

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 16 October 1980

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Clarko) took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., and read prayers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr Bateman, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr Grill (Yilgarn-Dundas) on the ground of urgent public business.

APPROPRIATION BILL (GENERAL LOAN FUND)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 October.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [11.06 a.m.]: I do not have a great deal to say about the loan funds this year. I think most of what I could say has already been said when dealing with the Revenue Estimates and also in the Press releases I have issued. Indeed, I was able to give some faint praise to the Treasurer for the way he had spread the icing on the cake. To be sure, it is a very thin icing, but it seemed to me the Treasurer had spread it around on a fairly equitable basis to allow for the work force to remain in employment.

Unfortunately, however, it seems that is not likely to be the case. I will have something to say later about the employment position and the attitude of the Government and its Ministers when answering questions in this House as to the likely effect this Bill will have on employment. Already, we are seeing a cut-down in jobs. We know there have been no substantial, across-the-board wage increases which would have upset the budgeting of the Government. It would seem to me the Loan Estimates are not as rosy as might appear at first glance. Indeed, it appears the works programme for 1980-81 is threadbare.

This situation is a direct result of the Fraser Government's parsimonious attitude to making money available to the States. This attitude is having serious effects on Western Australia. It is causing higher unemployment and a growing backlog of works which are required both in the metropolitan area and the State as a whole; it will cause further setbacks in the building and construction industries. As we all know, they are the industries which have been hardest hit by the policies of the Fraser Government over the last five years.

This Bill will do nothing to help those industries recover from their present depressed circumstances. The economic policy of the Federal Government has placed unnecessary constraints on economic activity within the community as a whole.

Another effect of this policy has been that we have had to suffer higher Government charges in this State. Employment levels, Government charges, the degree of economic activity, and the standard of community facilities and services all have an impact on our standard of living; no-one can deny that. Therefore, the Fraser Government's failure to allow the States to implement reasonable works programmes—it is the responsibility of the Fraser Government to ensure the States have enough money to continue their works programmes—has indirectly contributed to the lowering of family living standards which currently is occurring in this State.

It is many years since there has been a drop in living standards. As I said, that is related directly to the Fraser Government's parsimonious attitude when dealing with economic matters affecting the States.

Let us consider the position now, and what the position has been, and what we might reasonably expect it to be. This year's total capital works programme, including the General Loan Fund and all other capital spending by Government and semi-Government authorities, will be \$528.4 million. After allowing for inflation, this means that the total public investment in Western Australia in this financial year will be about \$30 million, or 6 per cent less than it was in the last financial year. It will be the fifth consecutive year that there has been a drop in money available for the works programme.

The cut-backs that the "Fraser razor gang" have enforced in the past several years include the fact that in the last five years the total capital funds for Western Australia are down by no less than \$241.9 million. If we had not had a Fraser Government—if we had stuck to the previous arrangement—we would have had \$241.9 million extra to spend in this State. That means a reduction of 79.7 per cent in capital funds from the Fraser Government in the last five years.

I sympathise with the Government for the predicament in which it finds itself; but even those figures do not reveal the full situation because they exclude certain categories of funds such as road funds and funds for tertiary institutions—funds which normally mean an increase in the works programme. That reduction

of \$241.9 million in five years is a direct result of the Fraser Government's economic—

Mr O'Connor: You are talking in real money terms?

Mr DAVIES: Yes. That is the only way we can deal with it this year.

Mr O'Connor: I am just clarifying it.

Mr DAVIES: The reduction of that amount is inflated by the amount that is not available for special projects. If road funds and money available for tertiary education institutions had been included, the position would have been much gloomier. Road funds alone have been cut by \$28 million in real terms since the Fraser Government took office. This State has put up with a cut of \$28 million in real terms in road funds since the Fraser Government took office.

The upshot of this has been a decrease in activity, a decrease in public works, and the financial burden is falling more and more on the shoulders of the States and on Government and semi-Government instrumentalities. They are being forced to find additional money to carry out essential works—not additional works, or something that they might like to do, but essential works.

I understand the State Energy Commission is already in trouble this financial year, although only a little over three months of the financial year have passed. The budget figures for the SEC are proving incorrect; and I will have something more to say about that next week.

The additional burden is being put back on the States—on State Government and semi-Government instrumentalities. It is a burden they cannot afford to carry. They cannot afford to replace the capital funds which are not flowing to them, as a result of the Fraser Government's economic policies. Indeed, I believe the Fraser Government is abrogating its responsibilities to the States.

We know what new federalism means. We know how the Premier came in hook, line, and sinker to the new federalism deal. That enabled the Canberra Government—the “Fraser razor gang”—to shrug its shoulders, slash the funds available, and say, “If you want to do it, find your own money.”

Let me demonstrate how there has been a massive shift in responsibility from the Federal Government to the State Government. Let me demonstrate the devastating abrogation of the “Fraser razor gang”—

Mr Watt: Is that supposed to be clever?

Mr DAVIES: Yes. It is a play on words. The member for Albany would not appreciate it; but I am talking about slashing funds.

Mr Watt: You must be getting a great amount of satisfaction out of it. That is the fourteenth time you have said it.

Mr DAVIES: One has to say things time and time again because some people are thick and it takes a long while for it to sink in. If the member for Albany has caught on to it, everybody has caught on and I will not need to say it again.

Let me demonstrate how this responsibility has shifted from the Federal Government to the States. I have not said this yet; and it will be enlightening. It must be an embarrassment for all the Government members to have to go out into the electorate between now and the weekend, to say how good the Fraser Government is, when they know how bad it has been for this State; how it has caused unemployment; how it has caused a drop in economic activity—

Mr Watt: That is a lot of rubbish.

Mr DAVIES: It must surely be an embarrassment; and I know Government members would rather I sat down and did not talk about it. However, there will not be a Fraser Government after Saturday; and the States, at last, will receive a fair deal from Canberra. Canberra will do away with the new federalism; and it will once again accept all its responsibilities.

The burden of raising money has shifted from the Federal Government to the State Government. In 1975-76, the last year before the “Fraser razor gang” started running things, 61.8 per cent of the cost of the Western Australian works programme was funded from Commonwealth sources. Nearly 62 per cent of the State works programme was paid for by the Commonwealth. In this financial year, the Commonwealth sources will provide only 34.1 per cent of the funds, which is about half of what it was providing five years ago. Then, 61.8 per cent of the financial load was met by the Commonwealth authorities, but this year it has been slashed almost in half, to 34.1 per cent. Yet the member for Albany wonders why I call them the “Fraser razor gang”. Surely he realises why we call them that.

If the situation is taken in reverse, in 1975-76 we had to find 38.2 per cent of the funds to pay for essential services. This year, we will have to find 65.9 per cent. We now have to find 65.9 per cent of all the money we need for essential works.

There is nothing lavish about the works programme. Every item is essential. I am sure

there are some additional items we want. Every member could think of additional things within his electorate; but the money is not there because the burden has been shifted right back to the States.

The State Government deserves some approbation, some credit, for the job it has done in spreading the money and in maintaining the works programme, meagre as it is.

Despite the steps which have been taken and despite the huge increase in the proportion of capital funds raised from State sources, this year's works programme in real terms is 14 per cent less than the programme mounted in 1975-76. So, in five years, whilst everything else has been rising and inflation has been booming, we are 14 per cent down on our works programme. What a terrific record in real terms!

The money lost amounts to \$47.6 million. After allowing for inflation Western Australia is spending \$47.6 million less on its works programme this year than it did in 1975-76 and the entire blame lies with the "Fraser razor gang" in Canberra. The amount of \$47.6 million represents at least 3 200 jobs and that is without taking into account the jobs created indirectly by expenditure on the works programme. This loss also represents millions of dollars that will not flow into the private sector as payment by the Government for goods and services, because the private sector does benefit from Government spending. From our calculations, at least 1 000 jobs will disappear this year in the Government sector because of the cut back in loan funds. The jobs will be lost amongst Government employees and employees of Government contractors.

This loss of jobs does not relate only to the day-labour force; it relates also to those who normally enjoy contracts from the Government which they will not be getting in future. So there will be a drop in jobs available in the private sector because of the cut back in the works programme this year.

The retrenchments announced last week in the Public Works Department and the further sackings foreshadowed by the Minister for Works are merely instalments in the employment run-down which is likely to continue during the year. I remind members of the way the Premier and his Ministers treated this Parliament with contempt on Thursday last. In answer to a question I asked about the likely run-down in employment the Premier gave me a waffle, waffle answer, of the type he is so good at. He indicated he could not say what was on or what the reductions would be. His Ministers all referred me to the Premier's answer when I asked them questions, except for

the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning who said there would be no loss of jobs in her department. Of course, she does not have any day-labour force.

But the Premier went on and spoke a few words about, "You lose jobs there and you pick them up here." We know that will happen; it was ever thus. He was not telling us anything we did not know. He said this sort of situation was inevitable from year to year as the structure and emphasis of works programmes changed to meet changing needs. That was the information he gave to question 1044 on notice; but he told us nothing new. The Premier said it was not possible to continue spending money on works programmes which run down. Of course, it is not possible to do so; if the need for a labour force is no longer there it is natural that we have no need for a day-labour force. It is unbelievable that the man who is supposed to be an economic genius should give answers such as that. It is a slight on the Parliament.

In fact, the Premier and his Ministers said they did not know what was going on. However, in the *Daily News* the very next day, after the Minister for Works had told me he did not know what the likely reductions would be in his work force, he was able to tell the public that 83 people from the Public Works Department would get the sack. If he knew that 24 hours after I had asked him for the information, why did he not know this when I asked my question?

It is obvious the Ministers were embarrassed about having to announce that at least 1 000 jobs would be lost because of the Fraser Government's parsimony in regard to loan funds. It is certainly an insult to the Parliament for a Minister to reply to questions by saying he does not have the information, and yet just one day can go by and he can publicly give out the information which he had a responsibility to give in this House. I am certain all Ministers who have responsibility for day-labour employees would have some idea of what the cuts are to be, because in the *Daily News* article the Minister for Works stated how he calculated the loss. I think he has been a little generous in his calculations, remembering that I said there would be a loss of 1 000 jobs. I think the loss will be greater, but I have made allowances which the Minister does not appear to have made.

Why does the Government not be honest and tell the Parliament, in response to questions asked—questions we are entitled to ask and to which we require answers—what the situation is? Why is the Government not honest instead of giving us the sort of waffle we got from its

economic genius who tells us that things happen which we know are happening? The Premier and his Ministers know as well as I do that there will be a reduction in jobs. The fact is, because it was a week before the Federal election—which the Government will lose anyway—the Premier was not game enough to tell the Parliament what the situation would be. The public are entitled to know.

The Premier admitted there would be retrenchments but he could not tell us exactly how many. I will acknowledge that we cannot be precise, but as the Minister for Works indicated, there are methods of calculating the jobs which will be lost. We should have been extended that courtesy instead of being given the sort of waffle we did receive. The Government admitted there would be a drop in employment. We know there will be. The Ministers were covering up their assessment of the situation because they were embarrassed. If they had revealed the figures which must have been known to them, it would have shown in the starkest and most heart-breaking manner the devastating effect on employment in this State of the Fraser Government's policies.

The tenor of the Liberal Party's recent advertising has been to warn Western Australian people of a danger that could exist if they voted a certain way. There is a danger, but it is not posed by a Federal Labor Government and it is not posed by voting for the Australian Democrats; it is posed by the re-election of a Fraser Government. This State just cannot stand continuing cuts in loan funds of the nature I have mentioned. We are spending less now on essential capital works programmes than we were five years ago.

If a Fraser Government is re-elected, it will mean a further three years of deprivation of the type this State has been subjected to over the last five dark years. It will mean more unemployment and more vital work left undone; it will mean higher State Government charges to help make up the shortfall. As I said before, someone has to pay for essential works, and the States are now taking on their shoulders twice as much as they did five years ago. Of course, despite the Premier's protestations to the contrary, it will mean a State income tax.

At the outset, I mentioned the effect this policy was having on a growing backlog of essential public works. Let us look at some of the areas which will be affected. The Estimates we have been given for this financial year provide for a cut in spending on hospitals of approximately \$21.5 million in real terms. However, media reports

point to the severe overcrowding which is occurring already in our public hospitals. The reports refer to the fact that beds are not available.

Recently a lady complained to me that she was about to be taken to a ward in Royal Perth Hospital when it was decided a bed was not available for her. She was sent home and told to wait until she was called.

Only last week another lady told me she was due to have surgery and she had to telephone the hospital the day before the surgery was to take place to see whether a bed was available for her. The staff of public hospitals do not know from one day to the next what the position is in regard to the availability of beds.

