this place, not only by members of my own party, but also by members of the Opposition and the staff. It is true that when a person enters Parliament he does so with a degree of trepidation. Some members have been here for a long time and it is not easy for a new member to adjust to the situation; but I have been made very welcome by members on both sides of the House. Were the President with us tonight, I should thank him for the kindness he has shown me and the way in which he has guided me in the right direction. I commend him on his organisation of the instruction day held in this Chamber prior to the opening of Parliament. It was beneficial to all who attended. As a result, I entered the Chamber on opening day a much wiser person than otherwise I would have been.

I should like to congratulate the members who have just been elected to the House and also those who have been re-elected. I extend my congratulations also to the Hon. Ian Medcalf on his election to the position of Leader of the House.

I should like now to turn to the situation in my electorate of Lower North Province. Some of the remarks made on opening day are relevant to my electorate, because it consists of 500 000 square miles. It stretches from Exmouth in the north to the Murchison River in the south, and east to the border. It covers a big area. The electorate is sparsely populated and it takes a great deal of time to cover it adequately. A large portion of my electorate is made up of pastoral properties, about which questions have been asked in this Chamber tonight.

I should like to point out, however, that a great number of the agricultural and pastoral properties in Western Australia have suffered a devastating drought in the last 4½ years. Fortunately we have received some beneficial rains in pastoral areas this year, and one may be led to believe that all the problems of the people in these areas have been solved. However, this is not the case.

I shall refer now to some of the devastating problems—and I use that word advisedly—faced by people in pastoral areas. In 1969 properties in the Gascoyne area enjoyed a sheep stock number of 1.3 million. The Department of Agriculture has told me that that figure has been reduced by more than half to approximately 640 000 this year. In 1969 farmers were faced with a similar problem to that which is being faced today. It was necessary for them to restock their properties and fortunately ample stock was available. The pastoralists restocked as best they could. At that time breeding stock cost from \$2 to \$4 per head. The pastoralists were charged approximately 80c per road mile for the delivery of stock to their properties. Those pastoralists who could afford to restock did so.

Today similar breeding stock costs between \$22 and \$25 a head. As a result, very few farmers can afford to restock. It costs \$2.40 per mile to employ a stock carrier to take the stock back to the pastoral properties. At the present time, because of an Australia-wide drought, these people are experiencing great difficulty finding suitable animals with which to restock their properties.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. T. Knight): There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask members to afford the member who is on his feet the courtesy he deserves.

The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER: Thank you, sir. I would appreciate it if the Hon. Peter Dowding showed me that courtesy. He is a friend of mine and I went to school with him.

The figures I have quoted were given to me by Mr N. Williamson who is an Australia-wide authority on these matters. He works for the stock firm of Elders and he is familiar with the situation.

Unless we give pastoralists adequate consideration a number of them will go to the wall. This would be unfortunate, because it is undesirable for large tracts of the country to be unattended. Pastoral people have experienced criticism as a result of their mode of living. It has been claimed that all pastoralists drive Rolls Royces, and similar criticisms have been made. However, if one were to drive through a pastoral area today, it is unlikely one would see a new car. Such luxuries are things of the past. It should be remembered also that pastoralists are not able to follow the example of those who live in the city by changing from an eight-cylinder to a four-cylinder vehicle in order to reduce petrol consumption. Most pastoralists drive four-cylinder vehicles anyway. They have to travel around their properties, and therefore, they cannot reduce their mileages.

Most pastoralists have reduced their staff numbers to a bare minimum. In fact, frequently pastoral properties are now run by a husband-and-wife team, whereas formerly—10 to 15 years ago—they would have employed five or six people. One does not see pastoralists employing jackeroos today.

These people do not want hand-outs. They are strong people, but they want a little consideration. Although good rains have been enjoyed this year, more rain will be required next year before the problems can be alleviated.

Recently I spoke to Mr Eric Scott from Wynyangoo Station and he said that the trees which were devastated during the drought are just beginning to sprout. Three or four years of light stocking will be required before the trees are restored fully.

