

associated with trotting would have preferred to retain the name of the gentleman who was more or less responsible for making what is now Gloucester Park possibly the best trotting ground in the southern hemisphere.

I am sure that many of those who have followed trotting over the years would hold similar views and feel that the name Brennan Park should have been retained. I understand, however, when the Duke of Gloucester visited Western Australia, somebody had the idea that it was desirable to change the name to Gloucester Park. This of course is now history, but I do feel that the name Brennan Park should have been retained.

I certainly believe the Bill is necessary. Quite apart from my interest in thoroughbred horses I had, as I have already indicated, been interested in trotting horses. I have more or less followed horses all my life, except, possibly, during the depression years when I was not able to devote as much time as I would have liked to the sport.

One of my horses won the South-West Derby, so this will give members some indication that I have some knowledge of both trotting horses and thoroughbreds. I do not by any means seek to imply that I am an expert in the field, but I do have considerable knowledge of the matter and I can speak on it with some authority.

I support the Bill. I think we should do all we can to place it on the Statute book of Western Australia.

THE HON. T. O. PERRY (Lower Central) [5.04 p.m.]: I believe the popularity achieved by trotting in Western Australia has prompted the W.A.T.A. to seek an increase in the number of meetings which are held in the metropolitan area.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide that a certain number of meetings be held in any one year; it seeks to increase the number that are already held. I do not know, however, whether the reference to "any one year" means a calendar year or a trotting year.

I think most of us are aware that the trotting year commences on the 1st August, and, accordingly, I would like the Minister to inform me whether the reference to any one year means, in fact, any one trotting year.

At the moment it is most unusual to hold a T.A.B. meeting in the near country areas at the same time as a trotting meeting is held in the metropolitan area. When I refer to the near country areas I mean places like Bunbury, Northam, Cunderdin and Merredin.

During the Kalgoorlie round meetings are held sometimes at Kalgoorlie on the same nights as those held in the metropolitan area. With that exception, however, I cannot recall a T.A.B. meeting

being held in a country area on the same night as one is held in the metropolitan area.

The purpose of this practice is not to restrict the country people from visiting the metropolitan area when meetings are held in that area. Accordingly if the number of meetings are increased in the metropolitan area I feel this could inhibit the trotting clubs with T.A.B. facilities at Bunbury, Harvey, Pinjarra, Northam, York and elsewhere, because these clubs would be prevented from holding meetings on the same nights on which they are held in the metropolitan area.

I would like the Minister to clarify this before I give the Bill my support.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. C. R. Abbey.

House adjourned at 5.06 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 14th September, 1972

The **SPEAKER** (Mr. Norton) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMENTARIES

Background Film

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Norton): I wish to advise members that I have granted TVW 7 permission to make a very short silent film of Parliament in session for use in parliamentary commentaries. This will take place at 3.30 p.m. this afternoon.

KWINANA-BALGA POWER LINE

Tenders for Construction: Urgency Motion

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Norton): I wish to advise the House that under Standing Order 48 I have received the following request:—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I desire to seek your approval to move when the Legislative Assembly meets at 2.15 p.m. today for the adjournment of the House as a matter of urgency for the purpose of discussing the following:—

- (1) The seriously unsatisfactory position that has developed in local industry due to the Government's decision to enter into a contract with E.P.T. worth approximately \$7.7 million for 330 kV transmission lines, Kwinana - Southern Terminal, Southern Terminal - Northern Terminal, Kwinana - Northern Terminal when pre-tender information under date

13th July and referred to in 15th July newspaper advertisements refers to:—

- (a) specifications being available in the fourth quarter 1972 when tenders are called,
 - (b) intending tenderers should register their names with the General Manager, State Electricity Commission, Wellington Street, Perth by 5 p.m., 29th September, 1972 by completion of the form attached to the pre-tender information, and
 - (c) reference in the pre-tender information that the order to design, supply and construct the transmission lines will be placed in the first quarter 1973.
- (2) In good faith local companies have worked on the pre-tender information only to find that an announcement has been made by the Government that it is extending the E.P.T.'s existing contract and thereby making futile the pre-tender information and the invitation to intending tenderers to register by the 29th September, although this date is still more than a fortnight hence, and
- (3) The Government appears to have been misled about the available capacity to undertake this work locally by firms other than E.P.T.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES COURT,

Leader of the Opposition.

Are there seven members who support the motion?

Seven members having risen in their places,

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Leader of the Opposition) [2.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I have studied the Standing Orders of this House, and this is the only procedure which will enable the Opposition, and indeed the whole of the Legislative Assembly, to discuss today this question which has caused a great deal of uncertainty and concern amongst the industries of this State. It is not a very satisfactory procedure because after the normal number of speakers, the motion before the House has to be withdrawn. Also, there is only limited time available. I will therefore be as concise as possible in presenting to the House the reason for our concern. Also, the Government should be given an opportunity to explain why it has taken this action.

It is a fact that in the industries of this State at the moment a lot of serious concern has developed following an announcement in *The West Australian* dated the 12th September, under the heading, "W.A. firm may build pylons." The article reads—

The A.L.P. State executive was told last night that most of the pylon construction work for the Kwinana-Balga power line might be done in W.A.

The work has been offered to Electric Power Transmission, which in turn has asked the State Government for financial assistance to extend its plant at Kwinana.

Following that bald announcement from the State Executive of the A.L.P., the Minister later in the day issued a Press statement. The Opposition raised some questions regarding this matter during the sittings on Tuesday and Wednesday.

As we understand the position—and we cannot be precise about this because we have not had a firm statement—the Government has arranged with E.P.T. to extend an existing contract which we believe is for less than \$1,000,000 and involves approximately 11 miles of pylons. We understand the contract is to be extended to cover the new contract for some \$7,700,000. If this is correct, of course, it is a case of the tail wagging the dog. It is not unusual for a contract of, say, \$7,700,000 to be extended to include a further contract of another \$1,000,000 or so as a logical extension of the work; but it must be quite without precedent for this to be done the other way around.

The main part of this story starts with an advertisement which appeared in *The West Australian* on Saturday, the 15th July, 1972. The advertisement reads as follows:—

The State Electricity Commission of Western Australia
Tenders
for
330kV Transmission Lines

1. Kwinana-Southern Terminal,
2. Southern Terminal-Northern Terminal,
3. Kwinana-Northern Terminal

Tenders will be invited during the fourth quarter of 1972 for the design and construction of the above transmission lines.

Preliminary information will be made available to prospective tenderers from Tuesday, 18th July, 1972 at the office of the Controller of Stores, 2nd Floor, 365 Wellington Street, Perth. The Specifications and other Tender documents will be available to persons who advise their intention to tender after examination of the preliminary information.

Following that some pre-tender information dated the 13th July, 1972, was issued. I will not read all of it, but I think some portions should be recorded because they are pertinent to our study of this problem today. Under the heading of "Specifications and Tenders" the following is stated:—

Specifications will be available in the fourth quarter 1972 when Tenders are called.

I emphasise the words, "when tenders are called."

Mr. Graham: Emphasise the fourth quarter too.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The document continues—

Prospective tenderers will be able to inspect the documents at the Commission's Head Office before purchase.

A deposit of \$200 to establish *bona fides* as to intention to tender will be required for one full set of documents. The deposit will be refunded on submission of a completed tender. Further copies of the Specification can be obtained for the price of Four Dollars (\$4) per copy.

Then, in part 5, under the heading of "Order," the following is stated:—

The order to design, supply and construct the transmission lines will be placed in the first quarter 1973.

Under the heading of "Preference" in part 7 we find the following:—

Preference will be given where the materials being offered are fabricated in Western Australia and tenderers will be requested to state the nature and extent of the Western Australian content.

Then in part 12, under the heading of "Intention to Tender," the document reads—

Intending Tenderers shall register their names with the General Manager, State Electricity Commission, Wellington Street, Perth W.A. by 5.00 p.m. 29th September, 1972 by completion of the attached form.

Some other details are given including the form to which I have referred; the idea being, of course, that potential tenderers would have a look at the document and see whether the job was within their capacity and, if so, they would proceed to be registered as potential tenderers.

I emphasise that, firstly, tenders were to be called in the fourth quarter of 1972; and, secondly, it was intended that prospective tenderers would have until 5.00 p.m. on the 29th September in which to indicate their desire to tender.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine the shock of these people when, right out of the blue, they read in the paper following the meeting of the State Executive of the A.L.P.

that the Government had decided to have the work done by way of a negotiated extension of an existing contract with E.P.T. for an amount of something like \$7,700,000. I understand that some companies received letters reading as follows:—

We refer to your response to our press advertisements in connection with construction of the above lines.

We wish to advise that due to a change in circumstances it is no longer our intention to invite tenders and the work is to be covered by extension of an existing contract.

It is regretted that you may have been inconvenienced as a result of this decision.

I think the last paragraph of that letter must be this week's understatement. One can imagine that many of these people are desperate for work and some of them are using only 25 per cent. of their capacities. They are very anxious to obtain—either alone or as a consortia—the tender for the work, because this is attractive work with no complications once the design has been settled.

The other point stressed in my letter to you, Sir, is that these companies have in good faith worked on the pre-tender information believing that they would have until the 29th September in which to indicate their intention to be tenderers, and that tenders would actually be called in a formal manner in the fourth quarter—that is, October-November-December.

Also, it was understood from the pre-tender information that the actual order would be late in the first quarter of 1973—that is, January-February-March.

The third part of my letter to you, Mr. Speaker, refers to the fact that the Government appears to have been misled about the available capacity to undertake this work locally of firms other than E.P.T. I say in all kindness that the Government appears to have been misled because through some source or other it must have been informed that the capacity does not exist here in respect of the design, the galvanising, or the actual fabrication.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: What facts can you submit to say that they have the capacity?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have only limited time at my disposal—

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: It is all very well to dodge the issue.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to say quite categorically—

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: You are a past master at making general statements without supporting them with facts.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Mr. Speaker, I have limited time and I want to get on with my story.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Well, put it over properly.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: Just keep quiet for a moment and I will be able to substantiate what I am saying. The Chamber of Manufactures has assured me that the capacity does exist here.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: That is not good enough.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Well, that is a very nice interjection, and I will indeed be pleased to see that the right people hear it.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I, too, have had many assurances.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am sure that so far as this project is concerned the capacity is here in this State.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Give us some proof it is here.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Hart has very skilled galvanising capacity, which it is expanding. Once the design is completed, the fabrication of these pylons is comparatively easy when measured against some of the very sophisticated work that has been done for the north. Added to this is the fact that we have in this State engineering capacity that is not used beyond 25 to 40 per cent. in the cases of some workshops.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Tell us where the galvanising capacity exists in this State.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Hart has very good capacity in galvanising. The Premier has been advised of this: an extension of its capacity is taking place to meet the requirements, even assuming—and I do not admit this—the existing capacity is not sufficient.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I am advised that the galvanising capacity does not exist here.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It amazes me that we have a Government which should be turning over backwards to help local industry to function, but which is prepared to accept the word of somebody without having a look into the situation itself. If the Premier is calling the members of the Chamber of Manufactures liars he should say that to their faces. I have been assured the capacity exists in Western Australia.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Who assured you?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Chamber of Manufactures.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: We will find out.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I hope the Premier will give us proof. Which officers or Ministers went out to look at the situa-

tion and to satisfy themselves? Is it not strange that the firm of E.P.T. has to be financed by the Government? I know of no other tenderer which will be financed by the Government.

I am not questioning the capacity of E.P.T. which is a very experienced firm. Originally it came from Italy and started operations on the Snowy Mountains project, specialising in transmission work. No-one is questioning the technical capacity of that firm, but we are questioning the action of the Government. Having called people to apply as tenderers and giving them until 5.00 p.m. on the 29th September to make their wishes known, all of a sudden these people picked up a newspaper to find that following a meeting of the State Executive of the A.L.P. the tenders will not be called in that way. They then received a letter from the Government saying, "We are sorry. We have changed our methods because of new circumstances." Then they read the answers given by the Minister for Electricity to some questions which were asked in the House. As I understand the position, the Press this morning did not report the answer to my question correctly, because the Minister divided my question into two parts. The first part of my question was—

- (1) Has the proposed contract with E.P.T. for the Kwinana-Balga power line pylons proceeded to a point where it must be finalised with E.P.T., or is it still possible for other tenderers to be considered?

The Minister for Electricity replied—

- (1) The question is in two parts. The answer to the first part is "Yes." The answer to the second part is that tenders have not been called for.

The second part of the Minister's answer then took on new significance. I can only assume that as the Minister had said "Yes" to the first part, the Press misunderstood the Minister's intention. I understood that when the Minister gave his answer he, in fact, indicated to Parliament that negotiations with E.P.T. had proceeded so far that the point of no return had been reached. No doubt he will advise the Press or the House in due course, so that the record can be put straight. This is desirable, because this morning some people got in touch with me, and I believe some also got in touch with the Minister, to ascertain whether the Minister could clarify the position. Having read the newspaper this morning they felt they would be given another chance to submit tenders.