I have spoken about the breakdown in medical services and an article appears in this morning's issue of *The West Australian* in which the Minister for Health indicates 27 junior medical resident officers will not have jobs, because the money to pay them is not available. That can only be a direct result of the cut in funds made available for medical purposes in the General Loan Fund. Essential work has to be continued, so the money is taken from the revenue section of the accounts. If no money is available, staff have to be put off.

For the first time in my life I had to put off a staff member of an organisation with which I am associated. It was necessary to do this to save money. This organisation does a tremendous amount of good work for children in the area in which it operates. However, we found that, as a result of cuts in funds in comparison with the allowances made for previous years, we did not have enough money to continue to employ that person.

The same situation is occurring with medical services. Four substantial changes in five years have occurred in the area of medical services and we have had about 14 changes to the Medibank system in five years. Fraser said he would not touch the Medibank system; however, we find now public hospitals are bursting at the seams and private hospitals are closing wings.

Over the past few years a hospital in my electorate constructed an additional wing, but it has now had to close that ward.

Mr Young: Do you believe all graduates of all professions should be guaranteed a couple of years' work by the State?

Mr DAVIES: No, I do not; but there is work available for these doctors. If no work was available, the situation would be accepted. However, recently a doctor told me he had just

finished working a 32-hour shift. There is a need for doctors. If there was no need for them, there would not be a need to guarantee them employment; but we do need them and we are able to make good use of them. It would be valuable additional training for doctors if they were employed in this way. That is why I believe the Government cannot afford to get rid of these doctors. They are needed.

There has always been a need for doctors and, at a time when the need is greater than ever, we are forced to cut down. I am not criticising the Minister.

Mr Young: I realise that. I am just trying to make the point in respect of that particular profession—I trust you will agree with me—that there is nothing magic about it.

Mr DAVIES: No-one has to be guaranteed a job and it is clear these doctors have been lucky in the past. However, they have been lucky because they have been needed. As the Minister is aware, doctors are also able to go to country hospitals, or the Kimberley or the goldfields. There is a great need for doctors, but the Government cannot afford to employ them. It is as simple as that. The Government cannot afford to employ doctors, because it does not have the money.

The emphasis is returning for the public to seek treatment from the teaching hospitals and public hospitals. Once again, because of Fraser's policies, the States are being forced to carry the additional burden.

Mr Young: While that may well be so, the situation also remains that many general practitioners are claiming they cannot get enough work and many private hospitals are empty or half-empty.

Mr DAVIES: I just said that.

Mr Young: Therefore, the situation is that the system is driving people into the public hospitals, which is basically the Hayden system—the Medibank system.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister cannot say that. The present system is as far away from the Hayden system as black is as far away from white.

Mr Young: Would you say the Hayden system would not have driven people into public hospitals?

Mr DAVIES: It would not have, no. Surely the Minister is not suggesting it is not as costly now to take out insurance as it was under the Hayden system. It was only a fraction of the cost then that it is now. Many people were contributing and money was available for the overall good.

Mr Young: After three years of Whitlam, everything was free!

Mr DAVIES: Here we are after five years of the "Fraser razor gang" and we are in a worse position. Having been a former Minister for Health, I am sorry for the present Minister who has to stretch the limited funds available. I know there are frequent arguments about who is responsible for various things. The Government is in the position that it cannot deny help to pensioners and less fortunate members of the community; but in regard to others we hear constant remarks that, "we do not care what you elect to do, if we think you can afford to pay, the Government hospitals will not be available to you."

I get no delight from paying approximately \$600 a year to insure myself and my family at the rate of \$50 a day for a hospital bed. That figure does not in fact cover the costs involved, because the actual cost of a bed in a hospital today is approximately \$95. However, I am taking this risk and I am going only half-way.

This is a very serious and difficult matter. Doctors are being put off when in fact this should not occur. We have the grey shell of a building in Wellington Street—that is, the northern block of the Royal Perth Hospital—which, as pointed out by the member for Melville, is unlikely to be completed before the year 2000, if the Government continues to spend money in the way it has in the past.

In real terms there has been a cut of \$21.5 million in health services. Members should not look at the situation only in regard to doctors and hospitals, they should look also at the Mental Health Services. I believe there has been a cut in that area of approximately \$1.4 million in real terms.

We know the position in regard to the Swanbourne Hospital. The Government has been trying to modernise and update some of the buildings there. Indeed, I thought the construction programme might have been completed by now, because it was started in 1972 when I was Minister for Health. However, it seems to be dragging on, because the money is not available.

There is a motion on the notice paper expressing concern and alarm in regard to the Swanbourne Hospital.

Mr Young: Just in respect of that motion, I have pointed out many times before and I might as well take the opportunity to point it out again, that the motion does not say anything that either

I or the Director of Mental Health Services has not said already.

Mr DAVIES: I agree with the Minister. However, we want to say it again so that we can impress on the Minister our feelings with regard to the position.

Let us look at the allocation for primary and secondary education facilities. In real terms, that is down by \$5.3 million. I am sure all members have a situation in regard to education in their electorates which demands attention. I am sure all of us could spend money on providing education facilities. Money would not need to be spent extravagantly, but to provide necessary work and capital work only.

Mr Tonkin: Reducing class sizes for a start.

Mr DAVIES: The policy to reduce class sizes has been forgotten in the general melee.

Mr Tonkin: It is the worst State in Australia.

Mr Nanovich: It is the best!

Mr DAVIES: Members should look at the situation in regard to housing funds which are down by \$9.5 million in real terms.

No-one could suggest to me that the list of applications for houses at the State Housing Commission is becoming any shorter. The list grows longer and longer and the waiting time grows longer, yet the amount of money available has been decreased by \$9.5 million in real terms.

I mentioned earlier in my speech the effect that the cutbacks would have on economic activity in this State. It should be understood that public investment through capital works expenditure is the most effective instrument which can influence the level of economic activity. Economic development and regional growth increases in the real level of expenditure on capital works, increases the level of output into the economy and also generates greater economic confidence.

Surely this is something which is lacking in the community at the present time. There is no economic confidence. Economic confidence is of enormous importance at any time, but it is particularly important when the work force is not working to capacity. Recent figures indicate that the work force is down by 25 per cent. It is about three-quarters the strength it should be. The Fraser Government's cutbacks in capital funds have generated this decrease. This is somewhat bad for the economy and expenditure on capital works would not harm the economy and it need not be inflationary.

Many of the projects undertaken as public works in this State would be making a contribution towards increasing the national

wealth. This work is not done for glorification or to be left as monuments. It is very necessary and will be a contribution to the nation's wealth. I believe these works would help to provide the overall infrastructure which will be so necessary if we are to proceed with resources development, as we hope.

These projects would increase the community's stockpile of assets. There would then be something available which we need and we would be making a positive contribution to economic growth. Capital works of this nature would be an investment for the whole of the State just the same as any other investment would be. Surely investment is something which the nation needs. I have often heard Government Ministers say that this is exactly what we need, but the actions of the Fraser Government have been hampering investment, economic growth, and regional development.

The essentials which we need to help this State leap into the eighties have not been provided. That is not sound, responsible economic management on the part of the Fraser Government. It is irresponsible and shortsighted economic management.

As far as I can ascertain, at the commencement of the Federal election campaign the Fraser Government was offering electors only two things. The Government was offering leadership and responsible economic management. That was approximately one month ago. Those facts were blazoned across the Press and television. However, there has been a change of strategy. Malcolm Fraser has disappeared from the Liberal Party's advertisements. I am quite convinced that the Liberal Party has realised that he is not the sort of leader Australians are looking for.

This attempt to keep the electoral carrots down to two has been the strategy of the Liberal Party. The Prime Minister's election speech included no fewer than 86 promises. However, no-one can remember what they were.

These promises have been presented in such a manner that they are not likely to attract the attention of the public. The Government does not seem to wish to address itself to the election promises. It is more concerned with untrue propaganda in regard to what the Opposition would do if it were elected. The Liberal Party has done this because it suits it electorally.

The Liberal Party has launched the most negative campaign I have ever seen. The Liberal Party's approach to capital works programmes demonstrates that its members are not responsible economic managers. If they were, they would be

channelling money into the community to assist with capital works. This would then create confidence in the community which is so lacking at the present time.

Planned development in Western Australia will be placed at risk unless the State has sufficient capital funds to provide the basic services and infrastructure necessary to induce and accommodate economic development and growth, especially in our non-metropolitan region. We have heard much said about regional development, but the provisions in the works programme will add nothing over and above what has been done.

The final aspect I wish to deal with is the impact of the cutbacks in Federal funds on State Government charges. During my Budget speech I outlined the enormous number of increases which have been agreed to by the Government since the last election, and I detailed these increases.

The Court Government has to take a share of the blame for the deliberate acts of the Federal Government which resulted in increased State charges. One of the Fraser Government's major contributions to this increase has been its attitude to the works programme. During my Budget speech I pointed out the huge increases in the proportion of the funds for works in Western Australia provided by the State Government and its agencies from their own resources. This was as a consequence of the need of the State and its agencies to find money for essential projects. There was a need to raise additional money and this could be done from only one source—the public.

Until 1977-78 funds were made available from Canberra to this State for essential sewerage works. Those funds have been terminated and no-one can suggest that that need for additional funds for sewerage works will cease to exist. The demand has been as high as it ever was, yet funds have been cut back. That was the end of the agreement entered into by this State and the Whitlam Government.

If we consider the cut-back in road funds—some \$28 million—it is apparent that we will have to increase the State fuel levy. If, as a result of this increase there is a cut-back in the use of fuel it will mean that amount of money will not be available next year and the fuel tax will have to increase again.

The programme agreed to is the very minimum. Members will recall how the Premier said I would bankrupt the State by having a great splash-up and going on a spending spree with the money available from the short-term money market. The

Premier has done exactly that; he has been more irresponsible than any post-war Premier. He has blown the lot just to try to keep things looking in good shape because of the forthcoming Federal election. The great financial organiser!

As I have mentioned, the two areas of sewerage and roads give cause for concern. I will repeat what I have already said twice. In the present situation the State Government has done creditably in being able to mount a works programme. The criticism which the Premier has levelled at the Fraser Government has been more than justified. In fact, I think the Premier was very restrained in what he said. I am sure he was in the position of having to make some criticism, but he was not prepared to say too much because of the delicate situation in which he finds himself with the forthcoming election.

I want to remind members, as I have done time and time again, that the Premier has nobody but himself to blame for the present situation. Members will recall my telling the House previously how the Premier was the prime architect of the new federalism, and how when the other States cried, "Quits. Let us talk again", the Premier said, "Not on your Nelly". The Premier said we would not do away with the system of which he was the prime author. The Premier believes the system will come good in the end. But, his faith has been shaken badly by the rough deal we have received from the Federal Government.

There are no grounds on which the Premier can complain. He ought to beg forgiveness rather than complain because the whole State is suffering as a result of the willingness with which he grasped this new federalism. He did not realise the many faults which were obvious, and which have since become apparent. By his own admission, he played a feature part in framing the new federalism policy. Having accepted all the glory which he thought should be due to him at that time, he must now accept the blame. Fortunately, Fraser will not be in office after Saturday and we might get some sense into the Federal-State relationship again. The Government might be in a position to honour some of the promises put up by the present Government, but which have been abrogated and rejected.

No sympathy is due to the Premier for the part he has played; indeed, because of the part he has played this whole State of Western Australia is suffering. That is a matter for some regret.

I only hope the forebodings I have made during these few remarks will not be proved true. However, I am quite certain they will be. There

will be a drop of at least 1 000 in the number of jobs available because of the cut-back in the works programme which we are about to approve, and which we must approve. We have no alternative. No additional funds are available. There is nowhere to go for additional funds except to the public, and the public already will have to pay an extra \$113 million this year, as well as the sum of \$216 million which will be raised by various means under the Revenue Estimates.

The long-suffering public have had enough, and they will make their views known in the ballot boxes on Saturday.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [11.55 a.m.]: While speaking the other evening I referred to the question of additional costs being placed on the working people in this State. I also dealt with the inflationary trend over a wide spectrum of the needs of the people in this State, and throughout the world. There has been an overall increase of 34 per cent in the price of goods.

I will recapitulate some of the figures I mentioned because they are pertinent to the continuation of my remarks. I have not yet had an opportunity to mention unemployment, because of the time factor.

The cost of housing has increased by 18 per cent; health and personal care, by 65.8 per cent; fuel costs, by 38 per cent; medical, by 44.2 per cent; transport, by 42 per cent; and electricity and gas, by 137.7 per cent. Those figures give an overall increase of 34 per cent, and the figures cannot be refuted because they are taken from statistics provided by both the Commonwealth and State Governments. They cover the period from 1977 to 1980.