I should like to comment on the vermin problem and, in particular, the situation in regard to kangaroos. Some of my remarks may incite criticism from conservationists, but I feel it is necessary to bring the matter to the attention of the House. As a result of the good rains we have had, excellent feed will be available on pastoral stations. However, it is impossible to restock in some areas and stations will be invaded by kangaroos. As members are aware, kangaroos can breed four times in three years and one does not need to be a great mathematician to work out that, in the next 12 months or so, pastoralists will be faced with a big problem. The Minister for

Fisheries and Wildlife is in the Chamber and I am sure he is familiar with the problem. It is necessary to streamline the means by which shooters can deal with this problem in pastoral areas. We must encourage exporters, processors, shooters, and pastoralists to get together and solve the problems which exist. This must be done quickly, because as soon as the thunderstorms come in early summer and the grass sprouts the kangaroos will wipe out a property almost overnight.

I should like to turn to a matter which is a feature of most electorates and which I believe should be encouraged. I am referring to tourism. I see the Minister for Tourism is present at the back of the Chamber. I am sure he will agree that today tourism is the world's biggest business. In such areas as Exmouth, Carnarvon, and Shark Bay tourism is of great importance. These areas are known for their fishing. Areas such as Cue, Leinster, and Leonora are flourishing today. Large numbers of people travel there with metal detectors and search for gold and some of them are fortunate enough to find some. Therefore, it can be seen it is important that the public of Western Australia pay more attention to our tourists.

It never ceases to amaze me that, no matter where one goes, one sees local people being rude to tourists. Tourists are called "terrorists" and they experience rudeness in shops. I do not mean to imply that all Western Australians are guilty of this; but a certain percentage of people fail to respond to tourists in the correct manner. It does not take many rude people to frighten off a tourist. That tourist will tell a friend about the situation and the industry will suffer.

If we want to encourage people from overseas, or even people in Western Australia, to travel to country towns, it is important that we carry out a public relations exercise designed to instruct people on how to look after tourists.

Many towns in my electorate offer hospitality to tourists. Excellent facilities are available and visitors are looked after very well. It is unfortunate that an increasing number of accidents are occurring in which cars towing caravans are involved. I carried out some research on this matter and discovered that, to date in 1980, there have been 93 accidents involving cars and caravans on the roads. That figure included three fatal accidents.

It is possible an anomaly exists in the Act, because a 17-year-old can obtain his driver's licence one day and drive a car, towing a 20-foot caravan, to Darwin the next. The authorities do

not seem to be concerned about the number of vehicles he may collide with between here and his destination. This matter should be looked at.

Mining is booming in Lower North Province. I was happy to hear the Hon. Ron Leeson say he expects mining to improve in Kalgoorlie. The Agnew Mining Company at Leinster is at full strength with its nickel operation. I was in Kalgoorlie at the weekend and, according to the information given to me by some of the local people, there are no vacant homes in the Leinster area at the present time. The same situation is occurring at Laverton with the reopening of mining operations. Approximately 20 or 30 families are expected to move into the area in the next few weeks. The Hill 50 Company of Mt Magnet has announced that there will be an influx into the area of approximately 200 people before the end of the year. It is encouraging to see the signs of an improvement in the mining industry.

I should like to mention briefly the recent flood in Carnarvon. Most members will have read about it in the Press and undoubtedly they would have spoken to people who have been there. Some confusion exists as to the levee banks which were built. They were constructed prior to the 1970s to protect the residential part of Carnarvon. I am happy to say that, during the recent floods there, the residential area was protected by these banks.

Problems were experienced in the plantation areas during the floods, but it has to be accepted that this situation can arise in a town like Carnarvon, because it is situated on a flood delta. However, the people who live there are tough. They have faced the problems and, in some cases, two or three days after the floods planting was underway once more.

Quick action by the Public Works Department resulted in photographs of the flood at its height, and those photographs will be of considerable assistance towards offsetting this problem in the future. Some people asked why a dam had not been constructed in the Kennedy Range, and they claimed that would have solved the problem. However, I make the point that even if there had been a dam in the Kennedy Range sufficient water passed through that area every 12 hours to fill the Sydney Harbour, so a dam would not have been of much use in combating the problem.

The Galena Bridge, over the Murchison River, was under water on two occasions. The first time it occurred there was great disruption to the transport of plantation produce from Carnarvon to the Perth markets. In fact, the RAAF had to come to the assistance of the growers. I commend

the RAAF, and the Government, on the assistance provided to the growers. There were many happy people in Carnarvon as a result of that action. The transport industry is important to the economy of Western Australia, and the closing of the Galena Bridge was reflected in the prices which had to be paid by housewives for produce in the metropolitan area. It is important that consideration be given to the construction of a new bridge over the Murchison River to avoid inconvenience in the future. I know the Minister for Transport is looking into the situation and I hope sincerely he is able to do something about it.