I have on the notice paper today a series of questions which cover this matter fairly extensively.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I regret to inform you that you will not get the answers to some of them, because there was not sufficient time.

Sir CHARLES COURT: These questions do cover the situation adequately. I realise that in view of the announcement in this morning's newspaper, and in view of the great concern that has been expressed in the community over the changed method of getting the work done, it is desirable and, in fact, very necessary for the Opposition to take this step and to avail itself of whatever facilities are available through the House to bring this matter to the notice of Parliament.

We have very limited time to debate this question, and we have agreed on the number of speakers. I am hoping that whichever Minister is to reply on behalf of the Government will explain the real circumstances as to why the Government has seen fit to change the method. Having called people to register as potential tenderers, having issued this pre-tender information which is quite specific, having advertised nationally, all of a sudden it states that it will extend the comparatively small existing contract to a firm which is to be financially assisted to give it the capacity to do the job.

The other information which I would like from the Government, which pertains to the interjections made by the Premier—and apparently this upset him—

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: That is because you will not give any detail.

Sir CHARLES COURT:—concerns the authority by which the Government was advised, and the advice it accepted that this was beyond local capacity.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: There is no doubt about that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I cannot find anyone who has been interviewed or which premises have been inspected to ascertain whether the firms here could, in fact, meet the requirements of these specifications. The Chamber of Manufactures is quite emphatic that its members can do this work.

From my own knowledge of steel fabrication I know they can do the work here. The only query is on the galvanising side. I know that previously some of this work was done outside the State, because at the time there was so much work in the State we did not have enough people to undertake that particular work.

Mr. May: In 1971?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The present Government was in office in 1971.

Mr. May: So was your Government.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Not for very long.

Mr. May: That was good.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Today we have the situation in this State where people are screaming out for work. I am sure the Minister is aware that the unions have been pressing him to be more vigilant to ensure that this work is done in Western Australia.

Also we would like to know what the \$250,000 will be used for by E.P.T. and what type of expansion it will undertake. This is a company which has a permanent installation in the Kwinana area, but from my understanding of its operations it operates on a stop-go basis. It might obtain a contract which it has the reputation of being able to undertake satisfactorily, but when the job is done it is inclined to fold up operations and wait for the next contract; whereas firms like Forwood Downs, Mitchell Cotts, Vickers, Structural Engineering, and others meet continuing obligations, and they have a sense of responsibility to provide continuous employment for their employees.

No-one is questioning the capacity of E.P.T. It has had technical capacity in Italy, and it has developed further capacity in Australia; furthermore, it has specialised in this sort of work. However, this should not preclude Western Australian firms from gaining the experience, possessing as they do what I believe to be adequate capacity to tender for this work. If we preclude them we will find that the State will never gain the required expertise to carry out this type of work up to and beyond the design stage.

My own opinion as a layman is that the most crucial part of this project is the designing, and following that the testing of the pylons. I do not know whether there is to be any serious departure from the design and technical construction of the 11 miles of pylons which E.P.T. had under the first contract. I should imagine the basic design would be the same; but if it is not I hope the Minister will tell us. From that information we would be in a better position to judge whether or not the Government has been right in its judgment in respect of arranging an extension of this tender.

I would also like to know the basis on which the Government has satisfied itself that E.P.T. has offered a price which would be better than a tender price on a competitive basis, because the Government will leave itself exposed to a very severe challenge if it is adding \$7,700,000 to an existing contract of \$750,000 or \$1,000,000 as the existing contractor always has an advantage over a newcomer. It is different if only 10 or 15 per cent. is being added to an existing contract.

When this is done the other way around it does not make sense; so, the Government should be quite frank as to the change in its tactics. Having got the

people interested in pre-tender information, and having got them conditioned to the tenders being called in the last quarter of the year with firm orders that will be let in the first quarter of next year, all of a sudden the Government announced that it would be changing the method, by extending a comparatively small existing contract to a firm which is to be financially assisted to give it the capacity to carry out this undertaking.

One final point: In the information released by the Government it was stated that the new contract will provide for at least 70 per cent. of the work to be done locally. I would just like to know why the figure of 70 per cent. was mentioned because from information I have gathered it seems that other contractors would be almost 100 per cent. local. I think this is important and more information is required to clear up the point.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [2.40 p.m.]: I take up the cause in this situation because I believe the Government has again attacked the confidence built up by the previous Government. This seems to have been the position on a number of occasions when the Government has come into contact with industry in this State.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Will the member explain why the previous Government let a contract to E.P.T.?

Mr. NALDER: That has nothing to do with the case at the moment.

Sir Charles Court: Was that not an open tender?

Mr. NALDER: The position is that tenderers in this State had been informed that contracts were to be let for a certain type of work. We know that the programme which has been planned by the State Electricity Commission—through the officers of the commission—is a long-term one. Considerable research has been carried out in detail, and we know the programme envisages a power line travelling from the Kwinana power station, first of all to Jandakot, and then across to Gosnells. At that stage one line will be positioned along the escarpment to Balga, and a second line will follow a similar route through the foothills and then extend to Balga. The two routes will involve approximately 100 miles of power lines.

We have been told the approximate cost but we are working a little in the dark because we do not know the details of agreements entered into by the Government. We do not know the details of the contracts, and the lengths of the extensions. Also, we do not know what the increased cost structure will be but our guess is that it will be well and truly above the estimated \$7,700,000.

The programme will not be completed until 1975 so it is quite likely that the amount of money spent could be in the vicinity of \$8,000,000 to \$10,000,000. The confidence in the State which was established by the previous Government is being undermined.

As I said last night: What next can the public of this State expect from the present Government? An advertisement was placed in the Press by the S.E.C.—no doubt in good faith—but now the contract has been taken out of its hands. I do not know how the responsible people working in the State Electricity Commission feel when they see their work being undermined by the actions of this Government.

The advertisement was to the effect that companies in this State interested in tendering for the contracts could do so. We did not know what percentage of the total work was required to be done, or whether local firms would be able to do all or part of it. We did not know what sections the local people would tender for.

To my knowledge not one local company received any information prior to the announcement which appeared in the Press earlier this week. Companies have since received notice that the whole programme which was advertised is to be discontinued, and the present contractors are to be allowed to continue. We do not know whether or not the contractor will be allowed to subcontract for some of the work, or whether other companies will be invited to assist. We are completely in the dark.

We believe the public should be informed of the details so that in the future people will know what the situation will be. I would hate to be in the position of an officer or a member of the S.E.C.

Mr. May: That is a very nice thing to say!

Mr. NALDER: Well, what would the Minister do if he had worked out a programme and then had that programme completely taken out of his hands?

Mr. May: You do not know what contracts have been let.

Mr. NALDER: Why not tell the public?

Mr. May: You do not even know what contracts were let in your term, and you were the Minister. How many were let?

Mr. NALDER: The Minister is trying to back-pedal because he is being asked to let the public know the true situation.

Mr. May: You were the Minister only a little over 12 months ago so surely you know. How many were let?

Mr. NALDER: What the Minister is saying is emphasising the very fact that the officers and members of the commission, having carried out research and worked out a programme, will now have the job completely taken out of their hands.

Mr. May: What about their comments on your article which appeared in the Press this year?

Mr. NALDER: Does the Government consider that this sort of thing will build up confidence? As the Premier said when speaking to a motion yesterday, we have to be objective and create confidence. If the Government cannot create confidence, I do not know who will when this sort of thing happens.

We are justified in airing a situation like this in Parliament. If an organisation has the responsibility of undertaking a job on behalf of the community it should obtain the best contract price available. Unless the Minister, or the Government, can explain exactly what has happened, and give reasons for these actions, then I think it is obvious the Government has panicked. The Government has endeavoured to make it appear that jobs will be created.

This House should not remain silent. I would remind members that considerable opposition would have been raised had the position of the Government been reversed. Had we been in Government and had we taken action similar to that taken by the present Government, I guarantee there would have been a severe thunderstorm this afternoon.

We are justified in bringing to the notice of the general public the situation which has developed. I hope we will receive a satisfactory reply from the Minister who is in charge of this undertaking.

MR. MAY (Clontarf—Minister for Electricity) [2.50 p.m.]: Normally, a motion such as this is of tremendous importance to a Government, but in view of the fact that it is the usual Thursday afternoon statement of the Leader of the Opposition it loses some of its importance.

I would like to say at the outset that this matter is of tremendous importance to Western Australia. It seems to have escaped the attention of the Opposition that it is an endeavour to bring a contract to fruition much sooner than was expected and to bring added employment to Western Australia. It seems that every time this Government endeavours to obtain employment for Western Australia it is criticised by the Opposition.

Sir Charles Court: When did you invite tenders?

Mr. MAY: The Opposition brings no concrete evidence whatsoever. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will realise that during the course of his speech I interjected once.

It is strange that every time this Government endeavours to improve the employment position in Western Australia it is met with either a censure motion or an

urgency motion. Last night we had a most puerile censure motion, which has been followed by another one this afternoon in which the Opposition attempts to criticise the Government. It is a ridiculous situation.

Regarding the comments made by the Leader of the Country Party, who was the Minister for Electricity until 12 or 18 months ago, he does not even know how many contracts were let or how many people tendered for the contract 12 or 18 months ago. For his information, two people tendered for the contract about which he does not know anything.

I will take this matter further. On the 15th October, 1970, preliminary information was prepared for prospective tenderers. That was during the regime of the previous Government when the Leader of the Country Party was the Minister for Electricity. Tenders were called to specification on the 2nd November, 1970, and a letter of intent was approved by the Executive Council. On the 17th February, 1971, three days before the State election, two tenders were received for this work. The Leader of the Opposition said it was only a small amount of work. The tender submitted by Electric Power Transmission of New South Wales was \$750,000.74, and the other tender was \$3,298,084.

Sir Charles Court: What has that to do with the present situation?

Mr. MAY: May I continue? The trouble is the Leader of the Opposition thinks he is the only person who knows anything about this business. What about giving us an opportunity to explain the situation to the people who want to listen—who are the members of the public, not the members of this Chamber?

Sir Charles Court: You are wasting your own time.

Mr. MAY: The Leader of the Country Party has gone very quiet. At this point in time we decided we would have a look at the tenders. On the 15th July we advertised asking companies whether they would care to consider the possibility of tendering. No tenders were called for. Last night, I asked the Leader of the Opposition to apologise, which he did not do.

Sir Charles Court: He did not have to.

Mr. MAY: When he read the advertisement fully he found he had made a mistake but he was not prepared to apologise. He is always jumping to his feet and asking everyone else to apologise. He himself made a mistake and did not apologise.

The information which I propose to read is signed by the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission and approved by the commission. Members of the Opposition know that on the commission

there are quite a number of people who would look after their interests, and that is the reason they are on the commission. This information will surely be of particular interest to the Opposition. I will read out some of the recommendations that were made by the commission, which I think will refute the statement made by the member for Mt. Lawley that the matter had been taken out of the hands of the Minister. I can assure him quite definitely it was not taken out of the hands of the Minister and that it is still very much in the hands of the Minister. The report reads—

The Commission's engineers and accountants have studied the E.P.T. proposal and are generally in agreement that an equitable contract could be entered into on the terms offered. There are some differences in escalation rates, labour and material prices which would require resolution with the Company, but these would have only minor effect on the final contract figure.

One alternative would be to call for tenders in the normal way. This would almost certainly produce tenders which would favour Eastern States or overseas contractors or a tender by E.P.T. having the degree of W.A. participation which they are now proposing. At the best this would result in a contract being awarded in 6/9 months' time, thus providing no early relief to unemployment.

Another alternative would be to fragment the work into sections which safely could be reposed in local contractors.

This is the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party. The report continues—

This would call for supply of designs of towers and foundations by the Commission and would produce uneconomic fabrication by conventionally equipped structural workshops. There would be delays while designs were subjected to tests. Separate arrangements would have to be made for erection and stringing. This would be a most undesirable arrangement from an engineering point of view as the line of responsibility would not be clear and it would be most uneconomic.

Further on the report says—

From the rates tendered by E.P.T. for the just completed 11 mile section from Kwinana to Southern Terminal and escalated to present-day rates, E.P.T. have calculated a basic tender price for the new work on tower and foundation types and numbers estimated by the Commission of \$7,453,528. This figure has been checked and verified by the Commission's engineers

and accountants and would apply if the steelwork were fabricated and galvanised in New South Wales.

Using the same data, but on the assumption that there would be maximum W.A. participation, whereby 70% of the weight of steelwork would be fabricated in W.A., the basic tender price would be \$7,689,896.

	\$
The value of tower and foundation steelwork would be	3,376,688
70% of Western Australian manufacture would be	2,363,690
10% of this sum would be	236,369

which is the difference between the two tender prices given above.