When speaking previously I mentioned a figure of 17 612 as representing the number of unemployed seeking job vacancies totalling 795. I want to correct that statistic and put it in its proper perspective. The figure I gave related only to senior male workers, and did not include female or junior male workers. If those workers are included, and added to the figure of 17 000, the total number of unemployed is in the vicinity of 34 000. I want to make that point quite clear, because as I have indicated previously, statistics can be used in various ways to suit various arguments, and I do not want to be placed in that category of persons.

I will refer to the often-quoted claims of the Government with regard to its magnificent achievements in getting on top of the employment problem. The Government does not refer to "unemployment"; it refers to "employment". The Government refers to the number of jobs created,

and to the number of people employed because that is the easiest way to deceive people with statistics. It is quite easy for the Government to claim that during 1979-80 it created an additional 2 000-odd jobs.

Of course additional jobs were created. One would be awfully disappointed if some jobs were not created, bearing in mind the natural trend of the economy. From time immemorial—since human beings came into this world—jobs have been created naturally. Jobs are created by the natural increase in the number of people living in a country. The claim by the Western Australian Government is untruthful, and it is unrealistic.

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr SKIDMORE: There has not been an increase in employment opportunities for the people in this State, and I will provide statistics to show that to be so. I will refer to the figures contained in a booklet published by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs covering the period from 1974 to 1980. The data I am about to quote has been provided by the department under the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs (Mr Viner) who, after 18 October, no longer will be in charge of that department.

When using statistics one has to be sure to equate the figures with similar figures applying elsewhere. A classic example of not equating figures—if I might divert for a moment—was an advertisement which appeared in this morning's Press. It showed the prices of fuel oil in various countries throughout the world. How could one possibly compare those figures with Australian prices? Such a comparison is unreal. We do not know how much import duty is imposed in those other countries. We do not know what taxes are included in other countries. We do not know what landing costs are involved.

We do not know the direct levy charged by the Government in these countries. None of these things is known to us, and yet we are a producing nation whereas all the other countries mentioned are non-producing nations. It is very easy to make these comparisons, but we must remember that these other countries do not produce oil. The figures show that our petrol is very much cheaper than theirs is—big deal! It ought to be cheaper because we produce 60 per cent of our own requirements.

That is a classic example of the misuse of statistics. I do not use them in that way. The figures I have quoted are available in the library if anyone wants to look at them. What do these figures say? At the end of June 1974 there were

7 782 unemployed people in Western Australia. In 1975, 17 003 people were unemployed. In 1976 the figure had risen to 21 103. In 1977 there were 25 573 unemployed in Western Australia—still going up.

Mr O'Connor: How was the population going?

Mr SKIDMORE: In 1978 there were 34 443 unemployed—still rising. The Government must have been so alarmed by its performance over that period of years that it did not even bother to present any figures for 1979. So I then had to jump from 1978 to 1980. To use the words in the publication I have here, at the end of June 1980 we had 30 095 unemployed benefit recipients in this State. I would like to project that figure into 1981—I am sure it will be still rising.

The Deputy Premier made a remark a moment ago by way of interjection, and I would like to deal with that. He said, "What about the number of people available to be employed—it must have increased. More people are living here." Of course that is so, but any responsible Government should control the employment situation. With the growth in population, our economy should be controlled so that the increased work force is satisfactorily and properly employed. The Government is not doing that.

Mr O'Connor: They are coming here because—

Mr SKIDMORE: The population is increasing and the job opportunities are decreasing.

Mr O'Connor: Would you quote the figures for 1978 and 1980?

Mr SKIDMORE: The 1978 figure from the statistics was 34 443.

Mr O'Connor: What was the figure for 1980?

Mr SKIDMORE: That figure was 30 095—a decrease of 4 000.

Mr O'Connor: But you said it was still going up.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am sorry, that is a decrease of 4 000. I do not know the reason for that, but it is very difficult to make assumptions on those figures.

I would now like to refer to job opportunities. In 1975 the number of unemployed increased by 9 221. In the next year the increase was 4 100, then 4 470 in the next year, 8 870 in the next, and a drop of 4 522 in 1980. One might feel perhaps a little pleased at the drop in the unemployed over a period of two years and one must say at least that is a small gain. But we must be very concerned about the number of unemployed. The Government has given us figures in relation to job vacancies. I think the number of jobs created last year was 2 800.

Mr O'Connor: No, 28 000 additional jobs last year.

Mr SKIDMORE: Where?

Mr O'Connor: In Western Australia.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is 28 000 additional jobs created in Western Australia?

Mr O'Connor: I think that was the figure up to 30 June, the date you quoted.

Mr SKIDMORE: Well that is as it may be, but let us look at the problem we are facing. In 1974 there were 3 302 job vacancies, but we must consider the number of workers seeking those jobs. In 1974, 2.3 people were looking for work for each job that was available. In 1975, that figure had increased to 7.2 people for each job available. The figure increased to 12.9 in 1976, and to 14.5 in 1977.

In 1978, 26.5 people were looking for work for each job vacancy. In 1980 the problem had escalated, notwithstanding the number of jobs created. Certainly more jobs had been created, but that was the natural fulfilment of the wishes and desires of the people, and it hardly contributed to overcoming the unemployment problem. There are now 30.5 workers unemployed for every job vacancy. At the end of June 1980, 30 095 people were unemployed, but only 985 jobs were available. I would like to inform the Deputy Premier that he cannot have his cake and eat it too. Notwithstanding the number of jobs created—28 000 up to the end—

Mr O'Connor: That was over the 12-month period to 30 June.

Mr SKIDMORE: There were 28 000 jobs created?

Mr O'Connor: Yes, 28 604 jobs over and above the number for the previous year.

Mr SKIDMORE: We can imagine the sort of thing that happens. An unemployed person attends a CES office and he is sent off to a job. After a week in the job, he is sacked. I suppose that position is then shown as a job opportunity. We know that many people are sent out to jobs for which they have no training and no capabilities, and many juniors are sent out to a job only to find that after a week's work they are sacked. We have found that many are not even paid award wages. These positions are all listed as job opportunities. The Deputy Premier must realise we have to look at the number of unemployed—the airy-fairy business of job opportunities just does not stand up to scrutiny.

Mr O'Connor: The argument you put up is false because the same situation would apply each year.

Mr SKIDMORE: The statistics are not available to me.

Mr O'Connor: They are available. These are the ABS figures.

Mr SKIDMORE: But they are not the normal figures used to compare the number of unemployed with the job vacancies. Probably we could go back to 1974 and find out that there were 40 000 or 50 000 job opportunities. The availability of employment remains fairly static unless there is a development growth in which case there must be an increase in job opportunities. That is a natural thing, and the Deputy Premier is talking about an unnatural thing—unemployed people.

Mr O'Connor: Ours are by far the best figures in Australia. I give up!

Mr SKIDMORE: I agree that the Government can produce a rabbit out of the hat and make it look good. The Government says, "Look at what we have done", but I would like to bring the Minister back to the fact that in Western Australia we have 30 000-odd people unemployed and only 985 jobs available. That means that 30 people are looking for every job. In fact it has been projected that some 25 per cent of young people leaving school now will never have a job. I refer to people who in accordance with the normal practice in most awards would be classified as junior workers, being up to the age of 18 years.

Mr O'Connor: I can't agree with that.

Mr SKIDMORE: Then let the Minister look for himself at the projections and he will find it is true. That fact has been stated at symposiums and seminars by many people in this country. That is where we are heading: 25 per cent of those people leaving school will not be able to find employment. That will be a calamity for those concerned. Certainly it is a matter of great concern to me.

When we look at the figures for June 1980 in respect of junior workers we find that 279 vacancies were available for the 14 504 people unemployed. All I can say is that the Government's statements do not seem to ring true when one considers those figures.

I do not desire to speak at great length on this matter because I covered it fairly well the other night. However, it is time the Government stopped deluding the people of Western Australia when it talks about the creation of jobs. I think about 13 000 jobs will be created on the North-West Shelf project. From memory, I would say about half that work force will be permanently employed in the area.

This is the sort of compounding of job numbers in which the State Government has indulged for many years. If members cast their minds back to the occasion on which I last spoke on this matter in the House and queried the figures provided by the then Minister for Labour and Industry—the present Minister for Education—they will recall that I showed clearly that the true job creation situation was not stated by the Government.

The Government says that a project will be started, say, immediately on which 2 000 workers will be employed; that another project will be commenced in six months on which a further 2 000 workers will be employed; and that in nine months' time a further project will be commenced employing another 2 000 workers. We are given the impression that 6 000 jobs will be created; but in fact jobs are created for 2 000 people who move from construction site to construction site to construction site. The jobs are not simultaneous. It is merely a matter of 2 000 workers moving from job to job, and at the end of the construction period few of the workers involved remain in the permanent work force.

In fact, due to the downturn in the availability of construction work, many workers have left their jobs and their craft, and we now find ourselves in the situation of having to train apprentices in greater numbers than before.

I find this great State of ours, which is allegedly riding on the crest of a wave of employment, will suffer a massive decrease in employment in Government instrumentalities as a result of the Loan Budget. The Public Works Department will put off employees, and every other Government instrumentality will be affected by this employment situation. The State Government, of course, has placed the blame fairly and squarely on the Fraser Government. I might say the Federal Government certainly must bear a great share of the blame, but so must the Western Australian Government because of its failure to understand what is required. If the State Government were half as smart as it thinks it is, and if it had a Treasury as good as it professes to have, the problems now facing this State would have become evident to them some time ago.

I do not want to repeat the argument developed by the Leader of the Opposition earlier because he covered the matter admirably and capably. He showed that people must see the State Government of Western Australia recognises its responsibility in respect of its failure to produce jobs for the work force. The Government has certainly failed in that respect; in fact it will reduce the work force and put people out of work

not just by the hundreds, but I would say by the thousands.

If we take a small town such as Merredin and say that 30 or 40 workers will be put off, the economic impact on that town would be disastrous when 30 or 40 families left. Small businesses would be forced out of existence; the people who rely on income to be generated in the town of Merredin would face disaster.

Let us consider Kellerberrin, a town about which I know something because some of my relatives happen to be involved in the displacement of workers on the water supply there, although they may be lucky and remain in employment.

Mr Cowan: The drought will have a greater effect; but I believe the allocation from the Loan Fund will prevent any retrenchments.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am aware of the fact that some allocation of funds has been made in that area, but I am using this as an example. The situation affects so many small towns. For instance, Geraldton will be affected, and workers there will find themselves on the job market. What chance will they have to find work when already 30 workers are looking for each vacant job? The Government will add four or five to that figure, so 35 people will be looking for each vacant job. So much for employment opportunities in this State.

Before I conclude, I want to make a passing reference to the member for Clontarf. During the debate this morning he remarked that it is about time people told the truth.

Mr Williams: Who said that?

Mr SKIDMORE: Yesterday evening during the debate the member for Clontarf referred to a matter raised by the member for Avon. I refer to the matter because it arose again in the debate today, when the opportunity was taken by the member for Clontarf to try to make out the Leader of the Opposition to be a person who cannot be trusted and whose veracity should be questioned. The member for Clontarf referred to free rides for workers at the Midland Workshops. He said that the member for Avon talked about the time when locomotives and carriages were used to carry workers from the Midland Workshops to their place of employment free of charge, but the return journey was used as a commercial project to make money. The member for Clontarf said, "And why should it not be so? That was the reason for its use so members of the Opposition should not try to tell us untruths in this House..."

Again today he peddled the same line. Of course, it is a complete untruth. The workers did not receive free rides, and they never have, as the member for Avon was able to show. I thought I should mention that so that the member for Clontarf will be well aware that we on this side of the House have a little more honesty and purpose than he has.

In regard to the question of average weekly earnings in Western Australia, it has been made clear that workers in this State will be out of pocket because of the additional charges with which they have been faced. The average family will pay an additional—

- \$30 per annum in water charges
- \$37 per annum in sewerage charges
- \$5 per annum in drainage charges
- \$45 per annum in electricity charges
- \$30 per annum in third party motor vehicle insurance premiums
- \$14 per annum in State fuel tax
- \$48 per annum in bus or train fares.

Yet the Government continually says the workers must cease their wage demands.

On the two nights I have spoken about inflation, increased charges to workers, unemployment, and the lack of employment opportunities, I have clearly illustrated that this Government has acted irresponsibly. I take no joy at all from the Loan Estimates presented to this House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT: OFFICES OF PROFIT

Inquiry by Joint Select Committee: Motion

Debate resumed from 14 October.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [12.21 p.m.]: We have no objection to this motion. Indeed, it accords with some of the things we have been saying for a very long time.

Before the motion was brought to the House, the Premier was good enough to write to me and suggest he might introduce a motion of this type, and he asked me what I thought of it. I took it to our party room, and I do not think I am giving away any secrets when I say it was generally accepted.