Fishing in Western Australia is probably our most important undeveloped industry. Game fishing at Exmouth is second to none, and I include the blue waters around Cairns on our eastern coast. The Government has assisted the Shark Bay fishing co-operative in the construction of a new building. I am happy to note that my good friend, the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife (the Hon. G. E. Masters) will open the new building during September. That will provide a whole new concept for the small fishermen in the area. Mullet and whiting fishing already provide a thriving industry in Shark Bay. With the sealing of the access road, the industry can only improve.

I will now address a few comments to the matter of Aborigines in my area. There have been many comments with regard to Aborigines during the last few weeks, but I do not want to enter into the type of argument which has been raised. However, I want to place on record my own views with regard to the Aborigines. I do agree with some of the comments made by Ken Colbung when he stated we should be tackling the problem rather than just yapping about it.

My comments concern the early pastoralists who, at various times in the past, have come in for some criticism for not having solved their problems associated with Aborigines. I do not intend to debate the rights or wrongs of the past, but many pastoralists did considerable good for the Aborigines. I am not saying that some pastoralists did not abuse their positions; some did.

I will refer to an article which appeared in *The West Australian* of 7 August 1980. It appeared in the "News of the North" section, and I believe the comments are worth recording. The article reads—

One can hardly pick up a newspaper these days without reading about the problems of our unfortunate fringe-dwellers.

I know it is very easy to be wise after the event but, these problems have, by and large, only been created over the last 30 years by do-gooders and unions who had little or no knowledge of the Aboriginal people.

I mention, again, these are not my own words. To continue—

When I first came into the pastoral areas in the early '50s every station had a native population of upwards of 20 or 30 people.

The younger men worked as stockmen, the girls and women worked in and around the house while the older people sat round and looked after the children.

The accommodation was fairly rough but no worse than on the reserves today and everyone was well fed.

The children received a pretty scrappy sort of basic education from the governess, who was an integral part of station life.

The working stockmen received a minimal wage of about 30 shillings a week but their families, including the old people, were fed and housed.

This system was open to abuse and in a few cases, this did occur. But, in the main they were a happy people.

When it was decreed that all workers on the station should receive the appropriate award wage it was not an economic proposition to the station owners for the system to continue.

Whole families who had been born and bred on the properties were moved out into the towns to the so-called reserves.

A once proud and happy people lost their identity and became our fringe-dwellers.

Soon after this they were given drinking rights without any education in the handling of liquor and the downward trend escalated.

I am not attempting to offer a solution to the problem because I do not think there is one while current thinking, based on handouts, exists. But I think it important that newcomers to the area should know how the situation arose.

These unfortunate people have been pushed into a position not of their own making.

That article was written by Jack Haynes, a very responsible gentleman from the town of Port Hedland. I might also mention that he is a Past President of the Labor Party.

In summary: I look forward to my future years in this House. I have a strong desire to represent the people in my electorate. I do not apologise for the sparse number of electors in it, and I am quite happy to enter into debate on that subject at any particular time. I thank members for their indulgence and, as I have said, I certainly look forward to my future years here.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. P. H. Wells.

House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ROADS

Belmont Avenue-Wright Street Intersection

21. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In view of the high accident rate at the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Wright Street, Belmont, will the Minister advise whether it is intended to equip this intersection with traffic lights?
- (2) (a) If not, why not; and
(b) if "Yes" to (1), when is it likely that they will be installed?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) Traffic management measures in the vicinity of the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Wright Street, Belmont are currently the subject of discussion between council and the Main Roads Department. These measures have not yet been finalised, but, if implemented, are likely to obviate the need for traffic lights. Funding for channelisation work at the intersection has been provided in the current programme.

FISHERIES

CSIRO Research Unit

22. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is he aware of the intention of the Federal Government to shift the CSIRO Fisheries and Oceanography Research Unit from Cronulla, New South Wales, to Tasmania?
- (2) If "Yes", did the State Government make an approach to the Federal Government to have the research unit re-located in Western Australia?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, although two Western Australians were members of the committee of review set up last year to inquire into the functioning of the CSIRO in the areas of fisheries and oceanography.