It will be seen that the Company is seeking 10% extra on this particular section of the work. The extra amount which this represents is considered very reasonable in view of the less sophisticated production and galvanising methods which will apply in their Kwinana Works as compared to their N.S.W. Works, even though the Kwinana Works methods will be much more economic than those employed in conventional structural works.

Also, the Company will make an early start on the project and this will involve a considerable amount of uneconomic out-of-sequence field operations. The 10% premium on the steel fabrication segment of the contract will be the only recoup apart from indeterminable savings in overheads.

Yesterday I came into possession of a Press statement which was issued by the Chamber of Manufactures. I have no objection to Press statements provided they are in fact true. The Press statement to which I just referred states—

The President of the West Australian Chamber of Manufactures Inc., Mr. C. T. Pullan, today expressed the concern of the Chamber at the news reports regarding the decision by the State Government to grant to Electric Power Transmission, an overseas company—

This is the point I am trying to make. The Chamber of Manufactures said it was an overseas company.

E.P.T. was responsible for a good deal of work in the Snowy Mountains scheme. It did very well and established itself in Western Australia, where it has been doing work. I can remember that when I was working with the Goldsworthy Mining Company, E.P.T. did a terrific amount of work for the iron ore companies in the north of this State. If we can give employment in Western Australia to a company which is already established here and which, because of a guarantee the Government will arrange, will extend its

works in this State for the processing of overseas contracts, I am certain our actions will receive full acceptance by the public of Western Australia.

I will be very surprised if all the members of the Country Party concur with the Leader of the Opposition because, if ever there was a possibility of electricity going into the country areas and providing employment which will assist the Country Party, it is through this particular contract.

Mr. Speaker, there is no case to answer. As a matter of fact, this is another Thursday afternoon episode in the continuing series of attacks led by the Leader of the Opposition. Every Thursday afternoon the Leader of the Opposition asks a question without notice which could have been put on the notice paper. You, Sir, have been very lenient and his questions without notice have been answered. This is a typical Thursday afternoon procedure, and it will be reported in the Press, on television, and in the weekend papers.

Sir Charles Court: Are you not being harassed by industries?

Mr. MAY: This conduct ill-behaves the Leader of the Opposition. I can remember his criticising me and saying, "The most charitable thing I can say about the member for Clontarf is that he is having a go." The most charitable thing I can say about the Leader of the Opposition is that he is having a go. He is over-exposing himself. He has not given us definite details.

Sir Charles Court: Why don't you answer the question.

Mr. MAY: If he intends to lead a virile Opposition, he should put up something of substance. He should not attempt to detract from a Government which is endeavouring to provide employment for the people of the State. We will continue to provide employment and it is this fact which worries the Leader of the Opposition. All of a sudden this Government is beginning to generate employment. The downturn in the economy was created by the previous Government, but I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that we will generate employment. This is just one of the moves we have in the pipeline—and it is more than the previous Government left there. I have much pleasure in opposing the motion.

Sir Charles Court: Why don't you answer the questions we have raised?

Mr. MAY: This motion is wasting the time of a Government which is attempting to get on and do a job.

Mr. O'Neil: How about answering the questions?

MR. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [3.02 p.m.]: This particular project is yet another blunder perpetrated by the Government.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I hope you will advance something to substantiate that.

Mr. THOMPSON: I will.

Sir Charles Court: Keep going.

Mr. THOMPSON: I would like to draw attention to an advertisement which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 15th July. The Minister says that this advertisement is not calling for tenders. It is headed quite clearly, "Tenders." It goes on to say—

Tenders will be invited during the fourth quarter of 1972 for the design and construction of the above transmission lines.

Preliminary information will be made available to prospective tenderers from Tuesday, 18th July, 1972 at the office of the Controller of Stores, 2nd Floor, 365 Wellington Street, Perth. The Specifications and other Tender documents will be available to persons who advise their intention to tender after examination of the preliminary information.

Mr. May: Do you still maintain that is calling for tenders?

Mr. O'Connor: It is misleading the people.

Mr. THOMPSON: It says, "Tenders will be invited."

Mr. May: You are indicating that the officers of the S.E.C. are misleading the public.

Mr. THOMPSON: I am saying that this advertisement announced that tenders will be invited. Not only that, but the S.E.C. issued a document on the 13th July, 1972.

Mr. May: It says nothing about calling for tenders.

Mr. O'Neil: It says "Tenders will be invited."

Mr. THOMPSON: The advertisement says that specifications will be available. I will read it again.

Mr. May: I have it here.

Mr. THOMPSON: This is the advertisement of the 15th July. It reads—

Tenders will be invited—

Mr. May: They had not been called.

Mr. THOMPSON: Perhaps the Minister will tell me this: What is the purpose of inserting such an advertisement in the Press if it was not to get people interested in tendering and gearing themselves to submit a tender?

Mr. May: We agree.

Mr. THOMPSON: Very well. So the Government put the engineering firms of this State into the position where they geared themselves for the job.

Mr. May: That is not the point at issue. The particular advertisement is not calling for tenders.

Sir Charles Court: All right.

Mr. May: That is all I wanted your leader to say.

Mr. THOMPSON: The S.E.C. is asking sufficiently interested people to gear themselves to submit a tender.

Mr. Bertram: That is an expression of intention.

Mr. THOMPSON: The S.E.C. gives a great deal of information for people to submit tenders. A firm which is interested in tendering for a job to the order of \$7,000,000 is not going to wait until the specifications are available. Such a firm would find out as much as possible about the job. It would wish to ensure that it has the capacity to handle the contract so that when the documents are available—bearing in mind that usually the time for tendering is fairly short—it can weigh up the situation and decide what it has to do to be in a position to tender. Such a firm would incur considerable expense.

Mr. Bertram: How many have incurred this expense?

Mr. THOMPSON: Quite a few.

Mr. Bertram: How many?

Mr. May: One of the companies which your leader mentioned did not even put in a tender.

Mr. Williams: I know of three who have incurred this expense.

Mr. THOMPSON: The Government intends to assist a firm to expand its facilities to meet a contract. I wonder how many Western Australian firms would have welcomed the opportunity to tender? Many of them would, and I will tell the House why. Many structural engineering firms in this State are having difficulties in keeping their men employed. One company in the Welshpool area employed 334 men during the 12 months ended the 30th August, 1971. During the 12 months ended the 30th August, 1972, this company employed 127 men.

This emphasises the fact that Western Australian-based engineering firms will bend over backwards to equip themselves to be able to tender for such a lucrative job.

Mr. May: Why did they not bend over backwards last year?

Mr. O'Connor: They did not get the chance.

Mr. May: I know, because you were in Government.

Mr. THOMPSON: Let us go back to the question raised by the Leader of the Country Party.

Sir Charles Court: They had full order books then.

Mr. May: You mentioned the firm of Hart, and it did not even put in a tender.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. O'Neil: He said Hart had the capacity.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMPSON: The Minister said that contracts were let to E.P.T. 18 months ago, and on that basis the Government had a right to extend the contract. Members will bear in mind the extension of this contract is to the tune of \$7,700,000!

It has been stated that only two tenders were received for the job. The implication behind this action by the Government snipes at the very foundation of the system of tendering. Any contractor who heard of a contract being extended by \$7,700,000 without a tender being called would imagine there has been gross mismanagement somewhere.

Mr. May: Don't you think it is mismanagement when one firm tenders for 11 miles at \$700,000 and another firm at \$3,000,000?

Mr. THOMPSON: All right, but that happened 18 months ago. Is the Government intending to extend contracts forevermore because of this one instance? There was plenty of work on the order books when tenders were called previously. Tenders definitely should have been called on this occasion, bearing in mind the magnitude of the job.

The Minister read a letter signed by the General Manager of the S.E.C. This gentleman said it was an equitable contract. This would not accord with the opinion held by the management of the many engineering firms of this State which were gearing themselves to tender for the job.

Mr. Bertram: How many is "many"?

Mr. THOMPSON: I would not know, quite frankly.

Mr. Bertram: Then why say it.

Mr. THOMPSON: There were some. Even if we assume that not many firms were interested, there were certainly some, and this was evidenced in the Press statement issued by the Chamber of Manufactures.

Mr. O'Connor: The Government doesn't know how many.

Mr. THOMPSON: The president of the Chamber of Manufactures—

Mr. Rushton: The Government wouldn't know if it was coming or going.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMPSON: The Press statement issued by the Chamber of Manufactures quite clearly indicates that Western Australian engineering firms were prepared to tender for this job.

Mr. May: Is not E.P.T. a Western Australian firm?

Mr. THOMPSON: It was an Italian firm initially.

Mr. May: And it also employs Western Australians.

Mr. THOMPSON: But where do the profits go? The Government is always talking about the profits being siphoned off overseas.

Mr. May: This is gross misjustice.

Mr. THOMPSON: I submit that several firms were prepared to tender for this job.

Mr. Williams: What about the galvanising firm at Belmont? It has the capacity to do the job.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Who has the capacity?

Mr. Williams: There is a firm in Belmont that has the capacity.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: You know they have not, because they were asked.

Mr. THOMPSON: One of the "crunch" issues put forward by the Minister and by the Premier by way of interjection was that there was no facility in this State to perform the galvanising. It is well known that the firm of S. W. Hart & Co. Pty. Ltd. handle very heavy work, and if that firm were given the opportunity to extend its facilities I believe it would. In fact, I believe it is extending its facilities to cater for such work. If financial incentives are to be held out to anyone in order to cater for this work, they should be held out to such firms as S. W. Hart & Co. Pty. Ltd. which has been here for many years, and the Government is remiss in not making that approach to a Western Australian firm and making available to it the same terms and conditions it has made available to E.P.T. How can the engineering firms in this State have any confidence in this Government after it has made this decision?

Mr. May: I would say that they have every confidence, and when the member for Darling Range sets himself up against the commission in many instances—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMPSON: I did not set myself up against the commission. The Minister should have a look at the principle involved in this decision, and I should imagine that any contractor, big or small, would abhor what the Government has done in this case. I can imagine what would be said from this side of the House if we, as a Government, had extended by \$7,700,000 a contract worth less than \$1,000,000 to a firm that is not entirely Western Australian.

Mr. May: Provided you created more employment we would have been right behind you.

Mr. THOMPSON: Get out of it! Last night the Minister accused people on this side of the House of receiving backhanders from firms.

Mr. May: I did not accuse.

Mr. THOMPSON: Accusations were made from that side of the House—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMPSON: I would imagine that the people on the other side of the House would have accused us of all sorts of ulterior and dirty motives had the parties on this side of the House been in Government and done what has been done by the Government in this instance. In my opinion the Minister has not, in any way, condoned the actions of the Government in extending this contract.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: What you have just said does not make sense.

Mr. THOMPSON: I think it does. The principal point is that if a job is to be done, tenders should be called and everyone should be given a fair chance to submit a tender. It is not equitable for the Government to say that, because other people tendered 18 months ago and there were discrepancies between their tenders, or someone did not tender 18 months ago, they should be precluded from having a dash this time. I cannot see any equity in that.

Mr. May: Don't you think there is equity in the fact that this company has proved its credentials, and has also proved that it can do the work?

Mr. THOMPSON: Why did the Minister go to the trouble of announcing that tenders would be called?

Mr. May: Because it was our intention to call tenders.

Mr. THOMPSON: Then the Government, weeks before the date for the closing of tenders, merely said, "Sorry boys, we are going to give the contract to Joe Bloggs at a price of \$7,700,000."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMPSON: There is no equity in that, and I believe this Government stands condemned for its action.

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [3.15 p.m.]: I hope we can consider this case entirely on its merits—

Sir Charles Court: That is what we love to do.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: —and divorce it from any political bias or intention so that we can see whether, in the circumstances that obtain, those now in Opposition, if they had been on the Government side, would have acted differently. Let us have a look at that proposition as we go along. To begin with, although tenders were not called, and have not yet been called—a fact recognised by the Leader of the Opposition in his letter when he refers to pre-tender—it was the intention to call tenders.

Sir Charles Court: I hope your Minister is listening to that.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: He is, but my Minister is correct when he said that tenders were not called, and they have not yet been called.

Mr. Hutchinson: That is what we are worrying about.

Mr. Thompson: Why did you change your mind?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: We will see why we changed our minds. There was a great deal of complaint about motor vehicles, and jobs going to the Eastern States when the jobs should have been done in Western Australia.

Mr. Williams: When was this?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Therefore, I made up my mind that I would put an end to that, and I said I would look at every job that was to be undertaken in order to see how we could possibly ensure that the work would be done in this State.

Mr. Williams: This is what you said when you came into Government?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I was then told that if and when tenders were called it was a moral certainty that E.P.T. would get the contract.

Mr. Rushton: What a way of tendering!