My only concern was that the terms of reference might not be wide enough to give the members of the committee scope to do all they might want to do and that they would not have a chance to explore every avenue they might want to look into. But now that the motion, containing 18 paragraphs, has been brought forward, it can

be agreed that the Government has gone out of its way to ensure the committee is not inhibited in its work. The only change the Government made was to put in a proviso regarding pecuniary interests as existing under Standing Order No. 359, and that is perfectly reasonable.

I hope the committee will be able to sit soon and often, and bring down a report at an early date. I do not envy the committee its task. Several other attempts have been made at various times to come to an understanding about what an office of profit under the Crown meant. Erskine May and other authors have made particular reference to this problem. I believe it will need the wisdom of Solomon, but I hope the decision of the committee will be in keeping with this day and age and can be put into effect without any doubts about the interpretation.

While we have lawyers, I suppose we will always have disagreements about interpretations; but the task of the committee will be to endeavour to bring down a recommendation which will not require interpretation. During the next session of Parliament we hope to be able to make such amendments to the various Acts and Standing Orders as are necessary to give effect to the recommendations, whatever they might be.

We support the motion.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [12.24 p.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his general support of the motion, which must be to the advantage not only of members of this House, but also of the people outside. I think members and the people outside want it to be made absolutely clear what the position is, and this is all we are endeavouring to do.

I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and passed.

Resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Deputy Premier).

MEMBER FOR SUBIACO

Actions: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I draw the attention of members to an article which appeared in *The West Australian* newspaper this morning, wherein it is stated—

During last night's tea break, Dr Dadour was in the corridor outside Mr Crane's office. He said he wanted to lock Mr Crane in his room to prevent his voting with the Government.

He had a key which, he said, fitted the lock on Mr Crane's door, but Mr Crane left his office before Dr Dadour took action.

I regret that the member for Subiaco is not in the Chamber. I have ascertained that he has been unavoidably detained.

However, I feel it is necessary for me to make a statement to point out to members, and in particular the member for Subiaco, the seriousness of the action which apparently he contemplated. It may well have been that the member for Subiaco said what he did in a jocular fashion, but that is not the impression which people who read this morning's newspaper article would place on the statement which was made.

Therefore, I believe in all sincerity that I should point out to members of the House the seriousness of the action which apparently had been proposed. I draw the attention of the House to sections 8 and 9 of the Parliamentary Privileges Act and ask members to read them at their convenience. I should also draw attention to section 55 of the Criminal Code, which states—

55. Any person who advisedly, by force or fraud, interferes or attempts to interfere with the free exercise by either House of Parliament of their authority, or with the free exercise by any member of either House of his duties or authority as such member or as a member of a Committee of either House, or of a joint Committee of both Houses, is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to imprisonment for three years.

I simply reiterate that I believe members should be aware of their responsibilities to this Parliament.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 October.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [12.28 p.m.]: The Opposition generally agrees to the provisions contained in this Bill, with a minor exception. When introducing the Bill the Minister said it seeks to make two amendments, the first one increasing from \$20 to \$24 the penalty for failing to renew a licence for a gun. That is nothing new. It is another revenue device introduced by the Court Government and a further impost on people who own rifles. There is little we can do about the Government's attitude in regard to imposts on the people.

The Opposition is not altogether happy about amendment by regulation. Increases in charges are minor matters which have had to be brought

to the Parliament, and it is understandable that the Government now wants to amend charges by way of regulation. The Opposition has made it clear on other occasions that it is not happy with changes by regulation. Such a practice does not give us the opportunity to debate the changes involved until they are laid on the Table of the House.

The second and more important change in the legislation was outlined by the Minister in his second reading speech as follows—

It is the firm policy of the Government, and has been for many years under successive Governments, that the availability of firearms should be regulated strictly to ensure a proper level of protection for the community from the misuse of firearms.

We do not argue with that statement. As the Minister indicated, the Opposition must rely on the information presented to Parliament by the Minister. Certainly, I do not dispute the Minister's honesty. He informed us that high-powered firearms were being brought into Western Australia and he demonstrated by the tabling of a piece of steel the severe damage which can be inflicted by high-powered firearms. He told us of the calibre of the weapons to be prohibited, and informed us that bayonets could be fitted to some of these rifles. All in all, he expressed the Government's concern at the proliferation of such weapons, a concern which is shared by the Opposition.

However, I am also concerned for the people who already possess such firearms. They are not cheap. The Minister informed us that when the licences for certain of these weapons are due to be renewed, they will not be renewed and the weapons will be confiscated. The Minister also gave Parliament a list of weapons which the Government intended to prohibit immediately.

Yesterday I received a telephone call from a person living in Mt. Marshall, requesting me to raise the matter of compensation on behalf of himself and other people who possess rifles which are about to be prohibited. This person possesses a .30 calibre US Carbine Mk1 which he informs me currently is valued at about \$250. The Minister has told us there are 122 such rifles currently licensed in Western Australia and a quick calculation reveals that if each of those rifles is worth about \$250, the Government intends to confiscate rifles worth \$33 000. This does not take into account the other weapons on the Minister's list.

The owners of these rifles are licensed shooters. They have purchased their weapons in the belief

that they could obtain licences for them. All of a sudden, legislation is introduced which takes away their right to retain their weapons; they cannot continue to use them in the sport in which they are engaged. What does the Government intend to do to compensate these people for their loss? The figure of \$33 000 will go even higher when one takes into account the other weapons the Government intends to prohibit. For example, currently there are some 34 licensed .223 Ruger Mini 14 rifles; these are to be declared prohibited weapons.

As an analogy, let us take the situation of a person purchasing a certain type of motor vehicle. He knows before he purchases that vehicle that it will be licensed under the terms of the Statutes laid down by this Parliament. All of a sudden, a Bill is introduced which prohibits the licensing of that vehicle. That person could be down the drain to the tune of \$10 000 or \$12 000. The same situation applies to members of the WA Sports Shooters Association, and they have asked me to raise this matter on their behalf. Surely it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Government should provide compensation for the confiscation of these rifles.

Members would appreciate there is both support for and opposition to this move. No doubt all members have been circularised by the Australian Bank Employees Union, which is concerned about this type of weapon coming into Western Australia. Doubtless, members have also been approached by the WA Sports Shooters Association expressing opposition to this proposal.

We in the Opposition must accept our responsibility. We know armed robberies are taking place at an increasing rate; they concern us all. We know it is necessary to have rigid and strict firearms controls, and we appreciate the necessity for this legislation.

In essence, the Opposition supports the legislation. However, I hope the Minister will explain to the Parliament what the Government intends to do by way of compensation to shooters who will suffer a loss.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [12.37 p.m.]: As explained by the member for Collie, the Bill before the House seeks to outlaw the ownership and use of high-powered rifles in Western Australia. The Minister gave us a very graphic demonstration of the capacity of such weapons to inflict damage when he tabled a piece of steel at the conclusion of his second reading speech. He also pointed out that these sorts of weapons were used by terrorists and were deadly in their accuracy and devastating in their effects. No

thinking person would want to see these weapons in Western Australia for whatever purpose, be it legitimate or otherwise.

However, I take the point made by the member for Collie that many of these weapons are currently licensed for use within this State and that their owners will lose a great deal of money when their weapons are eventually confiscated.

I simply say this: Whilst in the hands of responsible people, such weapons would be used responsibly. However, if by some mischance an irresponsible person got hold of such a weapon, the compensation which would need to be paid to people affected by the irresponsible use of that weapon could be infinite. In fact, of course, no amount of compensation would make up for the loss of a life. Therefore, I believe this measure is necessary in the interests of public safety.

Like other members, I have been the subject of a great deal of lobbying from members of the WA Sports Shooters Association. These people take part in what to them is a legitimate and worthwhile sport. It is an activity they enjoy and in which, in a free society, they believe they are entitled to take part. However, I want to put it on record that I do not accept that this freedom should be extended in the manner suggested by the association. If these people had their way, we would be amending existing licensing procedures.

As members are aware, each weapon has to be licensed before it can be held legally. The Sporting Shooters Association wants to have the operator licensed; but as I have expressed this view to association members on a number of occasions, I believe firmly that this should not happen. The licensing of a weapon creates a record which is of tremendous use to the police when investigating a crime involving injury or loss of life. Therefore, it is very important that the records should be kept. The police should retain the right to determine whether a particular person should be granted a licence to hold a particular gun.

I am totally in agreement with the stated policy of the Government on this matter. In his second reading speech, the Minister said it had been the firm policy of the Government for many years that the availability of firearms should be regulated strictly to ensure protection of the community at large, and protection from the misuse of firearms.

We are well aware of what happens in the United States of America, where such licensing does not take place. There it is considered to be the right of an individual to carry firearms. Certainly we do not want that situation in this

State. In bringing forward this legislation, the Government is ensuring that the state of affairs in the United States never occurs here.

MR HODGE (Melville) [12.42 p.m.]: The Opposition supports this legislation, as the member for Collie has indicated. However, I would like to express a few of my own views on the Bill which I do not think goes far enough.

If the Government is serious about protecting the community from the proliferation of powerful firearms and the repercussions of their use, it should have gone a step further. There was a controversy about 12 months ago about the sale of firearms in supermarkets. It affected me, because there is a supermarket on the edge of my electorate—the K-Mart at Kardinya. That supermarket applied for permission to sell firearms in the shop.

The Melville City Council unanimously opposed that application; but the Commissioner of Police ignored the wishes of the Melville City Council and gave permission to the operators of K-Mart to sell the firearms. That is not a desirable situation.

Firearms and ammunition should not be sold in supermarkets or be put on the display shelves for people to purchase. We all know that much of the purchasing of goods in supermarkets is what is called "impulse purchasing"; people enter supermarkets to buy an item, notice something else on the shelf and, on impulse, purchase it. Firearms are not the sorts of things that should be on shelves in supermarkets where people can purchase them on impulse.

I know the Government says that people have to obtain a licence before they can remove the firearm; but everyone knows it is not difficult to obtain a licence. One only has to go to the local police station and put up a plausible story, and the licence is issued.

Another concern to me is the effect on young people and children. Firearms and ammunition should not be displayed on supermarket shelves beside food, toys, clothing, and other goods as though they were perfectly acceptable commodities that the people were free to purchase and, in fact, should purchase. Firearms should not be put in that category. I do not think they should be put on supermarket shelves where young people can see them as though they were part of everyday life, along with the other goods that supermarkets sell.

Sitting suspended from 12.45 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr HODGE: Before we suspended for lunch I was expressing the point of view that it was a pity the Government did not go further with this

legislation and introduce measures to stop the sale of firearms and ammunition from supermarkets. A case I have had experience with involved the K-Mart store at Kardinya where, against the Melville City Council's unanimous vote and against the wishes of the Melville Ratepayers' Association, the store was given permission by the Commissioner of Police to stock and sell firearms. It may well be that the commissioner had no option under the present legislation other than to allow those firearms to be sold. If that is the case, the legislation should be changed to cover this aspect.

Mr MacKinnon: Can anyone walk in and buy a firearm?

Mr HODGE: Yes.

Mr MacKinnon: No, he cannot.

Mr HODGE: A person cannot remove a firearm from the shop until he gets a licence from the local police station, and the Minister knows it is very easy to obtain such a licence. A person has only to go in and make an application, giving a plausible reason for wanting a firearm, to have a licence granted.

It is obviously a profitable business, otherwise K-Mart would not be going into this area. If licences were not readily granted, these big stores would not be stocking firearms. They do not stock lines which do not sell quickly or provide a good profit. K-Mart is obviously selling plenty of firearms and ammunition, otherwise it would not be stocking them.

Mr MacKinnon: Would you object if one of the smaller shops sold them?

Mr HODGE: I have nothing against specialist shops selling firearms. There is obviously a demand in the community for firearms, and if they are to be sold, the appropriate place to sell them is from the small specialist arms dealers. It is a vastly different proposition to have firearms on the shelves in family supermarkets where young people can see them exhibited as if they were normal household items.

Mr T. H. Jones: I hope someone tells the Minister what you are saying.

Mr HODGE: The Minister has just left the Chamber so it is probably a waste of my time making these comments; but I did want to express my personal views about the sale of firearms from supermarkets.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [2.20 p.m.]: This measure is a step in the right direction. There has been a considerable amount of communication with certain people with regard to this legislation, and one body involved has been

the Sports Shooters Association, which in the past has asked for the emphasis to be removed from the licensing of firearms to the licensing of the person concerned. I have discussed this matter with several people from time to time and the suggestion has been made that that is not desirable; but if a tightening up were needed, perhaps both the person and the firearm could be licensed.