The final decision to move the Cronulla research unit to Tasmania was made by the Federal Government.

For the information of the honourable member there already is a CSIRO laboratory in existence in Western Australia, the laboratory being situated adjacent to the WA Marine Research Laboratories at Watermans.

ARREST

Legislation

23. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

- (1) In view of the Government's announced intention to introduce the State's first Act dealing comprehensively with all aspects of bail, has the Government given any attention to the need to deal comprehensively in one Statute with all aspects of arrest?
- (2) If the matter has not been considered, will the Minister refer it to the Law Reform Commission for attention?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) No. However, review is being made of the Criminal Code in the course of which consideration is being given to the general powers of arrest set out in that statute.
- (2) The question may be further considered following the review referred to.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Turnover: Country Agencies

24. The Hon. TOM McNEIL, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the Totalisator Agency Board turnover of each individual country agency for the year 1978-79?
- (2) If "No" to (1)—
(a) why not; and
(b) will he provide the total turnover figure for the area covered by agencies at—
(i) Northampton;
(ii) Geraldton;
(iii) Dongara;
(iv) Mullewa; and
(v) Morawa?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) and (2) The Totalisator Agency Board is an independent statutory corporation which has always conducted its operations on a commercial basis. Unless there was special reason to do so, the Government would not be prepared to identify information which would be regarded as confidential by private commercial operators. If the honourable member has a particular reason for seeking this information, he is invited to make personal contact with the Chief Secretary.

In fact, the particular information sought is both not readily available and, if extracted, which would be a lengthy process, would be incomplete.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Damage: Liability

25. The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Has the Public Service Board or the Crown Law Department been called upon to advise statutory employers or departments in respect of the liability of employees for damage caused in cases where a duty of care devolves upon the employee?
- (2) If so, will he table a copy of such advice?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes, it has been ascertained that the Crown Law Department has, this year, given advice in relation to this legal question.
- (2) No. The opinions of the law officers of the Crown, being confidential, are not tabled.

CRIMINAL INJURIES (COMPENSATION) ACT

Applications and Amounts Paid

26. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Attorney General:

In each full year since the enactment of the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) Act—

- (1) How many applications for compensation pursuant to section 7 of the Act were made?
- (2) What was the amount represented by the total of sums ordered to be paid less the recoverable amounts referred to in section 7(i)(b) of the Act?
- (3) What was the total cost to consolidated revenue of compensation paid?
- (4) In how many cases and by how much did the Treasurer in the exercise of his discretion reduce the sum which would otherwise have been payable pursuant to the Act?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Information not available and would take a considerable time to ascertain, but payments were made in the following number of instances—

| 1972-73 | 1973-74 | 1974-75 | 1975-76 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 19 |
| 1976-77 | 1977-78 | 1978-79 | 1979-80 |
| 21 | 34 | 35 | 57 |

- (2) To ascertain the amount represented by the total of sums ordered to be paid would require an examination of all files over the period; nor has it been the practice of the under secretary to specify amounts under the subsection referred to due to the difficulty of forming a relevant opinion in such cases.

- (3)
- | 1972-73 | 1973-74 | 1974-75 | 1975-76 |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| \$3 000 | \$120 | \$8 500 | \$18 806 |
| 1976-77 | 1977-78 | 1978-79 | 1979-80 |
| \$29 138 | \$45 446 | \$74 805 | \$166 021 |

These are actual disbursements and have not been reduced by amounts recovered.

- (4) For the same reason given in the answer to (2), this information is not readily available. In some cases the amount paid out of Consolidated Revenue has been less, and in at least one instance more, than the amount awarded by the court.

PRISONS

Imprisonment Rate: Inquiry

27. The Hon. P. M. DOWDING, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

With reference to the answer to question 1 given on 5 August, 1980—

- (1) Is it not a fact that the inquiry into the rate of imprisonment is receiving evidence on the high rate of imprisonment in Western Australia?
- (2) Even if the report which was prepared after two years' study related to 1970 and 1971, does the Minister agree that the material might assist the current inquiry in even a small way?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that the current inquiry has expressed interest in seeing this report?
- (4) Whatever the reasons for the previous suppression of the report, will the Minister reconsider the decision to continue its suppression and release it to the current inquiry?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, not in a material way.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.