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I then asked, "How can you say that?" and I was told, "The last time tenders were called the local price was \$2,000,000 in excess of the price submitted by E.P.T., and that was on a contract of less than \$1,000,000."

Mr. Williams: What you overlook is that everyone had their order books full at that time.

Mr. May: How do you know that? You must be a clairvoyant.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will keep order!

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: That was another point that made me sit up and take notice; that there was a difference of \$2,000,000 on a contract of less than \$1,000,000. Who on earth could afford a discrepancy such as that? I then asked: "How does it come about that this firm is so much more efficient in this line than other firms?" and I was told that it wins contracts in international competition—as indeed it does—and one of the reasons is that it has a special automatic galvanising process which enables the firm to carry out the galvanising in the process, which process apparently none of the other firms have.

It is this difference in expertise and production capacity which enables E.P.T. to submit a tender which is well below those submitted by others.

Mr. Thompson: If it has all this expertise, why did you put this in?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The next point is that E.P.T. already has an investment of \$500,000 at Kwinana with several men employed, and it is looking to the South-East Asian market because, if it produces in Western Australia as against producing in the Eastern States of Australia, it can save money.

I think one of the objectives of the previous Government, and certainly one of the objectives of our Government, is not to say that we have enough firms here and that we are not trying to do all we can to attract people with production capacity to come to this State. In discussions with representatives of E.P.T. they told me that if they increased their capacity in Western Australia to carry out one portion of this contract, when the contract was concluded they would then be in a better position to sell to the South-East Asian market where they already have foundations for substantial business in the future.

This meant then that encouragement in this line would result in further production capacity in Western Australia. Now a point arose here. We already have galvanising capacity in Western Australia, but not adequate to undertake this job and I tell the member for Darling Range—

Mr. Williams: In what way? In size?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: —that this very question was put to the firm he mentioned and it admitted that on the existing capacity it could not cope with this job.

Mr. Thompson: Did you offer some financial guarantee as with E.P.T.?

Mr. Williams: Did you try the other firm?

Sir Charles Court: What about the firm which wrote to the Minister?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Another point in connection with this was the urgency for employment.

Mr. O'Connor: You are a bit late on this one.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: If this had gone to tender as was originally contemplated, and E.P.T. had got the tender as I am assured was a moral certainty—

Mr. Rushton: Great way of doing business!

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: —we would be in no position to insist upon the amount of local work to be done in this State. It would have won the tender on the basis of fabricating in the Eastern States with existing capacity. I was not prepared to allow that situation to arise. I wanted to do something beforehand to ensure that we could have this job done in this State—or the bulk of it.

Sir Charles Court: That is a very weak argument.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: In the discussions the undertaking given to me was that the firm could get into operation within a month. It would immediately employ 100 men in the factory and 100 men in the field, so this meant employment for 200 men within a month as against waiting for months to consider tenders.

Mr. Thompson: If it was so clear-cut you would not need to wait months.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I would point out that whilst I concede that people who believed they might succeed if they submitted a tender would be disappointed if they did not, only one firm could succeed in getting the contract. Consequently there would be many disappointed people here if they submitted tenders.

Coming back to the point—and I was perfectly satisfied on this—if it had gone to tender E.P.T. would have won the tender by a mile.

Mr. Williams: That is being supposititious.

Sir Charles Court: Do you know an established galvanising firm in Western Australia had to regalvanise some of its work galvanised in the Eastern States?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Who was it?

Sir Charles Court: Your Minister knows because he has had a letter from them.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Who was it?

Sir Charles Court: You ask the Minister.

Mr. May: You tell us.

Mr. Williams: He has had three letters.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Williams: A firm in Belmont.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: This is what we have to try to rebut all the time—general statements—

Mr. Williams: My eye!

Sir Charles Court: What nonsense!

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: —with a complete inability to submit specific instances.

Sir Charles Court: Ask the Minister.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I will ask the question again: Give me the name of the firm.

Mr. Williams: Ask your Minister.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The Opposition is making the allegation.

Mr. Williams: You are not game to.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: What is the name of the firm?

Mr. Williams: I am not going to tell you. You know as well as I do.

Mr. May: Give us the name.

Sir Charles Court: It was written to the Minister so he knows who it is.

Mr. May: What is the name of the firm?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: For the information of members this is the submission from the Treasury dealing with this question—

I attended a meeting at the State Electricity Commission at 3 p.m. on 25 August, to discuss a proposal for financial assistance to Electric Power Transmission Pty. Ltd. Also at the meeting were:—

Mr. W. J. Gillies—Manager, State Electricity Commission

Mr. Carter—State Electricity Commission

Mr. R. Gregory—Department of Development and Decentralisation

Mr. F. Belli—Commercial Manager, and Director, E.P.T. Pty. Ltd.

The Leader of the Country Party tries to establish that the Government overrode the commission against its wishes and policy and foisted upon it a policy it did not want. He had no basis for what he said; it was pure guesswork. However, I can refute it all from this file.

Mr. May: No wonder he could not get the price of oil.

Mr. Nalder: What is the price of oil?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The submission continues—

Mr. Gillies explained that the Commission is pressing ahead with the horseshoe 330 K.V. ring around the Metropolitan area. This is specialised work and few firms can handle it efficiently.

Construction of the towers could be carried out by any of the structural steel firms in Western Australia, but at too great a cost.

Sir Charles Court: Why?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Continuing—

Usual methods of design and construction are too expensive and specialised plant and design are called for.

That is precisely what E.P.T. has got and that is why it is able to outbid the other firms when these contracts are being offered.

Sir Charles Court: You do not know that.

Mr. Nalder: You do not know because you did not wait for tenders.

Sir Charles Court: You would have been in the clear if you had the tenders.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: To continue—

As in the past, tenders will be called for the next stage of construction.

That is a point which has been overlooked. The first stage is being done in this way to get additional capacity here and to employ 200 men without waiting to go through the process, when E.P.T. would

finish up with the tender and do the job in the Eastern States. So, to obviate that, the first stage is arranged in the way we have done it by basing the price on an existing tender.

Sir Charles Court: That is putting everyone out of business for the next phases, if any.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: More guesswork.

Mr. Hutchinson: Fooling the others.

Sir Charles Court: I am not guessing at all.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition is a past master at innuendos and inferences, but every time he is faced with having to find specific information, he runs away with his tail between his legs.

Sir Charles Court: Well, you get your Minister to table the correspondence with Galvanisers-Lyons Pty. Ltd.

Mr. May: I will table the file. You put the question on the notice paper.

Sir Charles Court: I am asking you now.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The submission continues—

As in the past, tenders will be called for the next stage of construction. A price will be sought for towers and erection. Conductors, etc., are supplied by the Commission but the successful tenderer must carry out the "stringing". By this means the contractor is made fully responsible for his work.

Both employer and employee organisations are pressing the S.E.C. to get as much work as possible done in Western Australia. Consequently on this occasion the Commission has advertised for firms interested in tendering and will select those considered most suitable.

E.P.T. has done S.E.C. work before and the Managing Director came to Perth last week to discuss the prospect of maximising the W.A. content if successful in the present case. He proposed to design, manufacture and galvanise in the automatic plant in Sydney and assemble and erect in W.A. This was the basis of the previous contract and appeals to the S.E.C.

But that did not appeal to me because I wanted the work done in Western Australia.

Mr. Nalder: At any cost.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Oh no! That is what the Leader of the Country Party thought.

Mr. Nalder: You have not proved that situation yet.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: No; at a cheaper cost.

Mr. Nalder: You have not proved that yet.

Sir Charles Court: You will never know that now.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: As the previous Minister for Electricity left contracts behind with no money to pay for them, we must save money; and that is a fact, too.

Sir Charles Court: Are you accepting personal responsibility for this?

Mr. May: Let us table some of those files.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir Charles Court: I can see the Minister did not have much say on the decision.

Mr. May: Didn't he? He had much to say today.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: The following is pertinent:—

The S.E.C. contract would end in twelve months, following which E.P.T. would supply its Asian markets from Kwinana as far as possible. The contract will require 100 men in the field but this proposal would mean employment of a further 100 at the factory.

Mr. Belli said the Premier was informed that the facilities so financed would be permanently established at Kwinana. One problem was the proposal to install an automatic galvanising plant when others are already in the field.

I raised a question and said that if the work were to be done, I was concerned about competition with existing firms in Western Australia. I received an assurance that the automatic galvanising plant would be used exclusively in connection with this contract and when that cut out it would subsequently be used to fabricate work in this State for sale in South-East Asia. I was assured the company would not use the plant in competition with local plant. I ask: Could anybody receive a better undertaking than that?

Sir Charles Court: That is a most unrealistic undertaking.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Is the Leader of the Opposition telling me that these people cannot be believed and we are to take no notice of assurances given by businessmen? If that is his philosophy all right, but until I find this out for myself I prefer to accept what they tell me.

Sir Charles Court: You have broken a cardinal principle of financial assistance from the Government to industry. You cannot give financial assistance in these circumstances; you do not give financial assistance for someone to establish in competition with one who has his own funds.

Mr. T. D. Evans: The Leader of the Opposition is obsessed with the idea of becoming Premier.

Mr. Hutchinson: We have a responsibility to bring this up.

Mr. T. D. Evans: The Leader of the Opposition is becoming the laughing stock of the community.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: It goes on—

However, this is essential, he said, as part of the automatic process and the company would not be seeking outside galvanising work.

I think that is sufficient to indicate the reasons for the Government deciding to act in the way it intends to act. Firstly, it will save time in putting men to work. Secondly, the increased productive capacity in Western Australia will ensure that in future, when similar work comes up, we will not have to let it to the Eastern States as we have done previously, because the capacity did not exist in this State.

Sir Charles Court: It does exist.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: We have taken the necessary steps to attract this capacity. I repeat that E.P.T. has an investment of \$500,000 at Kwinana. This shows the company's belief in the future of this State and its recognition of the possibilities of being able to develop trade with South-East Asia. I have the information to convince me that the company already has sound contacts leading to profitable business in South-East Asia.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has one more minute.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: We can expect that if it establishes here and expands its works as it intends to do, far more work and, therefore, far more employment opportunities will result.

The Government is proud of what it has been able to achieve in connection with this and I oppose the motion. I agree with the Minister for Electricity; this is the usual Thursday afternoon exploration on the part of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hutchinson: You have failed again.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Leader of the Opposition) [3.35 p.m.]: I understand I have no right to reply, Mr. Speaker. As the agreed number of members have spoken I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Mr. Fletcher: A fiasco.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The honourable member wishes it were.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

TRADES HALL BUILDING: GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE

Personal Explanation

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Leader of the Opposition) [3.36 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: This requires an absolute majority. If there is a dissentient voice leave will not be granted. Is there a dissentient voice? There being no dissentient voice, leave is granted.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I desire to make a statement arising out of comments made by the Premier during the course of the debate on the Trades Hall guarantee and rental motion last evening.

- (1) I am not a partner in Hendry, Rae & Court and have not been since 1970. Although my legal association formally terminated in 1970, I was not active in the firm from 1959 onwards.
- (2) I am not a Director of Kimberley Finance or Landall and I have taken no part in their business operations.
- (3) (a) Cherrita Pty. Ltd. is a family company made up of members of my family.
(b) It is not a Hendry, Rae & Court partners' company.
(c) I own one share out of 25,002 issued shares.
(d) My wife also owns one share.
(e) My five sons have the remainder—5,000 shares each—making a total of 25,002 shares.
(f) My shareholding has not varied.

If I remember correctly, their shares are \$1 shares paid up to 25c. My shareholding has not varied. To continue—

- (4) Any transactions between Kimberley Finance Company, Landall and the R. & I. Bank were normal transactions between banker and client without any reference to or backing from the Government.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Has Cherrita Pty. Ltd. no shares in Kimberley Finance Company?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will answer that question and others too. To continue—

- (5) I have no personal knowledge of any transactions between these parties or associated parties, but from inquiries I have made I understand that any dealings have been highly satisfactory to the Bank and conducted in the normal course of banking business between banker and client. Also, I understand that Landall and Kimberley dealings with the R. & I. Bank were only as part of a syndicate in which they held only 20% interest.

Therefore the raising of this normal banking operation by the Premier in Parliament has endangered the normal banker/customer relationship that should exist in cases like this. It will no

doubt reflect on the Bank's relationship with its customers, if normal transactions not involving any Government backing are to be made the subject of public discussion under circumstances such as the debate referred to.

(6) The important thing I desire to make clear to the House is that:—

- (a) My shareholding in Cherrita Pty. Ltd. is a very nominal one.
- (b) It has not changed as suggested by the Premier.
- (c) I have no directoral or other participation in the day to day activities of Kimberley Finance, Landall or any of their associated companies or activities.
- (d) Any shareholding by Cherrita Pty. Ltd. in Kimberley Finance or Landall is a minority one.