It is not always easy to obtain a licence for a firearm. I have had people complain about the difficulties they have experienced in this regard and I believe the Firearms Branch of the Police Department is operating in the best manner by making the applicant measure up to what it considers to be a desirable standard before the issue of a licence.

To license both the firearm and the holder of that firearm would be a tightening-up procedure which would have a desirable effect. It would place more onus on the police officer responsible for the issuing of licences, and I am sure most people agree there is a need for some control in this regard. The legislation proposes just that.

The Minister's second reading speech contains a list of firearms to be prohibited and one of those is a most popular weapon. I refer to the .30 calibre US Carbine Mk1 of which 122 are licensed in this State.

Yesterday or the day before I wrote a letter to the Minister in regard to this matter. Of course, he has not yet had time to reply; but I should like to comment on the points I made concerning this particular firearm.

I have a letter from a constituent who is a very responsible citizen.

Mr T. H. Jones: Is that the same person who telephoned me yesterday?

Mr McPHARLIN: I do not know.

Mr T. H. Jones: He comes from Mt. Marshall.

Mr McPHARLIN: Yes; he is from Mt. Marshall.

Mr T. H. Jones: Is he on the shire council?

Mr McPHARLIN: He is.

Mr T. H. Jones: It would be the same fellow.

Mr McPHARLIN: It could well be. He has had 16 years' experience with a rifle club and four years' military experience as a small arms instructor and a range officer.

Before the gentleman concerned purchased this particular Mk 1 .30 Carbine, he consulted the local police sergeant to ascertain whether it was on the restricted list.

Mr Skidmore: What is this particular firearm used for?

Mr McPHARLIN: To a large extent, it is used to shoot vermin. Other weapons are just as dangerous, but not restricted.

This particular gentleman consulted the police sergeant to ascertain whether the rifle he wanted to buy was on the restricted list. He was assured that it was not. The gentleman bought it in good faith and informed me he paid \$250 for it.

Mr T. H. Jones: That is the same man, the same gun, and the same problem.

Mr McPHARLIN: I did not know he was going to phone the member for Collie.

Mr Old: He has seen a number of people.

Mr McPHARLIN: This particular gentleman bought the weapon in good faith.

In his second reading speech on the Bill, the Minister said that, even if this legislation is passed, it may not have the full effect which was perhaps desirable, because if a person wishes to acquire a firearm for criminal purposes, he can do so without the knowledge of the Police Department. Firearms can be obtained by mail from the Eastern States. Therefore, this legislation will not have the full effect which would be desirable, but it could have a retarding effect.

The particular rifle to which I have referred is lightweight and easy to handle. That is why it is so popular. It is no more dangerous than other rifles which are not on the restricted list. For example, thousands of .22 rifles are licensed and they are just as dangerous as the weapon to which I have referred. One can obtain various cartridge velocities for .22 rifles and some of them are rather high-powered. They are certainly just as dangerous as the particular item I am talking about which has a small shell, its range is not extensive, and it is not nearly as expensive as many of the other firearms mentioned.

The cost of ammunition is another matter to be considered. Automatic rifles can discharge ammunition at a very fast rate. To some extent, the cost factor may stop the excessive use of ammunition. It is possible to obtain three magazines for this particular rifle and it is suggested there should be a restriction on magazines containing higher numbers of rounds, such as 15 or 30 rounds. The suggestion is that magazines be restricted to, say, five rounds. I believe that, if such a suggestion were taken up, it would allow the holders of this popular weapon to retain their rifles.

(7)

The constituent to whom I have referred is conscientious. I know him personally, so I can vouch for that. He is careful in the way he stores his ammunition and rifle.

Mr T. H. Jones: How would you police your suggestions in regard to a restriction on the number of rounds?

Mr McPHARLIN: I admit it would be difficult to police such a restriction. However, when the licence was due to be renewed, the officer could check the matter and question the holder of the rifle in regard to the type of magazines he has. There would probably be no other way of checking the situation, unless an inspection was carried out of the premises of the rifle holder. There would be no problem in this regard with the person to whom I have referred; but, of course, I could not speak for others.

Compensation has been referred to by one or two other members. The cost of this particular rifle is approximately \$250. The legislation will not be retrospective, but when a particular weapon is due for registration, it will not be licensed.

The Government should consider the matter of compensation. These weapons are reasonably expensive. Some cost approximately \$250 and others are more expensive. If the rifle is to be removed from the possession of the holder, it is not unreasonable to expect he should be compensated for the loss of that particular piece of equipment which he has enjoyed using over the years.

Those are the points I wished to make in regard to the legislation. The weapon to which I have referred is very popular. It is possible the use of this firearm could be restricted in the manner I have suggested. I ask the Minister to consider the deletion of this particular item from the restricted list; but if this cannot be done and the legislation is passed, I suggest the matter of compensation should be considered seriously.

MR BATEMAN (Canning) [2.28 p.m.]: I do not want to delay the House, because I believe the matter has been canvassed fully by members from both sides. I support the comments made by the Opposition spokesman on this matter. He dealt with the contents of the Bill in great detail.

The debate on this Bill has been very useful as far as the Minister is concerned, because the comments made related closely to the legislation.

Any member who did not support the Bill should be remiss. Perhaps it does not go far enough; but it is probably best to proceed slowly in these areas. However, we do not want to reach the stage where rifles and ammunition may be

purchased with great ease, as occurs in America. Obviously, the Bill will move a little way towards stopping that.

I do think we have to give some consideration to the sporting clubs and the professional shooters. Most members in this House have been canvassed by the various sporting clubs and shooting associations. The members of these sporting bodies are very responsible people and police the use of rifles very carefully. I do not know how that is done once the rifles are taken home, but I am certain the members of these organisations are very responsible.

We are all aware of the dangers associated with people having the use of such violent pieces of equipment and what could occur if they were in the wrong hands. However I know the sporting organisations police the use of their weapons very well.

It could be said that it is somewhat like the Off-road Vehicles Act. Some children tear around all over the place in Mini Mokes or on bikes but when they belong to a club or organisation a good job is done to keep them in check and make sure they are run properly.

The professional shooters who use these weapons do a good job of looking after them because they do not want any discredit placed upon them. I am concerned about the effect of this legislation on the professional shooters; that is, the kangaroo shooters. They depend on these high-powered rifles for their livelihood and they are responsible people. They know very well that if they wish to go on to someone's property they have to have the authority of the owners and the permission of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

We must give some recognition to these responsible people in the community who look after their weapons very well.

The member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Collie mentioned the matter of compensation for those people who have expensive rifles confiscated. I believe this is something which should be taken into consideration because if we are to confiscate, we should compensate.

I join with other members of the House and support the Bill.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Minister for Police and Traffic) [2.33 p.m.]: I thank members from both sides of the House for their support of this legislation. I have noted the points which have been made and I admit that this is a difficult area in which to legislate. It is difficult because we are looking at a situation where we are balancing the interests of the whole community against the

rights, privileges, and interests of individual people.

It is not the Government's desire to interfere unduly with what individuals may do and of course many people have the attitude that it is their entitlement to be armed for their own protection or for the protection of their country. That attitude is expressed in the United States Bill of Rights in the statement that the right to bear arms should not be restricted.

I understand that in some countries there is an obligation to bear arms. In Switzerland the concern about the independence of the nation requires that everyone should be trained and have the capacity to contribute to the defence of the nation at any time.

The course which has been followed in Australia over a long period—it has also been followed in the United Kingdom—is the one which has been followed in this State and of which this present legislation is simply a part: It is an attempt to maintain regulation and control without eliminating completely the right of the people to have firearms in their possession.

The support which has been given to the Bill is accepted and I am glad that this exists because it is an issue which involves the whole community and is not one on which it would be desirable to have a purely party political conflict.

The issue of how we approach the licensing and the use of firearms has to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis in this State and in other States also. The measures we have effected so far and which have been included in this Bill have received a substantial measure of support from the wider community.

The member for Collie and other members raised the matter of compensation. It was my deliberate intention that the legislation brought forward would not support regulations which are restrictive in their operation, although power may be included in the legislation to bring about that effect.

Mr T. H. Jones: But it will have an effect.

Mr HASSELL: Whether it does have any effect depends on how long it is before we refuse to relicence weapons. I deliberately did not specify in the second reading speech the period involved because I wanted to ascertain the reaction to the legislation and whether there were genuine cases of injustice which may arise.

If regulations were brought in which had a minimum effect to delicense people who had lawfully spent their money and had lawfully obtained a firearm then I think it would be

necessary for us to consider the period which ought to apply in relation to each firearm. For instance if there is a weapon specified in the list and it is used for non-professional purposes it would take effect immediately. Where there are only one or two, as is the case in most categories, that could have effect almost immediately provided there is no injustice being done to individuals who bought the firearms.

In the case of the group to which reference has been made—that is, the .30 Carbine Mk1—we may have to look at the situation further. My contemplation was that we would allow a period of years in which the people holding those firearms would have the opportunity to dispose of them lawfully on an interstate basis or to places where they are not outlawed. Alternatively they could use up their expendable life.

I do not know the useful life of these weapons but there must be a limit to the life of a firearm. It may be that we would allow the licences to continue so that people can obtain their money's worth from their firearms.

These are the approaches to the problem which I think would be appropriate and I will bear in mind the interests of those people who have expended sums of money, such as \$250, when considering the period of time before these weapons will be refused relicensing.

I thought that would be a better approach than having to pay compensation to people for these particular weapons. It was my intention they be given the opportunity to get rid of the weapons and recover a reasonable amount of the expenditure laid out.

Mr T. H. Jones: Could you tell us the situation in other States? Do they have laws similar to this proposal?

Mr HASSELL: I think most of the other States basically have the same laws where they license firearms rather than the shooters. But I do not think they have the same provisions with regard to high-powered weapons. It is my understanding that the Police Forces in the other States regard our firearms control with some degree of envy.

Mr McPharlin: The person and not the firearm is licensed in New South Wales.

Mr HASSELL: I will touch on that aspect in a moment, but I am dealing with the questions in the order they were raised.

I understand the other States are not as strict about these particular weapons. Perhaps they will follow our lead.

The member for Collie, on behalf of the Opposition, said there was general opposition but,

also, some support for this measure. The Sports Shooters Association, and the interests which represent the manufacturers and the people who sell these weapons, do have a degree of interest in the passing of this legislation. It is gratifying that there has been evidence of support from various groups. We are concerned about the growing incidence of the availability of these particular kinds of weapons. The member for Collie mentioned bank employees, and I have received at least one other letter from interests representing security guards who are concerned about the welfare of their employees in relation to crime. So, it is not only the sporting shooters who have had something to say about this amendment.

While speaking about sporting shooters, let me also mention that so far as we are concerned we have no contest with what the member for Canning said and what the member for Mt. Marshall said about these groups being composed largely of responsible citizens who have a legitimate interest in the ownership and use of these firearms. But let us go back to what we are attempting to do.

We are directing this measure at a particular group of firearms; those with characteristics which until now have not been available in this State. I will repeat the characteristics of the particular weapons: Centre fire; automatic or semi-automatic; and capable of bulk reloading by use of a magazine with a capacity of eight or more rounds of ammunition. It is not the power alone of the weapon in question; it is the power in combination with the fact that it is automatic or semi-automatic and, therefore, capable of very rapid fire. It is also the convertibility of the semi-automatic to the automatic, and the convertibility of the weapon sold with a relatively small magazine capacity to a very large magazine capacity on a mail order basis.

The member for Mundaring referred to the lobbying from the Sports Shooters Association, and he said he wanted to put on record his view that he did not agree with the extent of the freedom those shooters want. The freedom they want, essentially, is that their members should be entitled to have any type of weapon they want at any time. They want to substitute, as part of that scheme, a shooter's licence for the present system of a weapon licence.

The Police Force in this State, and the Police Forces in the other States, to my understanding are uniformly opposed to the shooter's licence concept. They continue to favour the idea of licensing particular firearms. This argument has been around for some time. The sporting shooters were just as active when I was a back-bencher as

they are now in their approach to members of this House. They have been active for a long time in this campaign. They have a vested interest in their members being able to do what they want.

The Police Forces of Australia do not have a vested interest, other than the public interest. It is the public interest which we are seeking to protect with this legislation. Whilst we have not reached a final and absolute conclusion in relation to whether there should be a shooter's licence as distinct from a firearm licence, all the evidence points to the fact that the present system, with all its defects—which are acknowledged because there is no perfect system for preventing crime—is working in the best possible way.

The present system requires that a firearm be licensed, and it also requires that the person making an application for a licence should have a reason for that licence. The member for Mt. Marshall made the point that it was easy to have a reason for licensing a firearm.