PRISONS

Prisoners: Access to Regulations

28. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Does the Minister agree that it is desirable that persons held in custody, and especially those who have not been convicted of an offence, should have reasonable facilities available to them in order to ascertain the nature and extent of their rights whilst in custody?
- (2) If so, would it not be fundamental that the person in charge of every prison, gaol and lock-up, should have readily available for use by persons in custody, copies of the Prisons Act and the prisons regulations?
- (3) Will the Minister ensure that the proposed re-drafted and updated Prisons Act will contain a statutory requirement to this effect?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS, replied:

- (1) All persons received into the Western Australian prison system, whether convicted or otherwise, undergo procedures laid down by the departmental admission checklist. This is administered by welfare officers or prison officers and ensures that the civil and legal rights of the prisoner are made known to him and that appropriate action is instituted to safeguard his civil, legal, and general welfare.
- (2) Copies of the Prisons Act and prisons regulations are readily available to all prisoners either through the institutional library or through the superintendent. In addition to this, prisoners have access to other relevant Statutes which might affect their status or situation; for example, Police Act, Criminal Code, Traffic Act.
- (3) A statutory requirement that access to such publications be included in the re-drafted Prisons Act is unnecessary as provision of such material is standard procedure.

HEALTH: NURSES

Family Planning

29. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Further to my question 369 of 28 November, 1979, seeking information on the Government's intentions regarding the recommendations of the committee set up to examine the proposals in my private member's Bill of 1976 concerning family planning nurses, as it is now three years since that committee brought down its report and recommendations, what action does the Government propose to take on this matter?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The report has been fairly widely distributed and copies have been available on request by any interested party.

Many of the recommendations are the responsibility of the educational institutions and training bodies. The recommendations which require action by the Government are presently receiving Cabinet consideration.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Wright Street, Belmont

30. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

How many reportable accidents have occurred at the intersections of—

- (a) Belmont Avenue and Wright Street, Belmont;
- (b) Abernethy Road and Wright Street, Belmont; and
- (c) Belgravia Street and Wright Street, Belmont;

for the calendar year 1979, and for the seven-month period ended 31 July, 1980?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

| | 1979 | 1980 (to 30 June) |
|--|------|-------------------------|
| (a) Belmont Avenue and Wright Street | 19 | 8 |
| (b) Abernethy Road and Wright Street | 18 | 5 |
| (c) Belgravia Street and Wright Street | 3 | 2 |

Note: Figures for 1980 only available to 30 June.

POLICE ACT

Section 54B: Refusal of Permit

31. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is he aware that in an address to a conference of Liberal Party women on 19 May, 1980, the Minister for Police said that if the Commissioner of Police refused a permit under section 54B of the Police Act on wrong grounds, his—the Commissioner's—decision would be open to challenge?
- (2) What facilities or procedures exist for such a decision to be challenged?
- (3) Is he also aware that the same Minister, on the same occasion, said in respect of section 54B of the Police Act—"The stand being adopted by the opponents of the legislation is not a stand in favour of free speech which is guaranteed under the law and our Constitution."?

- (4) What provisions of the Constitution guarantee the right of freedom of speech?

The Hon. J. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (4) This question is inadmissible, and on two grounds. Firstly, it relates to a matter—namely, the administration of the Police Act—for which I am not responsible. Secondly, it is seeking an expression of opinion on questions of law.

I would add that I have no information as to whether or not the Minister for Police has made the statements referred to.

POLICE

Noonkanbah Station: Activities

32. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has the Aboriginal Legal Service lodged a complaint with the Commissioner of Police with regard to police activities at Noonkanbah Station?
- (2) What was the substance of the complaint?
- (3) What action has been taken by the police to rectify the matter?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The substance of the complaint is privy to the Aboriginal Legal Service and the persons alleged to have offended.
- (3) The matter has been referred to the regional police officer at Broome for inquiry and report. It is noted that the question assumes that some wrong has been done. The police will investigate the facts before reaching a conclusion.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Amendment: Consultations

33. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Was the Minister correctly reported in *The West Australian* recently when it was stated that he intended discussing

proposals to amend the Workers' Compensation Act with representatives of the Confederation of Industry, the insurance industry, and the Trades and Labor Council?