I might mention that I have had research undertaken and figures checked independently so that I could use somebody else's rather than my own for the purposes of this statement. To continue—

I understand that the maximum percentage of interest by Cherrita—

I interpolate here to say that Cherrita is the company in which I have one share out of the 25,002 shares in all. To continue—

—in Kimberley Finance, both direct and indirect, is 7.17 per cent. and in Landall .07 per cent and has never been higher than 14.36 per cent. and 1.51 per cent. respectively.

I also referred last evening to an article which appeared in *Jobsons Investment Digest*, on the 20th May, 1970. This is pertinent to my statement. The article was under the heading, "From Graeme Pratt in Perth." It states—

Mr. Charles Walter Michael Court, Western Australia's Minister for Industrial Development, has been building himself a substantial commercial empire in W.A. during the period he has been devoting his energies to directing the development of "the State on the move."

The centre of Mr. Court's commercial activities is two proprietary companies, Cherrita Pty. Ltd. and Solo Investments Pty. Ltd. Cherrita is Mr. Court's own family company and Solo is his eldest son's family company.

Both these companies are major shareholders in a privately owned finance company, Kimberley Finance Corporation Pty. Ltd., which has financed development projects in

Western Australia, using loans from the W.A. Government-owned Rural and Industries Bank.

The statement goes on to give other details which I can give to the House if any member wishes. Immediately, and without awaiting the normal legal processes, *Jobsons Investment Digest*, under the very bold heading of, "C. W. Court" published the following:—

Following the publication in *Jobsons* on May 25 of an article relating to the financial interests of Mr. C. W. M. Court, the Western Australian Minister for Industrial Development, Mr. Court's legal advisers have informed us that his family interests are not the major shareholders in Kimberley Finance Corporation as could be inferred from the article.

It has also been drawn to our attention that the article is open to the interpretation that Mr. Court used his influence as a Minister to induce the R. and I. Bank as a State instrumentality to loan money to Kimberley Finance.

It was in no way intended to impute any such improper action to Mr. Court.

We regret any inconvenience caused to Mr. Court by such implications for which there is no foundation.

The other matter to which I wish to refer is one which arose out of this in which a reference was made to the Trades and Labor Council and a letter was sent to all affiliated unions by Mr. J. W. Coleman, the secretary. The letter is dated the 16th June, 1970, and states—

Further to our Circular No. 48/70 please find hereon an article which appeared in *Jobson's Investment Digest* on the 3rd June, 1970.

The article was circulated. On being approached by the solicitors in connection with this matter the Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council replied in his letter dated the 18th June, 1970, as follows:—

Further to my letter to you, dated the 16th instant in respect to the publication of a copy of the article headed "Court Interests" from *Jobsons Investment Digest*, I wish to advise as follows.

In circulating the copy referred to, the Council at that point of time was not aware that the article would be considered libelous by your client.

In view of your advice on this matter contained in your letter dated the 12th June, 1970, we immediately circulated the apology article appearing in *Jobsons Digest* on the 3rd June.

In circulating the original article we had no intention of associating ourselves with the comments so made, and if it may be considered that it could be construed that way by your client we apologise accordingly.

Attached please find a copy of the most recent circular distributed by the Council.

Trusting this advice meets with your client's satisfaction.

The Trades and Labor Council then sent out a copy of the apology published by *Jobsons Investment Digest*. I felt it desirable to place this matter on record in *Hansard* because it seems to be recurring from time to time and it appears to get rehashed with each confrontation or "contretemps" that occurs—based on the *Jobsons Investment Digest* article about myself by Mr. Pratt and which resulted in a complete withdrawal and apology by them.

I thank the House for giving me this opportunity to place this on record.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.08 p.m.

QUESTIONS (45): ON NOTICE

1.

MINING

Platinum

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What quantities of platinum have been produced in Western Australia during the year ended 30th June, 1972?
- (2) What finds of platinum have been made in Western Australia and which of these are currently being worked?
- (3) (a) Are there mineral deposits being mined primarily for other minerals and the platinum is not being recovered;
(b) if the platinum is not being recovered, what are the reasons?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (1) Nil. (No production of platinum for the year ended 30th June, 1972, has been reported to the Mines Department.)
- (2) While platinum finds have been reported in the Press in recent years, they have been either unconfirmed or of mineralogical interest only. None have been worked.
- (3) (a) Yes—a trace of platinum occurs in most nickel deposits.
(b) Quantity insignificant and could not be recovered economically.

2.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Rating: Unimproved Capital Value Basis

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

How many local authorities assess—

- (a) in the whole of their territory;
 - (b) in parts of their territory,
- rates on an "unimproved capital value" basis?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

- (a) 51 use unimproved valuations only.
- (b) 76 use both unimproved and annual valuations.

3.

HIGHWAYS

Median Strips and Verges: Beautification

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Who is responsible for the beautification of the median strip and verges for a major highway, such as the Albany Highway, between Kelmscott and Armadale?
- (2) What are the Main Roads Department standard specifications for shrub and tree planting for this median strip and verges?

Mr. T. D. EVANS (for Mr. Jamieson) replied:

- (1) In accordance with agreement reached with the Local Government Association some time ago, and with particular reference to the section of Albany Highway between Kelmscott and Armadale, the Main Roads Department has accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the whole of the road pavement from outside kerb to outside kerb including beautification of the median strip. The local authority will be responsible for beautification of the remainder of the road reserve.
- (2) The Main Roads Department has no standard specification for shrub and tree planting. When preparing plans for a beautification scheme consideration is given to many factors including soil conditions, visibility and safety requirements and the need for future maintenance. Preliminary plans have been prepared for the median between Kelmscott and Armadale and some discussion has taken place with officers of the Armadale-Kelmscott Shire Council.

4. **KINGSLEY SCHOOL***Grounds: Reticulation System*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has adequate underground water been found and equipped to reticulate the Kingsley primary school surrounds and grounds?
- (2) What part of this project has been completed?
- (3) What work remains to be completed to reticulate these grounds?
- (4) Will he assure me this reticulation system will be ready for the start of this coming summer?

Mr. T. D. EVANS (for Mr. Jamieson) replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The bore has been sunk and tested, and the pump and reticulation installed.
- (3) Connection of the permanent electrical supply.
- (4) Yes.

5. **GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS:
MOTOR VEHICLES***Preference to General Motors Holden*

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he please supply the information regarding motor vehicle purchases as requested in my 7th June and 6th July letters, including the amount of business that was given to General Motors Holden in preference to others because of the 15 per cent. preference that was stated to apply to G.M.H.?
- (2) Would he also give details of the exact conditions or formula under which the various percentages of preference are applied as requested in my 7th June letter?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The number of vehicles where local assembly preference was given to G.M.H., was twenty, and the approximate value of the vehicles \$40,000.
- (2) A 10% preference is given to goods that are manufactured in this State. The local content of G.M.H. vehicles was assessed as 15%, and of competitive makes at 6%. The normal 10% preference was applied to this Western Australian content.

6. **NATIONAL FITNESS COUNCIL
AND YOUTH COUNCILS***Remuneration of Members*

Mr. W. A. MANNING, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What remuneration is paid to members of—
(a) National Fitness Council;

(b) Youth Council of Western Australia?

- (2) What remuneration is proposed for members of the Youth, Community Recreation and National Fitness Council?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) (a) Nil.
(b) Part time director \$3,500 p.a.
- (2) No provision for remuneration is included in the draft legislation.

7.

EDUCATION*Slow Learning Children's School:
Collie*

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Following his inspection of the slow learning children's school at Collie wherein he was able to see first hand the sub-standard conditions, will he advise if a decision has been made to construct a new school at Collie?
- (2) If so, will he further advise—
(a) the anticipated cost of the new building;
(b) the site where the new school will be built;
(c) the date tenders will be called;
(d) the anticipated period of construction?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) An allowance of \$26,900 has been made in the 1972-1973 estimates.
(b) A site has been selected but is still subject to Lands Department approval.
(c) Not yet determined.
(d) Approximately 16 weeks.

8.

COURTHOUSE*Collie*

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has any decision been made to carry out internal repairs and renovations to the Collie courthouse?
- (2) If so, will he advise—
(a) the repairs and renovations contemplated;
(b) the anticipated expenditure involved;
(c) the commencement and anticipated completion dates of the work?

Mr. T. D. EVANS (for Mr. Jamieson) replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) (a) General repairs, renovations and re-painting.
- (b) The preliminary estimate of cost is \$12,000.
- (c) Finalisation of the work programme has not been made but it is anticipated that the work will commence early in 1973 for completion by June 1973.

9.

CATTLE

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis: Funds for Eradication

Mr. I. W. MANNING, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he aware that in his budget speech the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Snedden, indicated that the campaign to eradicate bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis would be intensified and that subject to agreement with the States Commonwealth funds would be provided on a \$ for \$ basis to a maximum of \$4,000,000?
- (2) Has the Western Australian Government an arrangement with the Commonwealth to participate in the campaign on a \$ for \$ basis?
- (3) What sum of money has been provided by the Western Australian Government to be matched by the Commonwealth?
- (4) In what way is the money to be expended in Western Australia?
- (5) Is he aware that farmers regard the current compensation scheme for brucellosis reactors as highly unsatisfactory?
- (6) Will the provision of additional Commonwealth funds allow for compensation to be paid on all brucellosis reactor stock?
- (7) If (6) is "No" will he, in the interests of farmers who have encountered a high percentage of reactors and suffered considerable financial loss, undertake to have sufficient funds loaned to the cattle compensation fund to enable full compensation to be paid?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) \$205,000 for 1972-73.
- (4) For the planned eradication programmes on tuberculosis and brucellosis excluding the payment of compensation for cattle affected with either disease.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) No. The existing Commonwealth/States Agreement does not include compensation for either disease.

- (7) Measures for increasing the size of the cattle industry compensation fund so that augmented expenditures on compensation for brucellosis reactors can be met are currently under consideration.

10.

WATER SUPPLIES

Storage Reservoir at Karragullen

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

As he appears to have inadvertently overlooked answering part (2) of my question 6 on 7th September, will he advise me whether it is a part of long-term planning to build a storage reservoir downstream from Canning Dam?

Mr. T. D. EVANS (for Mr. Jamieson) replied:

No. Attention is also directed to the answer to part (3) of question 13 on 6th September.

11.

FIRE BRIGADES

Local Authorities: Contributions

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) Is it a fact that the metropolitan fire district assessment in the year 1971-72 totalled in round figures \$3.34 million and the assessment for 1972-73 is in round figures \$4.29 million which represents an increase of approximately 28 per cent.?
- (2) Is he aware that, as metropolitan local authorities are required to pay 20 per cent. of the total, they are becoming increasingly concerned not only at this steep increase but concerned and apprehensive regarding possible further inflated future assessments?
- (3) What are the reasons for this large increase and how does it compare with the previous year?
- (4) Whilst fully appreciating the necessity to maintain an efficient fire fighting service can he review the situation and give firm assurances that costs will be kept down to reasonable levels?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes, but this percentage is under review which is reaching finality.
- (3) The reason for the increase is payroll and associated costs which stem from awards granted and provisions made against pending claims.
The previous year's increase was approximately the same.
- (4) All possible steps are being taken to control costs.

12. CATTLE SALES

Live-Weight Basis

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are the Press reports correct wherein it has been quoted that buyers have boycotted cattle sales where the sales are conducted on live weight?
- (2) If so, could he advise of the sales involved?
- (3) Does the Department view this action with concern?
- (4) Is it considered that if the boycott extends it will have a detrimental effect on the farming community in Western Australia?
- (5) What action is contemplated by the department to protect the interests of the farmers in Western Australia?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) There is a current refusal by live-stock buyers to buy female cattle over the age of 12 months on a live weight basis.
- (2) This applies where the sale of cattle is conducted over scales, currently at Boyanup and Mount Barker.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) It is not considered likely that there will be any general extension of this problem.
- (5) Farmer organizations and live-stock buyers are holding discussions at present to consider all aspects of livestock selling for their mutual benefit. No action is contemplated by the Department of Agriculture pending results of these discussions.

13. *This question was postponed.*

14. ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

Repeal of Legislation

Mr. W. G. YOUNG, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Government intend introducing a Bill for the repeal of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act in this session of Parliament?
- (2) If so, could he indicate approximately when?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) No decision has been made.

15. GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Old Observatory Site

Mr. W. A. MANNING, to the Premier:

- (1) What other buildings are planned in addition to the present P.W.D. building on the old Observatory site?

(2) At what stage is the planning?

(3) What departments will be located there?

(4) Could this project be used to stimulate the building trades?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) Two 4-5 storey buildings facing Parliament Place with a third building 8-9 storeys high behind, and linked to the lower buildings.
- (2) Preliminary site planning only.
- (3) Education Department, and possibly Metropolitan Water Board.
- (4) Not immediately, as at least 18 months design time is required before tenders could be called.