It is my understanding that the Sports Shooters Association tends to generate reasons—which are legitimate and have to be upheld by the courts—and to some extent, create categories of contests which specify the weapons or firearms which their members want to be able to purchase. The association creates reasons for the members so that they can go to the police, or appeal to a magistrate, and establish a legitimate reason for licensing a firearm in order to enter a certain contest organised by the Sports Shooters Association. The association, in fact, creates those contests in order to provide a reason for its members to obtain certain firearms. Whilst that might be legitimate in a sense, I do not think it can be assumed, as has been said by some shooters, they want the weapons simply for the sake of competition.

We believe many firearms are available which are satisfactory for the purposes of legitimate competition, and for the purposes of legitimate professional shooters. That brings me to the point raised by the member for Canning when he said he was concerned about professional shooters who rely on high-powered weapons for their livelihood. It is my understanding that there are many high-powered weapons available which are suitable for their purpose, and are totally effective. Repeater models are available which are totally effective and of sufficient power for professional shooters to do their job. Those shooters do not need the characteristics of an automatic or semi-automatic rifle, or a large magazine capacity which turns these high-powered weapons from simple firearms into what is, in fact, in substance a military or para-military weapon capable of causing

incredible damage and devastation if it is misused.

It is not merely a matter of having high powered firearms available. They are available to sporting and professional shooters, and on the advice we have received we do not believe we are in fact depriving anyone of something for which he has a genuine, legitimate need. What we are talking about is a matter of preference, and the Government, in pursuit of a policy, has said that in this matter of preference the interests of the community are better served by not allowing the preference for people to acquire, own, and use firearms with the particular characteristic referred to in addition to high power. Other firearms which fill legitimate needs are readily available.

The member for Melville raised the issue of the availability of firearms, generally, from supermarkets. He referred to a particular case in his electorate in which he and others had opposed the licensing of a supermarket as a place where firearms could be sold. I am not aware of the particular case, so I cannot comment on it. The thrust of what he said was that we had not gone far enough and we ought to impose more rigid controls.

I can only say to him that if there are cases where the controls should be more rigid and where there is a genuine community interest in making them more rigid, the Police Force and I are prepared to move on it at any time. The question whether firearms should be sold at a supermarket is one of the difficult social issues which arise from time to time.

A few years ago we would have had the same arguments in this House about whether liquor should be sold in a supermarket. It was considered to be something which should not be available from supermarket shelves. I remember as a law clerk going to the Licensing Court year after year on store licences, when the court consistently imposed a condition that liquor should not be available on open shelves. That type of marketing was prohibited because it was thought liquor would be available to children.

The same arguments which have been used in relation to firearms were used in relation to liquor. I agree that it is not desirable to have firearm shops on every corner or to have firearms available at the ordinary supermarket, any more than it is desirable that pharmacy items be available at supermarkets. But others have a different view, and the question is whether we can go that far.

I have no doubt the Commissioner of Police was in part motivated by the fact that on a

number of occasions when the police have refused licences for firearms, they have been granted by magistrates. That was one of the specific reasons for this legislation. I do not know whether the commissioner's decisions could be appealed when someone was permitted to sell firearms at a supermarket, but perhaps he felt that on the precedents he could not succeed in an argument; or perhaps he reached a conclusion that he should not stop it. But that is not directly related to this Bill; it is related to the proposition that we have not gone far enough.

I can only repeat that if other cases are identified where we should go further, I am prepared to take them up, because within reasonable limits the tightness of the control we exercise on firearms should be quite severe. Prohibiting or restricting the sale of firearms will not prevent crime. It will simply contribute to prevention to have a set of restrictions which are appropriate in the circumstances. Some people have a legitimate claim and interest—those who want firearms for sporting, professional, or recreational purposes—and we must balance it.

As far as this legislation is concerned, bearing in mind the controversies which have arisen in the past because people felt their legitimate claims were being overruled, my objective was to limit the Bill to what was essential. The police drew attention to a certain set of weapons which were being brought in and becoming available for the first time—weapons which were of concern to the police because they had particular characteristics—and I said we would go forward on the basis of introducing the new controls for those weapons alone.

It was not intended to try to embrace, ban, and control everything, but to home in on the weapons which were causing particular concern. The provisions are not retrospective—that would be unfair. I considered we should appoint a day in the future when it ceased to be lawful to have those particular types of weapons.

I appreciate the support which has been given to the Bill, because this is not an easy matter and the pressures on members on both sides of the House from certain groups who have an interest in it are quite real. I dealt with the Sports Shooters Association, in particular, on the basis of saying, "We are not after your sport; we are not out to stop it; but on the best advice we can get, we believe the systems you propose are not better than those we have—in fact they are not as good as those we have. The particular weapons are not essential to your sport, and in relation to that set of weapons the community interests outweigh the interests of your members."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Hassell (Minister for Police and Traffic) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Section 6 amended—

Mr T. H. JONES: I raise the question whether, when a decision is made, the Minister will inform Parliament of the processes to be applied. He indicated when replying to the second reading that several areas were under consideration; for example, whether these types of guns should be relicensed until they are no longer useful, or whether compensation will be paid. He indicated that he has an open mind on these questions. Will he be good enough to inform members of Parliament when a determination is made, so that we may be aware of the situation?

Mr HASSELL: I make it quite clear that I am not contemplating that these weapons be relicensed until their useful life has expired. I was supposing it would be possible within the period before they were finally outlawed that some of them would have reached the end of their useful life. In other words, we would not say that the period will be until they are used up or worn out, but we are going to say the period may be a certain number of years and it may happen that those weapons will be used up in that time. I really do not know enough about the life of individual firearms to be able to say they will be used up within the sort of period that we contemplate, but it may be that that will occur.

The other issue raised by the member for Collie was whether the Parliament will be informed. Of course this will be carried out by regulation, and therefore the regulation will be laid on the Table of the House and will be open to the scrutiny of Parliament in that way.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

POLICE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 October.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [3.02 p.m.]: This Bill is to amend the Police Act in a number of ways. I would like to indicate to the Minister that in our opinion he did not explain the full ramifications of the Bill. He did not indicate what was happening in the other States or whether this was new legislation.

I believe some of the drafting could have received better attention. There is no reference to the section referred to in clause 7. We had to search through the parent legislation to find the reference. I draw that to the Minister's attention.

The Opposition strongly opposes this legislation, and I would like to indicate that to a degree the Police Union of Western Australia does not accept a number of the provisions of this Bill.

At the outset I would like to say that I forwarded copies of the legislation to the Police Union to find out its attitude to the measure. Today I received advice from the assistant secretary of the union that there had been no consultation with and no reference to the union at all, and I remind members that it is the Police Force of Western Australia which will be called on to administer the Bill when it becomes an Act.

The assistant secretary of the union asked me, in view of the concern expressed by the Police Union, to request the Minister to adjourn the measure to permit the union to hold discussions with him about it.

The Bill includes some radical changes, and one would have felt that the Police Union should have been consulted. Special constables are to be appointed and, as I will indicate in a moment, the union is not happy with the provision that a magistrate or two justices of the peace will have the power to appoint special constables.

The union is not happy about other provisions in the Bill, and so I make a plea in the Parliament, initially on behalf of the Police Union—and before I continue my remarks—that this matter be adjourned in order that further discussions may be held. The Labor Party has always maintained that where any legislation will interfere with the trade union movement or with any group it is proper for the responsible Minister to hold discussions with that group. It is for this reason that I make the plea for an adjournment on behalf of the union.

The Minister for Police and Traffic must confer and work with the Police Union, and certainly it

would be in his interests to find out the attitude of the union and the reason for its opposition.

The view of the Opposition is that the legislation is in line with the thinking of the Court Government. This Government seems to be interested primarily in repression and restriction of civil liberties, rather than a clear definition of public behaviour.

Mr Herzfeld: What about the liberties of the public at large?

Mr T. H. JONES: I promise I will not interject on the member for Mundaring if he has a say on this Bill, as he did on the previous one, and if he does not agree with me.

Mr Herzfeld: I will give you permission to interject.

Mr T. H. JONES: As usual I do not get very far in my speech without an interruption. No doubt, the member for Mundaring, having left his seat, agrees with my suggestion.

Mr Blaikie: Very fair-minded.

Mr T. H. JONES: Before that unnecessary interruption I was saying that we believe this is another piece of repressive legislation. We have seen the effects of section 54B of the Police Act. When we were discussing the amendment which became section 54B, we forecast what would occur.

Mr Grayden: The member for Mundaring is back again—he was having difficulty hearing you.

Mr T. H. JONES: Is the Minister speaking for him?

Mr Grayden: Yes.

Mr T. H. JONES: Can he not speak for himself?

Mr Grayden: He had difficulty hearing you.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is very good to see the Minister looking after his interests; apparently he is not capable of looking after them himself.

As I said, when the proposed new section 54B was introduced, we raised very strong objections to its ramifications. We said that the effects of the Bill would be obvious in the Pilbara, and this is what came to pass. We know what that section has meant to the liberties of the people of Western Australia, and here is a similar piece of legislation which is designed primarily to restrict the civil liberties of the people of this State.

I will now move on to the various clauses of the Bill. Clause 3 provides for non-police personnel to wear police uniform when supervising police boys' clubs or playing in the Police Pipe Band. That provision does not seem to be objectionable. We all know the situation that pertains in the

operation of the police and citizens' youth clubs, and it is not my intention to delay the House on this matter. All I wish to say is that the Opposition appreciates the need for the amendment to this section of the Act.

In respect of clause 4, the Minister said—

Power is also contained within the Bill for a stipendiary magistrate or two or more justices, upon the oath of any credible person, to appoint special constables in the event of any civil emergency.

This is a provision to which we are strongly and bitterly opposed. As far as the Opposition is concerned the Minister's statement contains a great deal of gray area. The effect of the amendment is to increase the range of events which justify the appointment of special constables. At present the appointment of special constables may occur only when any tumult, riot, or felony has taken place, and the Bill proposes to extend that to the situation where there is reasonable apprehension that a civil emergency will occur. Since the words "civil emergency" are defined nowhere in the Bill or the Act—and if the Minister can point out where they are defined, I will stand corrected—the amendment is open to question as the interpretation of the words could lead to great difficulty. I make that point strongly.

I cannot interpret the intention of the words, and I hope that when he replies the Minister will indicate what the interpretation is. The interpretations within the Act are silent on this matter.

While referring to this matter, I would make the point that this is one of the areas which is worrying the Police Union of Western Australia. In his second reading speech the Minister did not point to any other legislation or authority where the words "civil emergency" are defined; nor did he point to any other State in which those words are used. The Opposition cannot find any reference to these words in any other State of the Commonwealth. Certainly the Minister did not tell us anything about this in his speech. The Opposition has canvassed the matter and cannot find a like situation anywhere in Australia.

I would be pleased to hear the Minister reply to this point because we are strongly opposed to permitting the amendment to be retained in the Bill in its present form. In our view the powers of the police to control a situation of civil emergency are manifest. There is no justification, nor is any suggested in the Minister's second reading speech, to extend the provision for the appointment of

special constables to include situations of civil emergency.

My guess is that this provision will be used in the situation of a strike or a demonstration. Is that what is intended? Is it intended to use this provision in the case of strikes or demonstrations? If that is the case, in our opinion it runs parallel to the provisions contained in section 54B of the Police Act. Once again the Government seems to be increasing the powers of the police to use untrained constables in a situation where at the very least police training is essential. Magistrates and justices of the peace should not have power to appoint untrained men to handle such situations.

Obviously the Minister will not agree with that proposition, but it is the view of the Opposition. We want to know who will determine when a civil emergency occurs. We want to know whether the determination will be made by a justice of the peace, and whether it will be made as the result of an application by a body or by some person. If the determination is to be made by a magistrate or some other untrained person—and I cast no reflection on justices of the peace in Western Australia—then it will be made in many cases by laymen. For instance, an application could be made to two justices of the peace in Karratha to appoint special constables in a state of serious emergency. Those justices of the peace are generally laymen. No-one is reflecting on the service they give to Western Australia, but in a situation which could degenerate and in which control must be exercised quickly, this is a very broad power to give to any layman, particularly where the intervention of trained police personnel could be necessary.

Therefore, I cannot emphasise too strongly our challenge to the Minister to interpret the words "civil emergency". The Police Union also is concerned about this matter, and has asked me to raise it in the House. Let us suppose a civil emergency arose and special constables were appointed. If the civil emergency squad was involved, would it override the police? Would the police be left out while the special constables took over? What would be the role of the police in such a situation?

The Police Union is concerned that no discussions were held with it. In its view this amendment will have a big impact on the operations of the Police Force, generally, within the State. For those reasons, I raise this important issue regarding the appointment of special constables on behalf of the union.

I ask the Minister for Police and Traffic to be more precise in his reply than he was in his second

reading speech and to tell the Parliament what is intended in respect of the points I have raised both on behalf of the Opposition and on behalf of the Police Union of Western Australia.