- (2) If so, is it the Minister's hope that he may achieve some degree of consensus before proceeding with the amendments?
- (3) If so, would the Minister not agree that an even greater degree of consensus might be achieved if he also consulted with—
 - (a) members of the legal profession with special experience in this field; and
 - (b) the Opposition industrial relations committee; before finalising the Government's proposals?
- (4) If the Minister's intention is not to achieve some degree of consensus, what is the purpose of conferring with the parties referred to in (1)?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The report of the inquiry into the Workers' Compensation Act by His Honour Ben Dunn, has been allowed to lay on the Table for a considerably long period so that all parties would have the opportunity to make submissions in regard to that report.
- (4) It is obviously the intention of the Government to achieve a degree of consensus wherever that is possible.

in each year for the last three years, and for the seven-month period ended 31 July, 1980, in the Belmont City Council area?

- (3) What was the location within the Belmont City Council of each fatal accident during 1979, and for the seven-month period ended 31 July, 1980?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| (1) 1977 | 10 |
| 1978 | 4 |
| 1979 | 9 |
| 1980—to July 31 | 1 |
| (2) (a) 1977 | 11 |
| 1978 | 4 |
| 1979 | 11 |
| 1980—to 31 July | 1 |
| (b) 1977 | 275 |
| 1978 | 347 |
| 1979 | 311 |
| 1980—to 31 July | 132 |

- (3) 1979 Hardey Road, south east of Pratt Street.
Great Eastern Highway and Coolgardie Avenue.
Abernethy Road and Kew Street.
Alexander Road, north east of Kilter Place.
Wright Street, south west of Rual Place.
Great Eastern Highway and Carbine Street.
Boronia Street, approximately 1.5 kilometres north east of Hardey Road.
Hardey Road and Wallace Street.
1980 Phillips Road, Clayden Road, and Zante Road.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Fatal: Belmont Area

34. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:
 - (1) How many fatal accidents have occurred in the Belmont City Council area for each of the last three years, and for the seven-month period ended 31 July, 1980?
 - (2) How many people have been—
 - (a) killed or fatally injured; and
 - (b) injured;

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION

Appeals

35. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:
 - (1) During the calendar year 1979, how many appeals were made to the Industrial Appeal Court against decisions of—
 - (a) industrial magistrates; and
 - (b) the Western Australian Industrial Commission?

- (2) How many sitting days were actually occupied by the Industrial Appeal Court in hearing appeals during 1979?
- (3) Was there a backlog of appeals yet to be heard at the end of the year?
- (4) To what extent is it anticipated that the new Industrial Arbitration Act will affect the number of appeals to the Industrial Appeal Court and the time taken to dispose of them?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) (a) 3.
(b) 8.
- (2) 12.
- (3) Yes, 3.
- (4) It should reduce the number of appeals. The appointment under the new Act of a President of the Industrial Commission qualified to be a judge will allow him to sit either alone or with a Full Bench in cases where legal issues are likely to be particularly involved. This should not require such cases to go to the Western Australian Appeal Court. In addition, appeals from the industrial magistrate will go directly to the Full Bench and not to the Western Australian Appeal Court as before.

ABATTOIR: MIDLAND JUNCTION

Retrenched Workers

36. The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What arrangements were made financially or otherwise for workers who were retrenched from Midland Junction Abattoir last year?
- (2) What is the present position in respect to the abattoir?
- (3) What are the Government's future plans for the abattoir?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Workers who were in the superannuation scheme have received their full entitlements. The matter of payments to other workers is being considered by the Industrial Commission.
- (2) The abattoir is being kept on a care-and-maintenance basis.
- (3) This is under review on a continuing basis by the Meat Commission.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Amendment: Junior Workers and Apprentices

37. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has the Minister's attention been drawn to the decision of the Full Court of the Supreme Court in the matter of *Porter v Fremantle Hospital*, which effectively restricts the right of junior workers and apprentices who have been permanently partially incapacitated for work, to receive partial incapacity payments under the Workers' Compensation Act?
- (2) Will the Government give attention to removing this injustice when it introduces its foreshadowed amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) The Minister is aware of the decision of the Full Court in *Porter v Fremantle Hospital*. It upheld a ruling of the Workers' Compensation Board that upon the proper construction of clause 2 of the first schedule to the Act Mrs Porter's weekly earnings for compensation purposes should be calculated on the basis of the present weekly earnings of a second-year trainee nurse, that being her employment at the time of injury.