16. RAILWAYS

Picton Junction Marshalling Yards and Spur Lines

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

- (1) With reference to my question 20 on Wednesday, 25th August, 1971 (*Hansard* page 1009) have plans been finalised for the acquisition of land at Picton Junction for the establishment of marshalling yards, servicing facilities and a direct connection between the Perth-Bunbury, Bunbury-Bridgetown lines?
 - (2) Have negotiations been completed on the proposal with the local authorities concerned in regard to planning complication?
 - (3) Have all or any of the property owners in the area been advised of railway land requirements?
 - (4) If "No" to any of the above, what are the reasons for delay?
 - (5) Does the proposal require an enabling Act; if so, is it proposed the Bill will be introduced during this session of Parliament?
- Mr. MAY replied:
- (1) The department's basic design is now firm.
 - (2) Yes.
 - (3) to (5) It is considered desirable that these proposals be presented for Parliament's approval and an enabling Act passed. In the meantime, an official approach to the land owners cannot be made without anticipating Parliament's approval.
- The Bill has yet to be prepared and it is unlikely to be introduced during this session of Parliament.

17. WOOD CHIP INDUSTRY

Establishment

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

- (1) What stage have negotiations reached with regard to the development of a wood chip industry in Western Australia?
- (2) Bearing in mind that several agreements have been signed in the Eastern States, what are the main problems which prevent an agreement being signed for Western Australia?
- (3) When does the present extension to the company expire; is it likely to be extended; if so, for what period of time?
- (4) Are amendments to be made to the company's commitments under the agreement?
- (5) If so, to what commitments and when will these amendments be made?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

- (1) The W.A. Chip & Pulp Co. Pty. Ltd. is continuing its efforts to negotiate a contract for sale of woodchips and its managing director is expected to continue these negotiations in Japan next week.

- (2) The main problem over the past 18 months has been the reduced demand for woodchips resulting from the downturn in the Japanese economy.

The Eastern States agreements have been negotiated over a considerable period and have not necessitated the large capital contributions which the State prescribed under the Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act.

- (3) The company has an extension of time until 31st December, 1972, to satisfy the Minister that it has secured, or is about to secure meaningful contracts for woodchips.
- (4) Broad agreement has been reached with the company on the extent of concessions which might be made by the State to assist the company to secure contracts in Japan. It would be inappropriate to disclose these at a time when the company is still negotiating prices and conditions.
- (5) Consideration will be given to the need for appropriate amendments if and when the company secures contracts and these are acceptable to the State.

18. *This question was postponed.*

19.

CATTLE

Brucellosis: Eradication Programme

Mr. RUNCIMAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In view of the serious brucellosis situation in Western Australia and the requirements that if Western Australia is to compete in overseas meat markets this disease must be eradicated, how does he view the present situation?
- (2) Is he aware that New Zealand, U.S.A. and other States of the Commonwealth have initiated a seven year eradication programme?
- (3) What is being planned in Western Australia?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The present situation in Western Australia is basically quite satisfactory. Eradication is well advanced here.

- (2) Eradication of brucellosis is being carried out in the countries mentioned but only in the case of the U.S.A. has a target date for eradication been announced, as far as is known. This is 1975 or 1976.

In the case of the other States of the Commonwealth, the eradication programme is identical in principle with that of Western Australia. All States share a common national eradication plan with no fixed or established period for completion.

- (3) Western Australia is in many respects in advance of the other mainland States in brucellosis eradication and is vigorously pursuing an eradication programme approved by the National Committee, as its part of the national effort.

20.

MILK QUOTAS

Negotiability

Mr. RUNCIMAN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the request from a large section of wholemilk producers that milk quotas be negotiable, what is his intention in this matter?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

Under legislation proposed for the dairy industry, a dairy industry authority to be constituted would be able to consider the conditions under which milk quotas may be transferred. It is my intention to await the advice of the proposed dairy industry authority in relation to this matter.

21. HARVEY DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Extensions

Mr. I. W. MANNING, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the extensions to the Harvey District Hospital that have been requested by the hospital board?
- (2) Were the proposed extensions approved by the Medical Department?
- (3) Is he aware that the hospital board regards the construction of the requested extensions as a matter of considerable urgency?
- (4) When is it planned that work on the extensions at the Harvey hospital will be undertaken?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) Extensions requested by the hospital for the Harvey district hospital are—
 - (a) New ablution facilities.
 - (b) Additional ward accommodation.
 - (c) New X-ray facilities.
- (2) The Medical Department has agreed that the hospital's requests will be carefully assessed and that a sketch plan will be prepared for discussion with the Board.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No date can be given as it will depend upon the completion of plans and availability of loan funds.

22. SUPERPHOSPHATE

Price Loading on Small Orders

Mr. STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he aware that the superphosphate companies have made a loading of \$3 per ton on orders of less than three tons of either superphosphate or mixtures?
- (2) Has it been proven to his satisfaction that this charge is reasonable?
- (3) If "No" to above has he power to investigate the justification for this charge?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Cost of superphosphate is not within my jurisdiction but I have discussed the matter with the Minister for Prices Control who advises he has no power at this stage to check whether such price surcharge is reasonable.

23.

APPLES

Production and Exports

Mr. STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In the 1970-71 year what quantity of apples were produced in, and what quantities were railed from, the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Busselton, Nannup, Manjimup, Collie, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Harvey, Waroona, Capel, Dardanup, Mandurah, Denmark and Plantagenet?
- (2) What quantities of apples were shipped overseas during 1970-71 from Fremantle, Bunbury and Albany, and to what ports were they consigned?
- (3) Was light brown apple moth discovered in fruit shipped to the U.S.A. in 1971 and 1972 seasons, and if so, was it conclusively proven that infected fruit originated in Western Australia?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The quantity of apples produced in the nominated shires in 1970-71 was as follows (source Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics):—

	Bushels
Augusta-Margaret River	Nil
Mandurah	Nil
Busselton	34
Nannup	10,773
Manjimup	630,942
Collie	21,714
Boyup Brook	29,791
Bridgetown-Greenbushes	434,694
Harvey	182
Waroona	619
Capel	132,717
Dardanup	2,609
Denmark	19,901
Plantagenet	165,572

There are no records available of the quantity of apples railed from individual shires.

- (2) Quantities of apples shipped from the ports of Fremantle, Bunbury and Albany in 1970-71 were:—

Fremantle—1,207,161 (including 440,377 to Singapore and other Indian Ocean destinations).

Bunbury—525,182.

Albany—144,906.

The majority of shipments from Fremantle were to United Kingdom, German and Scandinavian ports. Approximately 100,000 bus. went to North America.

Bunbury shipments were to U.K. and Continental ports except for approximately 100,000 bus. to North America.

Albany shipments were all to U.K. and Continent.

- (3) Light brown apple moth was not identified in apples shipped from W.A. to the U.S.A. in 1971 or 1972. 25,310 bushels of apples were fumigated due to the presence of unidentified insect larvae.

24. **TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGES**

Capital Expenditure

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What was the amount of capital expenditure incurred on each of the teachers' colleges, viz—
Churchlands, Claremont, Graylands, Mt. Lawley and Nedlands on—
(a) buildings;
(b) other than buildings?
- (2) What additional capital expenditure is anticipated on—
(a) buildings;
(b) other than buildings,
on each of these colleges until and including the financial year 1974-75?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) It is not possible to answer this question unless a financial year or period of time is specified.
- (2) Capital expenditure to the year 1975, is under review, for the purpose of a submission to the Commonwealth Government under the proposals recently announced by the Minister for Education and Science.
It would be desirable to await the full assessment before details are released.

25. *This question was postponed.*

26. **HOSPITAL AT BRIDGETOWN**

Site

Mr. REID, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has agreement been reached between the Medical Department and the principal architect on the site of the proposed hospital at Bridgetown?
- (2) If not, when will the decision be made?
- (3) If agreement on the site has been reached have provisions been made towards funding the construction and when will work commence?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) See answer to (1).
- (3) Funds are not available this financial year.

27. **EDUCATION**

High Schools: Hall-Gymnasiums

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What are the conditions according to which preference is given to existing high schools for building a hall-gymnasium?
- (2) Does the parents and citizens' association of a high school which is prepared to spend money for building a gymnasium receive a subsidy from the Education Department and to what extent?
- (3) If (2) is "Yes" what is the normal delay before such subsidy can be obtained?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The basic priority is determined by the order in which schools were established. The priority may be modified after consideration of such special factors as enrolment, climatic conditions, the amount of covered space available in the school and the proximity to available facilities.
- (2) The normal building subsidy of \$ for \$ to a maximum subsidy of \$5,000 would be payable.
- (3) Providing the parents and citizens' association could show that it had sufficient funds to meet its proportion of the total cost, the subsidy would be paid at any stage of construction.

28. **SAWN TIMBER**

Production and Rail Cartage

Mr. REID, to the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What quantity of sawn timber was produced during 1970-71 in—
(a) the metropolitan area;
(b) the south-west statistical division?
- (2) What quantity was railed from the source of production and to what destinations was it consigned?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) (a) 33,811 loads.
(b) 278,598 loads.
- (2) This information is not available from the Forests Department.

29. *This question was postponed.*

30. **RESEARCH STATIONS**

Staff Transfers

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the number of staff employed on each research station in Western Australia in—
(a) office work;
(b) field work?

- (2) What is the total number of transfers from one office to another, including research stations by—
 (a) office staff;
 (b) field staff,
 from 1st July, 1971 to 1st September, 1972?
- (3) What is the average cost to the department for each transfer for the same period?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

(1)	(a) Field Work	(b) Office
Abydos	4	—
Avondale	7	1
Badgingarra	8	—
Bramley	4	—
Chapman	4	1
Denmark	13	1
Esperance Downs	8	—
Gascoyne	13	1
Kimberley	34	3
Manjimup	8	—
Medina Pig	11	—
Medina Vegetable	11	—
Merredin	10	—
Mt. Barker	7	—
Newdegate	8	—
Northam	5	—
Woodlands Poultry	10	—
Salmon Gums	5	—
Stoneville	11	—
Swan	5	—
Wiluna	7	1
Wokalup	13	1
Wongan Hills	20	—

As at 1st September, 1972.

(2) (a) Nil.

(b) 34.

(3) \$310.00.

31. LEGAL CONTRIBUTION TRUST FUND

Expenditure, 1968 to 1972

Mr. BRYCE, to the Attorney-General:

(1) What moneys were in the Legal Contribution Trust Fund as at 31st July in 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971 and 1972?

(2) How much money was spent from the fund in each of the above years, and for what purposes?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Interest earned in each of the years ended—
 30th June, 1969—\$43,113.47.
 30th June, 1970—\$65,978.34.
 30th June, 1971—\$97,730.99.
 30th June, 1972—\$142,375.85.

(2) Disposal of interest earned—

	30/6/69 \$	30/6/70 \$	30/6/71 \$	30/6/72 \$
Administration expenses	691.75	703.15	835.15	813.10
Insurance of guarantee fund	6,825.00	6,825.00	6,825.00	18,900.00
Transfer to guarantee fund	35,596.72	10,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00
Legal assistance scheme .....	....	48,450.19	80,070.84	102,662.75

32. TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGES

Applicants

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

How many applications were received in 1971 for admission to teachers' colleges for the 1972 academic year, and how many applicants were admitted?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

3004 applications were received, 2481 were qualified, and 1512 were admitted.

I might add that this supplies the perfect answer to a certain gentleman from the University of Western Australia who claimed recently that the standards of trainees entering our teachers' training colleges were dropping.

33. SCHOOLS

Enrolments and Teacher-Pupil Ratios

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

What is the current enrolment at each primary school in the Ascot, Swan, Nedlands and East Melville electoral districts, and what is the current teacher-pupil ratio in these schools?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

	Pupils	Teacher-pupil ratio to 1.
Ascot—		
Ashfield	488	32.5
Belmay	555	32.6
Belmay J.P.	355	29.6
Belmont	265	37.9
Carlisle	683	32.5
Cloverdale	605	31.8
Redcliffe	283	31.4
Rivervale	240	30.0
Tranby	452	34.8
Swan—		
Anzac Terrace	293	36.6
Bassendean	386	35.1
Bellevue	84	28.0
Eden Hill	546	32.1
Greenmount	226	32.3
Guildford	322	29.3
Koongamia	369	33.5
Lockridge	714	34.0
Middle Swan	439	33.8
Midland	278	34.8
Midvale	490	35.0

	Pupils	Teacher-pupil ratio to 1.
Nedlands—		
Claremont	306	25.5
Dalkeith	362	36.2
East Claremont	199	28.4
Hollywood	228	32.6
Nedlands	321	32.1
East Melville—		
Applecross	442	34.0
Ardross	492	35.1
Attadale	587	34.5
Booragoon	377	34.3
Mt. Pleasant	664	33.2

34. SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Students over 14 Years of Age

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

In respect of each of the years 1952, 1962 and 1972, what was the number of pupils in attendance at State primary and secondary schools who, on 31st July, were aged 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 years and over respectively?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

	1952	1962	1971
14	4,319	9,683	15,261
15	1,556	6,546	10,986
16	395	2,204	5,111
17	259	931	2,365
18 and over	254	519	618

It is not possible to give separate figures for the age groups 18, 19 and over, for the years 1952 and 1962. For 1971 the figures were:—

18—210.