I now turn to clause 5, which proposes to amend section 80 of the principal Act by deleting in subsection (1) the words "wilfully or maliciously". The Opposition cannot see any justification for this action, which refers to things done by a person who is intoxicated. When people are so utterly intoxicated that they do not know what they are doing, any damage they cause is damage for which they are liable either at law or on a civil basis. The question of criminal responsibility is an important one because whilst there may be some grounds for this amendment, I think the Minister would agree that when a person is intoxicated he is not at all times aware of the actions he takes.

The Statute book already contains provisions to deal with a person in such a situation. In our opinion it is quite contrary to criminal law that an intoxicated person should be held responsible for his actions. We think society would be interested in making recommendations about this matter. I do not know how the Law Society feels about an amendment like this appearing on the Statute book.

So it will be seen the Bill has many gray areas about which we are not happy. Perhaps the Government has reason to say that a person should be dealt with in a different manner when he commits an offence during a period of intoxication. Of course, we have to protect the individual who cannot help himself. We feel sufficient protection is afforded in the law on the Statute book at the moment, and the proposed extension of the law in this amendment is unnecessary. For those reasons, we oppose this proposition.

I refer now to the offence of trespass. The Minister made the following comment in his second reading speech—

Contained also within this Bill are provisions to create the offence of "trespass". It is generally believed within our community that such an offence does exist. It does exist in all other States in one form or another, but not in Western Australia.

The police are frustrated in the performance of their duties where persons enter a property and refuse to leave. Present law gives the owner or occupier of those premises, or a police officer requested to assist, power to remove those persons, but any police officer in so doing is acting only as

a civilian and not given the protection the law gives a police officer.

Once again, this represents the introduction of repressive and unnecessary legislation. It has never been demonstrated in the Parliament, nor has the Minister spoken about specific occasions on which the police of Western Australian were unable to use other sections of the Act to keep law and order.

The Minister has a responsibility to prove to Parliament that the existing law has not been sufficient to meet the situation. The Minister simply spoke in general terms and said that, in his opinion, there was a need to change the Act in the prescribed manner. However, that is not good enough. The Minister must be able to demonstrate to the Parliament that such a change is needed.

I have already mentioned that this legislation seeks to make radical changes to the Police Act, yet the Parliament has been given a totally inadequate explanation by the Minister in his second reading speech. The charge of being unlawfully on premises is open to police where the presence is unlawful, or not lawful, and hence it cannot be said that the introduction of a provision for trespass is justified.

I give the House a few examples. Let us take the case of a demonstration of Aborigines on the lawns of the church we know so well in St. George's Terrace. In my hypothetical case, the church group itself does not object to the demonstration being held in its grounds; it is quite happy to allow the Aborigines to make their point in this manner. What would be the situation in such a case? Would the police move in and arrest these people for trespassing?

Let us take the case of a private householder on whose property a demonstration is taking place. That private householder is quite happy for the demonstration to take place and in fact is interested in hearing what the demonstrators have to say. Do the police move in of their own volition and arrest the demonstrators, despite the fact that the householder who owns the property has no objection to the demonstration taking place?

The Minister has given Parliament insufficient information on this matter, and I ask him to make some reference to this point when he replies to the debate.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), I believe I have made the point of view of the Opposition and of the Police Union very clear. We feel this legislation is yet another restriction of civil liberties. Both the Opposition and the Government know what is intended by this

amendment. The Minister can nod his head if he likes. We forecast how section 54B of the Act would be used by the police and we were told at the time that we were wrong. However, subsequent events have proved that what the Opposition said at the time was correct.

For those reasons, the Opposition strongly opposes this legislation. I make a final plea to the Minister on behalf of the Police Union of Western Australia to adjourn this Bill so that the union can hold discussions with him in relation to certain amendments in the legislation.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [3.25 p.m.]: I am greatly concerned about the legislation before the House. I listened with care to the member for Collie, and I share the fears he expressed. My mind boggles at the Minister's suggestion that a person could be put in the uniform of the Police Force of Western Australia and have bestowed upon him the same powers as a constable. My understanding of the Bill is that it merely gives the Commissioner of Police the power to say, "You may use this uniform in certain circumstances—either as the supervisor of a citizens' youth club or as part of the police band." Nowhere does it restrict the responsibility and powers of the person placed in uniform; he will have the same powers as a policeman. The Bill does not specifically say he shall have those powers.

I suggest to members that the people of Western Australia often feel so aggrieved about a particular matter that they take to the streets and demonstrate. Under this legislation, it would be possible for the Governor of the day to order 50 or 60 of these people, who have been given uniforms for a specific purpose, to join the Police Force to control the demonstration. This is what worries me.

I find myself slightly at variance with the member for Collie on the matter of trespass. I am concerned that we should protect the owners of private property. Let us take the example of a person who is holding a barbecue or a party, and that function is gatecrashed by one or more persons. Incidentally, this has happened many times in my electorate, where certain people in the area just do not adhere to the normal concepts of social behaviour expected of them. The owner of the private property concerned often finds it extremely difficult to remove the people who have barged in. In addition, the police are most reluctant to eject those people. Whichever way we look at it, there is a problem associated with this sort of activity.

However, I wonder why it has been found necessary to include in this provision the matter of trespass on premises occupied by the Crown, or by a public authority. As the member for Collie pointed out, this is already covered under section 54B of the Police Act. I take umbrage at the fact that so much importance is being placed on protecting the premises of the Crown and public authorities against trespass. I agree wholeheartedly with the concept that private property should be protected, and that police should have the power to evict people who barge in on private functions and be immune from any action which may be taken against them. This section appears to be simply an extension of section 54B of the existing Act, and will allow further mutilation of the rights and privileges of people to protest.

As to the wearing of the uniform, the mind boggles. A person could be a member of a local band of the Police Force, wear a uniform, and then go on the streets and act with all authority. Once he performs a function in the uniform, he could continue to wear it and use it for other purposes.

Mr Hassell: That is what the amendment is all about.

Mr SKIDMORE: It does not say that. The Minister might nod his head and smile in his usual, cynical fashion; but let us be truthful about it. He should be prepared to lay down some restrictions on these people. He should have another look at the amendment.

All the Bill does is to say that we will put a person into the uniform of a policeman for two special purposes—one as the supervisor of a police and citizens' youth club, and the second as a member of a police band. However, it does not restrict those people from indulging in other police activities once they have the uniform. That is a disturbing feature.

I sense some feeling of dismay on both sides of the House. However, as a legislator and a person who is responsible to the electorate he represents, I have a duty to say this. A great number of people in my electorate will be affected by this legislation, particularly in regard to the question of trespass, noisy parties, and antisocial behaviour. Therefore I have the right to speak. I apologise if I have upset anyone; but my concern is genuine.

There should be some limitation on these people to ensure that they do not adopt a role which is given to them, merely because they happen to wear the uniform of the Police Force of this State.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (10): ASSENT

Message from the Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. Change of Names Regulation Amendment Bill.
2. Administration Amendment Bill.
3. Constitution Amendment Bill (No. 3).
4. Waterways Conservation Amendment Bill.

5. Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Amendment Bill.
6. Public Service Amendment Bill.
7. Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited Agreements (Variation) Bill.
8. Railways Discontinuance Bill.
9. Main Roads Amendment Bill.
10. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Amendment Bill.

House adjourned at 3.50 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HOUSING

Construction Programme

1083. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In which localities will the 161 new dwellings in the State Housing Commission's programme for 1980-81 be built?
- (2) How many dwellings and of what type will be built in each locality?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2)

Fremantle Region—	52 units
Claremont.....	6
Coolbellup	37
Hamilton Hill	2
White Gum Valley	7

Metropolitan North Region—	75 units
Mt. Lawley	57
North Perth	16
Balga	2

Metropolitan South-East Region—	39 units
Carlisle	27
Langford	2
Queens Park	10

TOTAL 166 units

The anticipated construction programme for 1980-81 in the metropolitan area for new units has been revised to 166.

The above units will comprise 160 aged persons' units and six single detached units.

RAILWAYS

Commonwealth Funds and Australian National Railways Commission

1113. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Why did Western Australia withdraw from the Australian National Railways Commission?
- (2) Is Westrail being penalised financially in the allocation of funds by the Commonwealth?

- (3) (a) What major developments are being proposed by Westrail;
- (b) how will these developments be funded?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Western Australia has never been part of the Australian National Railways Commission.
- (2) Because of the cutbacks in Commonwealth general purpose capital funds Westrail is faced with the same financial constraints as other departments and authorities.
- (3) (a) Over the next five years Westrail proposes to spend—
\$83 million on the rehabilitation of the Kwinana-Koolyanobbing railway.
\$30 million on the upgrading of the Kwinana-Picton railway.
\$5.2 million on the modernisation of Midland Workshops.
\$45 million on replacement of locomotives and wagons.
\$8.4 million on replacement of suburban railcars.
- (b) The rehabilitation of the Koolyanobbing-Kwinana railway is being financed from public borrowings. Funds for the other works are likely to be provided from General Loan Fund allocations, special borrowings from the Commonwealth and through leasing arrangements.

PRISONS

Prisoner: Robert Wheeler

1116. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Would the Minister advise why Robert Wheeler currently at Wooroloo training centre sentenced to five years for receiving, has completed seven years?
- (2) Is it factual Mr Wheeler has repaid all moneys received since his conviction?
- (3) How many times has Mr Wheeler appeared before the Parole Board since convicted?
- (4) If a request for parole has been rejected, what are the reasons for rejection?
- (5) When will Mr Wheeler be released from custody?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Mr Wheeler was on parole after previous convictions when he was sentenced on 22 June, 1977, to four years' imprisonment with a two-year minimum term for a number of additional offences, including false pretences and stealing as a servant. As he was on parole when those additional offences occurred, the unexpired portion of his original sentence—938 days—was added to the later sentence.
- (2) Not known.
- (3) Twice since the latest convictions.
- (4) As he has been twice released on parole, with parole being revoked for subsequent offences on each occasion, the board is not convinced at this stage that a further period of parole would be successful, or desirable in the public interest.
- (5) Normal expected date of release would be 15 January, 1983.

HOUSING: PENSIONERS

Building Programme

1117. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many of the 160 pensioner units to be constructed in the State Housing Commission's building programme for the current financial year are to be built in each of the following suburbs—
 - (a) Nollamara;
 - (b) Balga;
 - (c) Girrawheen; and
 - (d) Koondoola?
- (2) (a) On which lots in each of these suburbs are these units to be built; and
 (b) what number of units is to be built on each lot?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2) No pensioner units have been programmed for construction in the current programme in the districts named.

POLICE

Special Constables

1118. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Will he advise the numbers of special constables in this State and the dates they were appointed?

Mr HASSELL replied:

There are eight special constables. Dates of appointment are—

17/9/69	23/3/79
23/12/70	16/5/79
11/2/74	11/6/79
29/4/76	26/6/80.

SEWERAGE

Collie

1119. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Where are the areas where the allocation of \$597 000 for sewerage extensions at Collie will be utilised?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The allocation is for the following works—

	\$
(1) Upgrade the Nos. 1, 2, and 3 pump stations	80 000
(2) Complete the upgrading of the No. 1 treatment works	153 000
(3) Extend the reticulation sewers in Wilson Park	199 000
(4) Construct reticulation sewers in area 14 in the vicinity of Carma Avenue	23 000
(5) Construct reticulation sewers in area 15 which includes the Fairview Primary School	85 000
(6) Construct reticulation sewers in area 16 which is bounded by Archer, Steere, Stuchbury, and Bebbington Streets	57 000

\$597 000

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Collie

1120. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Education:

Will he detail the work programmes at the following schools as announced in the Estimates—

- (a) Collie Ameroo \$30 000;
- (b) Collie Fairview \$51 000;
- (c) Collie Wilson Park \$80 000;
- (d) Collie High School \$170 000?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) Final payment on additions.
- (b) Completion of upgrade of administration and provision of a library.
- (c) Upgrade of administration areas, provision of staff toilets and a student practical area.
- (d) Improvements to administration area.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL

North Forrestfield

1121. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have the plans for the construction of the North Forrestfield primary school been deferred?
- (2) If "Yes", will he give reasons why and for how long?
- (3) If "No", will he advise when construction will begin and what is the completion date?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes, until an alternative site is located.
- (2) and (3) The designated primary school site is separated from its catchment area by a road which the Shire of Kalamunda advises will carry heavy traffic in the future.

The new school is planned to open in February 1982, depending on the availability of a suitable site.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ROADS: MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT

Employees: Reduction

297. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

I ask the Minister for Transport, in his role as Minister for main roads, whether there has been any indication of the likely cut-back in this staff due to the cut in loan funds during the current year?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I answered a similar question relating to this and asked by the Leader of the Opposition the other day. If he wants further information relating to it, I ask him to put a question on the notice paper.