Clause 2 in its relevant part provides—

Where the work performed by the worker in the employment in which the injury occurs is subject to an industrial award or industrial agreement . . . the total wages, salary or other remuneration payable at the time of the incapacity for a week's work in such employment under the industrial award or industrial agreement.

The Government regards that as a useful definition of weekly earnings for the purposes of the Act, but is anxious to avoid anomalies in its application in particular circumstances. For this reason it will give close attention to the matter and will, in relation to students, apprentices, and junior workers endeavour to cover employment in their capacity of probable promotion, but for the injury.

- (2) See answer to (1).

**ROAD: BEECHBORO-GOSNELLS
FREEWAY**

Timetable

38. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a timetable been decided upon for the construction of the Beechboro-Gosnells Freeway?
- (2) If so, will the Minister supply the details?
- (3) If not, when is it anticipated a decision will be made on this project?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The section of this route from Forrestfield to Gosnells is currently under construction. No timetable has yet been determined for other sections of the route.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Priorities for major road projects are reviewed each year in the formulation of the Main Roads Department's annual programme of works. The next review will be for 1981-82.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Misuse: Legislation

39. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Will the proposed separate Act dealing with the misuse of drugs announced in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, contain any provisions dealing with the misuse of alcohol and tobacco?
- (2) If not, on what basis does the Government differentiate between the misuse of alcohol and tobacco, and the misuse of other drugs?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) By separate legislation.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Family Support Centre and Child Sexual Abuse Team

40. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

Further to my request to the Government on 17 October, 1979, for more funds to be made available to the

Department for Community Welfare to enable the establishment of a family support centre and child sexual abuse team as recommended in the report of Mrs. Hamory of the Child Life Protection Unit and by Australian Women Against Rape—

- (1) Has the Government taken any action on this matter?
- (2) If not, does it intend to do so?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Government will consider the matter in the context of the Budget in the light of the overall needs and priorities facing the State this year.

POLICE

Latter, Mr W. S.: Execution of Bench Warrant

41. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has the Minister made any inquiries to ascertain whether recent Press reports relating to the time and circumstances of the issuing and execution of a Bench Warrant against Mr W. S. Latter are factually correct?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) from whom were inquiries made; and
 - (b) what information did such inquiries reveal?
- (3) If "No" to (1), will the Minister now institute such inquiries?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Commissioner of Police.
(b) Statements made by Mr Cook on television that the warrant was held up by police were wrong, and that the statement made by the Commissioner of Police that the court had made a mistake with the warrant and that police were not in possession of the correct warrant until late Friday afternoon was correct.
- (3) Answered by (2).

HOUSING: APPLICANTS*Refusal of Accommodation*

42. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many refusals of accommodation offered is a State Housing Commission applicant permitted before the application is withdrawn by the Commission—

- (a) for initial accommodation; and
(b) for a transfer?

- (2) What criteria are used to determine whether reasons advanced for refusal are valid?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) The ready availability of the particular type of accommodation will allow greater flexibility in the allocation process and permit the applicant to exercise a wider choice.

Where there is a demand situation—

an applicant for initial accommodation can decline one valid offer and incur a deferment of that application for a six-month period before a second and final offer is made. Where the applicant is from the emergency list and declines a valid offer the application reverts to its position on the normal wait turn lists;

transfer applicants normally receive only one valid offer.

- (2) In allocating any type of accommodation, the commission within the limits of its resources, endeavours to meet the physical needs of the applicant or tenant in or as near as practicable to the area of choice. Regard also is given any other extenuating circumstances such as medical disabilities or the needs for special services.

43. *This question was postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS***Government Support*

7. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Does the State Government support the recently announced decision of the

Federal Government to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

- (2) Was the State Government consulted before the Federal Attorney-General announced his Government's intention to ratify that covenant?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT*Operations: North-west*

8. The Hon. P. M. DOWDING, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has the Minister visited the electorate of North Province this year, and in his discussions with local government in that area, was he made aware of dissatisfaction with the operation of his department in the north-west of Western Australia?

- (2) If so, what steps has he taken, if any, to rectify it?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) I have visited the North Province on, I think, two occasions this year. I have held discussions with representatives of local government on various matters, and I do not think actual dissatisfaction was expressed. Needless to say, they would like to see some matters speeded up, but, in general, satisfaction has been reached on all points.