19 and over—406.

35. EDUCATION

Migrant Children

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What facilities are being provided by the Commonwealth Government for the education of migrant children attending State primary and secondary schools?
- (2) How many schools in the metropolitan area receive Commonwealth assistance for this purpose, and what conditions must be met in order to qualify for such assistance?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The Commonwealth provides—
 - (a) a record player for secondary classes;
 - (b) a refund of the cost of consumable learning materials;

- (c) a grant of \$50 for each new class to purchase needed teaching aids;
 - (d) in-service training for teachers;
 - (e) a refund of the cost of teachers' salaries.
- (2) (i) 6 secondary schools.
18 primary schools.

- (ii) (a) Full-time classes—

A minimum of 20 students is required for the employment of a full-time teacher. The Commonwealth Government refunds the teacher's salary in such a case. If the number of students is more than 10 but less than 20, the Commonwealth refunds half the salary.

- (b) Withdrawal classes—

A minimum of 30 students is required for the establishment of a withdrawal class. These students may come from more than one school. Full refund of salaries by the Commonwealth is made if the number of pupils exceeds 30. Proportionate refunds are made for enrolments between 10 and 29.

36. HIGH SCHOOLS

Libraries, Science Blocks, and Halls

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many Western Australian secondary schools are eligible to receive Commonwealth-financed libraries and science blocks?
- (2) Which of the eligible schools had not received—
 - (a) libraries;
 - (b) science blocks,
 as at 1st July, 1972?
- (3) (a) How many Western Australian secondary schools have auditorium/assembly hall facilities;
- (b) how many eligible schools did not have such facilities on 1st July, 1972;
- (c) what is the estimated cost of providing the outstanding number of auditorium/assembly halls required?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) All 56 Government secondary schools are eligible.

(2) (a) Libraries—

Senior high schools—

Balcatta
 Bentley
 Busselton
 Carnarvon
 Cannington
 City Beach
 Collie
 Como
 Cyril Jackson
 *Eastern Goldfields
 Esperance
 Hampton
 *Hedland
 Hollywood
 Kewdale
 Manjimup
 Melville
 Merredin
 Mirrabooka
 Northam
 Rossmoyne
 Swanbourne

High schools—

Balga
 Bridgetown
 Harvey
 *Karratha
 Margaret River
 *Morley
 Moora
 Mount Barker
 Newton Moore
 *Rockingham
 South Fremantle
 *Thornlie

Note: Commonwealth approval has been granted for a further ten libraries in the remainder of the present triennium.

(b) Science—

*Carnarvon
 Como
 *Eastern Goldfields
 Eastern Hills
 Harvey
 *Hedland
 *Karratha
 Moora
 *Morley
 *Rockingham
 *Thornlie

*New schools or additions incorporating libraries and science facilities of a Commonwealth pattern.

- (3) (a) 19 including 2 in the current building programme.
 (b) 37.
 (c) Approximately \$6.5 million.

37. SCHOOL CROSSWALKS

Appointment of Attendants

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) What criteria are used to determine if a crosswalk patrol officer can be provided for a school?

(2) Is the onus on the parents and citizens' association or the shire affected to take a count of pedestrian-traffic conflict, or does the traffic department take its own count?

(3) Are there any factors, e.g., the vast number of under 12 years of age children attending school or absence of fences from school-grounds, which could affect a decision to make crosswalk patrol officers available?

(4) Can parents of school children arrange their own crosswalk patrol officer?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

(1) to (3) The information sought by the Member is contained in Main Roads Department Circular No. 6/66, a copy of which I will table.

(4) No.

The circular was tabled (see paper No. 349).

38. RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

Terms of Employment

Mr. BLAICKIE, to the Premier:

(1) What are the terms of employment for those personnel receiving employment with funds provided by the Commonwealth for rural unemployment in—

- (a) Government;
 (b) semi-Government;
 (c) local government,
 categories in Western Australia?

(2) Would he detail whether personnel receive benefits, in addition to weekly wage (i.e. sick pay, long service leave, etc.) when employed by any category as in (1)?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

(1) and (2) The rates of pay and conditions of service prescribed by respective awards for the category of worker employed.

39. COURTHOUSE

Bunbury

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Attorney-General:

(1) Has a site been acquired for the building of a new courthouse at Bunbury?

(2) If so, where is this site?

(3) If "No" what moves are being made to acquire a site and when is it expected agreement will be reached?

- (4) As there is no mention of a new courthouse for Bunbury in the Loan Estimates 1972-73, in which year is this facility likely to be built?
- (5) As the lease expires on the old post office in February, 1973, what arrangements are to be made to accommodate the public office, magistrate's rooms, courtroom, etc. now housed in the old post office?
- (6) As members of the public who, for one reason or another, have to attend court sittings are at present obliged to stand on the footpath and in the porches of the existing post office building, would he have this position rectified by providing some type of waiting room near this building?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Proposals for a new courthouse in Bunbury were for erection of the building on a site alongside the present police station.
- (2) and (3) Answered by (1).
- (4) Present accommodation is considered adequate.
- (5) The buildings alongside the courthouse which are presently occupied by the Child Welfare Department are to be made available to the court and will be updated to suit court requirements.
- (6) Provision will be made when the court moves from the present building.

40. COURTHOUSES

Gosnells and Cannington

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Attorney-General:

In view of the rapid increase in population in Gosnells and Cannington and the ever-increasing demands made on police court work in these areas—

- (a) is it intended to build a courthouse in either of these areas;
- (b) if so, when is it anticipated;
- (c) if not, what population figures are required before a courthouse would be built?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (a) No.
- (b) No consideration has been given to such a proposal.
- (c) Population figures are only one of the criteria to determine where a court should be built. Consideration must also be given to the area where offences are committed or causes for civil action arise.

41.

EDUCATION

Aborigines: Grants Scheme

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What are the requirements for provision of assistance under the Aboriginal secondary education grants scheme?
- (2) At what age do the students commence to obtain the grants?
- (3) What is the amount allowed for—
- (a) text books per annum;
- (b) uniform allowance per annum;
- (c) living allowance up to third year, sub-leaving and leaving grades for students living at home?
- (4) Is there any extra payment to cover charges for students living in hostels?
- (5) What amount per week is allowed for private board and is this an extra payment?
- (6) (a) Is there a personal expense allowance per week for students up to third year, leaving and sub-leaving years, and if so, what are the amounts for each;
- (b) are these allowances additional to any of the above?
- (7) If there are compulsory tuition, examination and service fees are these paid for under the scheme?
- (8) Are fares paid for students who have to travel home during term vacation?
- (9) What is the address of the department to where applications should be forwarded?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Students must be of Aboriginal descent, attend an approved school and be likely to benefit from further schooling.
- (2) From the commencement of the year in which they turn 15 years of age.
- (3) (a) \$50;
- (b) \$150;
- (c) up to third year—\$240; fourth and fifth year—\$300.
- (4) Compulsory charges are provided.
- (5) Payment of boarding costs up to a maximum of \$16 per week but not in addition to allowances under (3) (c) above.

- (6) (a) Yes, up to third year—\$1.50 per week;
fourth and fifth year—\$2 per week.

(b) Yes.

- (7) and (8) Yes.

- (9) Regional Director, Department of Education and Science, 22 Stirling Highway, Nedlands, 6009.

42. TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGES

Certificates and Applicants

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

- (1) Referring to question 23 of 6th September, 1972 what were the commencing enrolments for each

of the teachers' colleges for each of the years 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971?

- (2) What were the final enrolments for each of the colleges in each of those years?

- (3) How many students in each year of the colleges terminated their courses during the year and prior to the conclusion of that year for each of the years referred to above because of—

(a) voluntary withdrawal;

(b) dismissal due to unsuitability for the vocation;

(c) other reasons?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Commencing enrolments—

	Feb. 1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Claremont	1,209	783	675	674	627
Late enrolments	.....	2	11	.....	.....
Transfer from Secondary	.....	2	12	29	23
Total	1,209	787	698	703	650
Graylands	448	460	495	450	433
Late enrolments	.....	.....	3	.....	.....
Total	448	460	498	450	433
Secondary	168	782	1,133	1,337	1,424
Late enrolments	2	11	.....	19	19
Total	170	793	1,133	1,356	1,443

(2) Final enrolments—

	Dec. 1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Claremont	1,137	765	660	676	614
Graylands	435	413*	478	436	419
Secondary	157	756	1,065	1,222	1,334

* 30 students outgoing in June 1968.

(3)—

(a) Voluntary withdrawal—

Claremont	57	14	15	19	27
Graylands	9	10	12	11	6
Secondary	9	41	49	91	87

(b) Dismissed as unsuitable—

Claremont	7	7	2	6	5
Graylands	2	7	3	1	4
Secondary	4	3	2	12	11

(c) Other reasons—

Claremont	8	1	12	2	5
Graylands	2	.....	7	2	4
Secondary	.....	2	5	2	11

43.

HEALTH

Tab Beverage: Hazards

Mr. BRYCE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that the diabetic soft drink known as Tab bears the warning "Take on medical advice only"?
- (2) In view of its widespread availability will he indicate the health hazards that may accompany the consumption of this drink?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) Under the Food and Drug regulations all foods containing the artificial sweetener "cyclamate" are required to be labelled "Take on medical advice only".
- (2) Cyclamate containing food should be consumed only when there is a medical necessity for it. Cyclamates have been associated in animal experiments with cancer of the bladder.

44.

COMMONWEALTH AID ROADS FUND

Unacceptable Expenditure

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Further to my question 50 on 16th August, 1972—

- (a) will he give full details of the amounts of "road expenditure" not acceptable to the Commonwealth for the years 1969-70, 1970-71 and 1971-72;
- (b) why were these amounts claimed by the State as road expenditure under the 1969-74 Commonwealth Aid Roads Act?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (a) See statement attached.
- (b) The items on which detailed expenditure is shown in reply to question (a) are essential to the operations of the Main Roads Department. The administrative instructions from the Commonwealth require that the State shall meet this expenditure from State funds and that it shall not form part of the State's "quota". Because of this policy, the Main Roads Department has never made a

claim against the Commonwealth with respect to those items shown in the answer to question (a).

The statement was tabled (see paper No. 350).

45.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Staff Shortage

Mr. NALDER, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it correct that there is a serious staff crisis at the Western Australian medical school?
- (2) How many teachers are required when the school staff is at full strength?
- (3) How many vacancies in the teaching staff exist at present?
- (4) What are the reasons for the vacancies?
- (5) What action does the Government intend taking to retain the confidence of the public who generously supported the costs of establishing the Western Australian medical school?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) It is a fact that there is a serious staff shortage in the Medical School's Department of Medicine but whether this can be said to have reached crisis proportions is a matter of opinion.
- (2) There are 37½ teaching positions in the Clinical Department in the Medical School.
- (3) There are, at this date, 6½ vacancies.
- (4) One probable reason is, inadequate salaries.
- (5) The State Government has made representations to the Commonwealth Government which has the responsibility to appoint a committee of inquiry to review academic salaries and that the Committee's terms of reference should include inquiries into the matter of clinical responsibilities in teaching hospitals. Although it is understood that the Commonwealth has appointed the committee of inquiry, the terms of reference are not known.

In the meantime, departmental officers are re-examining this complex situation to ascertain whether there is any interim solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

QUESTIONS (7): WITHOUT NOTICE**1. ALUMINA REFINERIES***Red Mud By-Products*

Mr. GRAHAM (Minister for Development and Decentralisation):

On the 10th August the member for Bunbury sought information on the possible use of red mud residue resulting from bauxite refineries.

I undertook to table a feasibility study of the DL-M process as it applied to the extraction of iron from red mud residues. I now have a copy of the feasibility report and I seek your permission, Mr. Speaker, to lay it on the Table of the House.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 351).

2. EDUCATION*Free Books Scheme*

Mr. T. D. EVANS (Minister for Education):

On the 12th September the member for Cottesloe addressed a question to me concerning the books being produced by the Education Department through the medium of the Government Printing Office. The books appertain to the subject of social studies, and I undertook to make copies available. I now advise that I am prepared to table a list of the books. Some 60 titles are listed and, in addition, a further nine small books are being produced for the free primary school books scheme. The latter are not yet available but they will be printed in time for the beginning of the 1973 school year.

With your approval, Mr. Speaker, I would like to lay on the Table of the House a list of the 60 titles. The books are available for inspection in the Parliamentary Library, and I am sure members will be impressed with their content and also with their theme.