ELECTORAL

Federal Election: Premier's Letter

298. Mr CARR, to the Deputy Premier:

I refer to a letter received in Geraldton yesterday, addressed to my wife and myself at our Geraldton address, which came from the Premier's Office, 14th floor, Superannuation Building, St. George's Terrace, Perth, marked "personal—from the Premier, Sir Charles Court", in which on two pages he said all sorts of terrible things would happen to the State if I did not vote for his team for the Senate. In the last paragraph the following words appear—

Please think deeply about your Senate vote on 18 October. I urge you to put the names Withers, Durack and Crichton-Browne at the head of your list. They believe in Western Australia. They believe in the Senate. They believe in you.

Before asking my question, can I say that I appreciate the Premier's concern for my voting intentions; and I am pleased to hear that Messrs Withers, Durack, and Crichton-Browne believe in my wife and me. I ask the Deputy Premier: Is it the official view of the Government that the Liberal Party campaign is in such disarray that it needs to make this sort of appeal to Labor Party members of Parliament to vote for the Liberal team?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I do not think that is the position at all. I think the Premier is fairly confident; but he is offering a last chance to save the member for Geraldton.

Mr Davies: When am I going to get my letter?

ELECTORAL

Federal Election: Premier's Letter

299. Mr PEARCE, to the Deputy Premier:

This question refers to the same letter, copies of which have been received by my constituents. In the past, the Premier has harassed members of Parliament who have used their office addresses as contact points for Federal election material or for other purposes; and we heard that sort of thing from the Premier about four weeks ago in this Chamber, on the same subject. Will the Deputy Premier take some action to harass the Premier for using his office address for the delivery of this letter, which is quite clearly Federal election material and nothing else, and chastise him for the use of his office in this way?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I have not seen the letter, and I do not know the facts of it. I would be amazed if members opposite had not sent letters to people asking for support in some way or other. However, I will refer the comments to the Premier; and I am sure he will answer the question if the member wishes to ask it on Tuesday.

RAILWAYS

Midland Workshops: Employees

300. Mr WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are any employees of the Midland workshops entitled to free travel by rail to and from work each day?
- (2) If not, what concessions do the workshop employees enjoy when travelling by rail to and from work?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, there are some who receive free travel.

Mr Harman: Who are they?

Mr Skidmore: Only travelling to technical school.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RUSHTON: Apprentices and junior workers under 16 years of age receive free travel to and from work at the Midland Workshops. The other workers receive a quarter rate, or 25 per cent of the 28-day ticket rate to and from work.

ELECTORAL

Federal Election: Premier's Letter

301. Mr HODGE, to the Deputy Premier:

This is in connection with the Premier's letter. Does the fact that I did not receive a letter mean that Messrs Withers, Durack, and Crichton-Browne do not believe in me?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

To my mind it seemed that the Premier felt there was no chance of saving the member.

STOCK: SHEEP

Export

302. Mr STEPHENS, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) With regard to the 24-hour stoppage imposed by the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union, does the Deputy Premier see these stoppages and the Transport Workers' Union moves of coercing drivers to join its union as a co-ordinated plan of industrial action that will be taken to prevent the shipment of live sheep?
- (2) As union membership is voluntary and any form of collusion between these two unions will increase the prospects of a union-imposed ban on live sheep exports, will the Deputy Premier give an assurance that the law will be upheld and that the Government will ensure that live sheep exports will continue?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) I have had no notice of the question; but in reply I say that even this morning I had a meeting with the secretary and other members of the Meat Industry Employees' Union; and it was agreed that there would be no more stoppages at this stage. Arrangements have been made for a meeting on Monday with the union, with the producers, and with the processors; and we will have further discussions at that time. The union members have indicated that the peaks in the work force mean that a number of members are out of work for three or four months. We are very concerned, from the farming community's point of view, that at the peak when the lambs are ready to process, if they are knocked back it creates a loss to the farmers. We will endeavour to make sure that that problem is solved; hence the meeting on Monday.
- (2) If we see the need to take action, we certainly will do so. We intend to make sure that the law is upheld.

MEMBER FOR MOORE

Threat to Personal Liberty

303. Mr CRANE, to the Speaker:

In view of the seriousness of the matter, I desire to ask a question of you, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moore should know that he has no right to ask the Speaker a question without notice. I indicate to the House that the member did give me notice of a question that he intended asking and I drew his attention to the fact that it was my intention to make a statement with respect to the matter reported in *The West Australian*. The question the member referred to me dealt with matters of security at Parliament House. I indicate to the member that in response to his written notice of question I will raise the matter with the Joint House Committee which has the responsibility for the security of Parliament House. As far as the other aspects of the incident to which the

member seeks to make reference are concerned, I will simply leave the matter standing following the statement I made earlier today.

UNDERWATER BREATHING APPARATUS

Filling Equipment

304. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) In view of the answer by the Premier to question 1023 on Wednesday 8 October, how many checks has the Medical and Health Services Department through its Clean Air Branch made on a voluntary basis on equipment used to fill self-contained underwater breathing apparatus throughout the State in the last two years?
- (2) On what dates were the checks made and on what premises?
- (3) How many premises throughout the State are used for the filling of self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, and how many of these have never been checked?

Mr YOUNG replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) A total of 68 tests were carried out on self-contained breathing apparatus on a voluntary basis over the last two years.
- (2) Tests were carried out on compressed air cylinders presented at the Clean Air Branch of the Department of Health and Medical Services at 57 Murray Street, Perth. The cylinders were presented by private individuals, underwater diving clubs, private companies and Government instrumentalities as listed. See list below.

These tests on air are an indirect test of the equipment used.

- (3) Not known.

DATE	TEST CARRIED OUT ON BEHALF OF
19.01.79	Private individual
23.01.79	West Nets Sports Centre 27 Kearns Crescent, Applecross
31.01.79	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin H.M.A.S. Leeuwin H.M.A.S. Stirling
8.02.79	Private individual
13.02.79	Public Works Department Western Australian Fire Brigades Western Australian Fire Brigades Western Australian Fire Brigades
2.03.79	Barry Martin Diver
29.03.79	Barry Martin Diver 3 Pearse Street, North Fremantle

DATE	TEST CARRIED OUT ON BEHALF OF		
9.04.79	W.A.P.E.T.	29.08.80	W.A.P.E.T.
	12 St. George's Terrace, Perth	15.09.80	12 St. George's Terrace, Perth
9.04.79	R.A.A.F. Pearce	16.09.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin
	H.M.A.S. Derwent	8.10.80	H.M.A.S. Derwent
18.04.79	Sports Specialists		Port Hedland Diving Service
	80 Scarborough Beach Road, Mt. Hawthorn		
23.04.79	H.M.A.S. Diamantina		
9.05.79	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
12.06.79	Public Works Department		
	Public Works Department		
14.09.79	H.M.A.S. Stirling		
	W.A.P.E.T.		
	12 St. George's Terrace, Perth		
	Private individual		
20.09.79	H.M.A.S. Diamantina		
	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
12.11.79	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
23.11.79	University Underwater Club		
23.11.79	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
	Malibu Diving		
	4 Hamilton Place, Safety Bay		
10.12.79	Special Air Service		
	Swanbourne		
15.01.80	H.M.A.S. Derwent		
17.01.80	Flower Davies Wemco Pty Ltd		
	193 Gt. Eastern Highway, Belmont		
31.01.80	University Underwater Club		
1.02.80	H.M.A.S. Stirling		
	W.A.P.E.T.		
	12 St. George's Terrace		
5.02.80	Water Police		
11.02.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
19.02.80	C.H.E.S. Engine Reconditioning		
	10 Stack Street, East Fremantle		
7.03.80	Flower Davies Wemco Pty Ltd		
	193 Gt. Eastern Highway, Belmont		
20.03.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
14.04.80	W.A.P.E.T.		
	12 St. George's Terrace, Perth		
15.04.80	Public Works Department		
	Bunbury		
16.04.80	Water Police		
30.04.80	H.M.A.S. Moresby		
	Public Works Department		
	Bunbury		
9.05.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
	H.M.A.S. Stirling		
15.05.80	Westrail		
	Midland		
16.05.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
24.06.80	Public Works Department		
	Fremantle		
	Public Works Department		
	Fremantle		
	Public Works Department		
	Fremantle		
26.06.80	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
4.07.80	H.M.A.S. Brisbane		
8.07.80	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
5.08.80	H.M.A.S. Leeuwin		
13.08.80	Western Australian Fire Brigade		
15.08.80	H.M.A.S. Stalwart		
25.08.80	Jack Sue		
	486 Murray Street, Perth		

HEALTH

Laboratory Services

305. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that up to 60 technologists and four doctors employed by the State Health Laboratory Services could lose their jobs if pathology work in Government hospitals is handed over to private pathologists?
- (2) Is it a fact that many employees of the State Health Laboratory Services are very worried over the possibility that they might lose their jobs and that this has had a serious effect on staff morale?
- (3) How much money does the Government expect to save by allowing private pathologists to perform work usually done by the State Health Laboratory Services?

Mr YOUNG replied:

I have had no notice of this question but I think I will be able to give the member the information he seeks.

- (1) I think he would probably be in a better position than I would be to know whether or not the figures he quoted were correct because, as I say, he gave me no notice of this question. The member indicated 60 technologists and four doctors could lose their jobs. The philosophy of this Government is to try to encourage private enterprise wherever practical and possible, and if private pathology services can provide services which public hospitals generally offer to the public on a proper and 24-hour basis whereby they do all the tests the hospital wants them to do, then it is proper they be given the opportunity to do so. If that means that the State Health Laboratory Services does not have sufficient work to do, we would have to face the situation as it arose. I told the member the other day that we can no longer look forward to people, in

whatever service, expecting to hold their jobs on a permanent basis if the work is no longer required to be done by their particular establishment.

- (2) I hasten to add that I have the greatest confidence in the State Health Laboratory Services. I believe it does work which is equivalent to that done by any other health laboratory, not only in this country but also in the world. It has provided an excellent service for our hospital system. I have no doubt the expertise it has will probably ensure that very few private pathologists could compete with its staff when given the opportunity to quote for work in hospitals which I am giving them the opportunity to do. If it happens that some private pathologist is able to do this, I have no doubt that the staff who would otherwise be employed at the State Health Laboratory Services and who might find themselves in a situation where they do not have work to do would have no difficulty, because of their expertise and qualifications, in finding work with those private pathologists.

Mr DAVIES: Would that not transfer the responsibility of costs back to the teaching hospitals?

Mr YOUNG: Charges for tests are being made to privately insured patients, through the State Health Laboratory Services at any event.

Mr DAVIES: Have you looked at comparative charges?

Mr YOUNG: That is why I have set up the committee to look at what effect there would be if private pathologists were given this opportunity and to establish the real costs of the State Health Laboratory Services in respect of these services. We want to know if there is some sort of reasonable and equitable basis on which the pathologists might quote for this work. The work of the committee will provide the answers to the questions asked by the member for Melville and the Leader of the Opposition.

- (3) The amount of money saved might also be answered by the work of the committee; but I stress that the move I

have taken to have this matter examined did not arise purely from the desire to save money, although I must admit that may well end up being the result. The Government is trying to put into effect the philosophy it espouses, which is to give private enterprise the opportunity to compete on a proper basis with Government enterprises.

EDUCATION

Materials: Premier's Letter

306. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that the Premier has written a confidential letter to Prime Minister Fraser indicating that the WA Education Department will not take materials prepared by the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra relating to the Australian Government and politics, material which the Minister himself has previously praised publicly?
- (2) Is he aware the Premier has taken this action in writing to the Prime Minister to say that this material is not acceptable in Western Australia on the grounds that the views contained in it are too centralist and that, as the Premier believes, disparaging comments are made about clear felling in forests and about mining?
- (3) Is the Minister prepared to retract his previous praise of the material produced by CDC?
- (4) If so, why is the Premier writing about what should be used in our schools, and not the Minister?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (4) I am aware that over a long period there has been considerable criticism of much of the material emanating from the source to which the member referred. I suggest he puts his question on the notice paper.

EDUCATION

Teachers: Pilbara Community Colleges

307. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Teachers' Union is warning its members against applying for positions advertised for community colleges in the Pilbara, in part upon the ground that no discussion has taken place between the union and the Minister about the security of tenure

of staff in these positions and the basis on which they are to be paid?

- (2) Can the Minister indicate to the House why such discussions did not take place and the likelihood of them taking place before the positions are filled?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) I am in constant contact with the Teachers' Union. I am attending a function with representatives of the union at five o'clock this afternoon. This matter has never been raised with me by the union.