LAND*Crown's Claim to Title*

9. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

- (1) (a) Has the Attorney General ever considered what is the true legal basis for the Crown's claim to title of land in this State?

- (b) If so, what are his views on this subject?

- (2) Is he aware that of the various former British colonies it is only in respect of the Australian colonies that no treaty of settlement has been reached with the indigenous inhabitants?

- (3) If he has not done so already, will he consider the material now being prepared by the Aboriginal Treaty Committee?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (3) I will have to ask for notice of the question.

COURT: SUPREME

Appeals to Privy Council

10. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

Now that the High Court of Australia has determined it should no longer be bound by decisions of the House of Lords and of the Privy Council, will the Government legislate to remove the right of appeal from the State Supreme Court to the Privy Council to avoid the possibility of conflicting decisions being given by the High Court and by the Privy Council?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The Government has no present intention to embark on any such legislation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Operations: North-west

11. The Hon. P. M. DOWDING, to the Minister for Lands:

I would like to ask the Minister for Lands a supplementary question as follows—

Will he undertake to arrange for the Under Secretary for Lands to visit the local governments in my electorate to discuss the operations of the department with them?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

I would need good reason to do this, and to date no such reason has been advanced.

LIMITATION ACT

Amendment

12. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Attorney General:

Will the Attorney General consider amending the Limitation Act to bring it into line with corresponding legislation in England whereby the limitation period does not commence to run in a tort action until the prospective plaintiff becomes aware of the damage or injury suffered?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

If the honourable member gives me notice of the question, I shall give consideration to it.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

Operations: North-west

13. The Hon. P. M. DOWDING, to the Minister for Lands:

Is he aware that the Broome Shire Council requested that the Under Secretary for Lands visit the shire to discuss problems in relation to the operation of his department?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The honourable member may or may not be aware that various offices in regional centres are under the control of the Surveyor General. The Surveyor General has visited Broome on numerous occasions, although I do not think he was with me on the occasion when the desire was expressed by the representatives of local government that they would like to meet the under secretary. I think this matter was raised jocularly after a comment that his signature had been seen many times on letters.

Within the Department of Lands and Surveys, the under secretary is responsible for administration and the Surveyor General is responsible for mapping, subdivisions, and the like. This is the reason for the involvement of the Surveyor General in most of the matters requiring discussion in Broome.

LAND: SALES

Country Areas: Profits

14. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Are the profits from the sale of Government land in country towns paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that many local authorities in country areas, and particularly those in the north-west, consider that profits from the sale of land in their areas should be spent locally in developing further land for residential purposes?
- (3) Does the Minister agree that this seems to be a reasonable proposition?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (3) The Act provides that moneys from the sale of land are paid direct into the Treasury. On various occasions I have heard the argument put forward by local governments that they would like to see the moneys ploughed back into their own particular districts. It must be remembered that in many cases the money from such land sales has been advanced by the Treasury to make the subdivision in the first place. This money is necessary for roads, sewerage, electricity, and the like, and has to be returned.

Generally, these expenditures are covered by an upset price. Often, of course, there is a difference between the upset price and what is actually paid for the land and I suppose this would be the only debatable sum of money. It must be remembered that Treasury supplies moneys for other areas—perhaps even in the areas of the very local authorities which are complaining—for subdivisions which do not sell, but which lie idle for some time until called upon.

LAND: SALES

Country Areas: Profits

15. The Hon. P. M. DOWDING, to the Minister for Lands:

In respect of the Minister's answer to the previous question without notice, is it a fact that that very complaint has been made to him personally by the Shires of Broome, West Kimberley, Wyndham-East Kimberley, and Halls Creek? Is that not one of the matters about which they have expressed dissatisfaction in the operations of his department?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

I think I have already pointed out that this matter has nothing to do with the Under Secretary for Lands. If it is anyone's responsibility, it is the Treasurer's, and he has been to those towns many times since then.

NOONKANBAH STATION

Lease: Default

16. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) What is the name of the person or corporation which holds the pastoral lease of the property known as Noonkanbah?
- (2) Is the lessee at present in default in respect of any term of the pastoral lease?
- (3) If so, in what respect?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (3) There are some 500 leases, and I do not know off hand the names of every lessee or the manner in which they make their payments. If the honourable member places the question on notice, I will be happy to provide him with an answer.