The list was tabled (see paper No. 352).

3. ESTIMATES*Introduction*

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

Is the Premier yet in a position to indicate when he proposes to introduce the General Estimates?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

Without giving any definite undertaking to the Leader of the Opposition, I anticipate that it will be about the first week in October.

4. WHEAT QUOTAS*Negotiability*

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has he received any submissions from individual banks or organisations representing banking interests on the question of negotiable wheat quotas?
- (2) If so, will he say what is their attitude to negotiable quotas?
- (3) Which banks, either individually or by group representation, have made submissions to him on this issue?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The banks are anxious that their security be protected where transfer of base quota is contemplated.
- (3) It is understood that all banks are concerned on this issue.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITIES*Number*

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

How many local authorities are there in Western Australia?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

That information is readily available from the Minister for Local Government, but it is obvious that I do not have it with me. I will undertake to supply it to the member for Floreat.

6. STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION*Galvanising Work*

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Have there been occasions when work done in the Eastern States by E.P.T. has been rejected by S.E.C. inspectors and has been satisfactorily regalanised by Western Australian firms?
- (2) If so, on how many occasions has this occurred and has the regalanised work been satisfactory?

- (3) Generally, has the galvanising work done by Galvanisers-Lyons Pty. Ltd. for the S.E.C. been satisfactory?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (1) to (3) I think the member for Bunbury will appreciate that I am unable to supply an answer to his question now. I will obtain the information and supply the answer next week.

7. KWINANA-BALGA POWER LINE

Construction: Approval

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Electricity:

Section 29, subsection (1) of the State Electricity Commission Act states—

“... The Commission may on behalf of Her Majesty—

- (a) construct, maintain and work any electrical or other undertaking as defined in this Act”.

In section 7 of the same Act it is stated—

“... “undertaking” means—

- (a) with respect to the Commission an undertaking approved by the Governor for the erection, construction and provision of distribution works . . .”

- (1) Will he state in which *Government Gazette* it was announced that the Governor had approved the undertaking of the 330 kV Kwinana-Balga power line?
- (2) If no such approval was gazetted, will he say by what authority the commission is constructing this power line?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (1) Approval not yet gazetted.
- (2) The commission has not yet commenced construction. It has merely issued a letter of intent subject to Executive Council approval.

LIQUOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Recommittal

Bill recommitted, on motion by Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General), for the further consideration of clauses 4 and 26.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Bateman) in the Chair; Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4: Section 7 amended.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: After we had passed clause 4 it was brought to my attention by a number of people that the observance of Anzac Day ceremonies usually concluded between 12 noon and 12.30 p.m.

People connected with the Returned Services League, and those who wished to continue to hold Anzac Day ceremonies sacred, felt that if hotels and licensed premises were permitted to open at noon those premises would compete with part of the ceremony attached to Anzac Day.

It has been suggested that to avoid any clash with Anzac Day ceremonies, hotels and other licensed premises should not open until 12.30 p.m. For that reason, I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 29—Delete the word “noon” and substitute the passage “half past twelve in the afternoon”.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I simply indicate that representations have been made to the Government for amendments similar to those proposed by the member for Wembley to give effect to the desires of the R.S.L.

The representations came first of all from the member for Northam, who drew my attention to this matter, but at a time when the Committee had passed the stage of considering clause 4; and further representations were made direct to the Premier. It was then decided to seek the recommittal of the Bill, but at the same time representations had been made to the member for Wembley, who had drafted amendments in the manner desired.

Whilst various procedures are required to give effect to the desire of the R.S.L., I recommend that the amendment that has been moved and those that are to be moved by the member for Wembley be supported.

Mr. NALDER: I wish to ask a question of the Minister. Under the previous Act the time stated in these circumstances was 1.00 p.m., and I understand on that occasion the R.S.L. provided the same argument as has been presented to the Chamber this afternoon. Is the R.S.L. now prepared to agree to the time being 12 noon instead of 1.00 p.m.?

Mr. T. D. Evans: Yes.

Mr. NALDER: Does this cover the situation as far as that organisation is concerned?

Mr. T. D. EVANS: From the communication that has been made direct to the Premier and the correspondence addressed to the member for Northam, which I have perused, I would say "Yes."

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: To add weight to that, the communications I have had with the R.S.L. accord with what the Attorney-General has said.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 4—Delete the word "noon" and substitute the passage "half-past twelve in the afternoon".

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 18—Delete the word "noon" and substitute the passage "half-past twelve in the afternoon".

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 26: Section 129 amended—

Mr. T. D. EVANS: On reference to the Bill as presented to this Chamber members will observe that clause 26, prior to the amendment which was accepted by the Committee the last time the Bill was dealt with, provided that the general prohibition applying to children on licensed premises in areas other than in a dining room would not apply when the juvenile was accompanied by a person in authority over him on licensed premises where liquor was sold and supplied only to persons seated at a table.

The member for Wembley drew my attention to the fact that in many instances this would place a prohibition on an adult person entering into certain licensed premises with a child. Since 1970 experience has shown that in many instances children are unaccompanied by adults and run wild in public bars.

No-one suggests we should go back to the situation which existed before 1970, when children were not allowed on licensed premises at all and were left to their own devices in many cases when their parents were otherwise engaged in hotels. However, it was thought that children should be restricted to areas in licensed premises where the adults in authority over them and the children themselves would be seated at a table where reasonable refreshment would be taken. The children would not necessarily cause inconvenience to other patrons and would not be exposed to what might be regarded as undesirable experiences in public bars. Hence the Bill as originally presented provided that the general prohibition would not apply where liquor was sold and

supplied only to persons seated at a table. The material words were "where liquor is sold and supplied only to persons seated at a table."

That provision would apply admirably in hotels where stewards and stewardesses sell and serve liquor at tables, but it would exclude adult persons in the company of juveniles from entering other premises that did not have service provided by stewards and stewardesses at tables. The member for Wembley quite properly proposed that the clause should be amended to cover the situation where there was a bar and tables but no service by stewards or stewardesses, so that the children could be seated at a table while the adults went to the bar to buy the reasonable refreshments and take them back to the table where the children were seated.

To complicate or clarify the matter further, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition perceived the possibility of difficulty—and upon reflection it transpired that it was a real difficulty—in that if the amendment moved by the member for Wembley were accepted with the intention of overcoming an inherent weakness in the drafting of the Bill, another error could be perpetrated in that where there was a bar and tables an adult with children could not be served in that area at all because the clause provided that the general prohibition applied except where liquor was consumed only by persons seated at a table. Therefore, if there were a bar in the same environment or room the general prohibition would still apply to juveniles in the company of adults.

The matter was referred to the Licensing Court for advice. Although the amendment I now propose to move will in fact cause an additional work load on the court, the court believes this approach is the right and proper one to give effect to the original rationale that children in the company of adults should be served with reasonable refreshment only when they are seated at a table. They should not be allowed to run wild inside the hotel premises. Prior to 1970, in some circumstances children were allowed to run wild outside hotel premises.

The amendment proposes that, having regard for his own special circumstances and the design of his premises, a licensee may make application to the court nominating areas within his premises where children could and could not be served, whereupon the court may approve of such areas. I envisage that in some premises there would be a sign over public bars reading "Children are not allowed in this area," whilst in lounges or garden areas where drinks are normally consumed at a table—whether they are served at the table or bought elsewhere and brought to the table—children would be permitted whilst

in the company of an adult who was taking some reasonable refreshment within the meaning of the 1970 Act.

Since drafting the proposed amendment to give effect to the suggestion which has been approved of by the Licensing Court, it has been drawn to my attention that there could be—not necessarily would be—some licensees who did not wish to have children on their premises at all. Therefore, if licensees are given discretion in the matter of applying for permission to have children on their premises, some of them may not apply at all, in which case as regards those premises we will find ourselves with the situation that prevailed prior to 1970, where children were either left at home unattended, left in the street, or left in cars while their parents were engaged in drinking in hotels, sometimes for inordinate periods.

I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word "premises" on page 16, line 35, down to and including the word "table" on page 17, line 1, with a view to substituting other words.

Mr. O'NEIL: This is only my third contribution to the debate on this Bill and, from what the Minister said, I believe he should be grateful. My first contribution when the Minister introduced this proposal was by way of an interjection that in my view the proposal in the original Bill did not cover the situation as he and the Chamber desired.

Mr. T. D. Evans: That was a very early and a very astute observation.

Mr. O'NEIL: Thank you. The Attorney-General has covered the broad scenario of the situation. However, I feel we should return to the synoptic situation. I have learnt these words from my leader. I am told they are used a great deal overseas, and are quite up to the standard of the word "rationale" used by the Attorney-General. This is becoming quite worn out.

Mr. Taylor: Like "this point of time" in place of "now."

Mr. O'NEIL: I believe that the amendment proposed by the Attorney-General will adequately cover the situation. However, I am rather regretful that the officers of the Licensing Court will be involved in additional work as a result of my suggestion.

We are considering the situation of young children accompanying their parents for a reasonable amount of time in public bars on licensed premises. It is my opinion that young and not so young children should be permitted to accompany their parents to licensed premises in adequate surroundings, and I have instanced the

case of the entertainment which is provided at metropolitan hotels on Friday and Saturday evenings. Some parents may like to take their children to enjoy this entertainment. The Act as originally introduced provided that juveniles would not be permitted in an area where there was a public bar. Juveniles were to be permitted in an area where beverages were sold at tables and consumed at tables. However, it is my experience—admittedly not very wide experience—that in most hotels there is almost invariably a bar in areas where beverages are sold and consumed at the table.

Surely the way around this problem is that each and every publican should apply to the Licensing Court to set aside an area on his licensed premises where juveniles may enter in the company of adults. I am sure the Committee is well aware that this does not confer on the juveniles the right to drink intoxicating beverages in this area. It simply confers upon people below the age of 18 the right to be on the premises in the company of their parents or guardians.

Mr. T. D. Evans: The provisions of the parent Act will still apply.

Mr. O'NEIL: That is correct. It has always seemed passing strange that in actual fact the only place where a person below the age of 18 is not permitted to drink is on premises licensed for drinking. A 17-year-old at my invitation in my home may partake of liquor, and yet my home is not licensed for drinking.

Mr. T. D. Evans: That is another valid observation.

Mr. O'NEIL: I assure the Attorney-General that this is my last contribution to the debate. I thank him for having noted the points I made and I trust that this method of overcoming the problem does not create more difficulties.

Mr. NALDER: I am not convinced that the Attorney-General's amendment will achieve the desired result. The Attorney-General said that publicans do not have to apply for this permit.

Mr. T. D. Evans: That is so.

Mr. NALDER: In other words, they are not required to make provision for such an area on their premises.

Mr. T. D. Evans: I have already covered that. I intend to make this mandatory to overcome the evil which existed prior to 1970—children could run wild in some areas. Areas will be prescribed where children may sit at a table in the company of adults who may consume liquor.

Mr. NALDER: I understood that the provisions of the amendment would not require the children to be seated at the tables.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Oh, no.

Mr. NALDER: The children can be anywhere.

Mr. T. D. Evans: The Licensing Court will lay down the conditions.

Mr. NALDER: I would prefer the Attorney-General to give the Chamber some indication of the line to be taken by the court. The court will not know what Parliament wants it to do. Many different situations could arise. The previous Act provided that children had to sit at a table.

Mr. T. D. Evans: This is the very evil we are trying to overcome.

Mr. NALDER: I am surprised that the Attorney-General calls it an evil.

Mr. T. D. Evans: The evil of children being allowed to run wild in a public bar.

Mr. NALDER: I understand that the Attorney-General is asking us to amend the Act where it provides that children must be seated at a table. Is it the Attorney-General's intention to let the Licensing Court decide where the children may be?

Mr. T. D. Evans: Yes.

Mr. NALDER: We are not giving the court a lead at all. Ten hotels in any section of the metropolitan area may all require something different.

Mr. Bertram: Would that matter?

Mr. T. D. Evans: This is the very purpose of the amendment.

Mr. NALDER: In this Chamber we have always tried to give a lead to the people administering the laws.

Mr. Bertram: The Licensing Court will build up its own code.

Mr. NALDER: There will be so many different situations.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Exactly. And this is why we are trying to write in some flexibility.

Mr. NALDER: Can the Attorney-General give us some idea of how the different situations will be catered for?

Mr. T. D. Evans: Yes.

Mr. NALDER: The provision that children must be seated will be deleted. Conditions may be easy to meet in one hotel but difficult in another. Why not give the court a lead?

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to attempt to clarify the situation for the Leader of the Country Party. I refer to section 129 of the principal Act which came into operation on the 1st July, 1970, as a result of very long and careful deliberations by this Parliament. Subsection (1)(h) of this section contains a general prohibition relating to children being on licensed premises.

Subsection (1) of that section states—

Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, every person who—

- (h) being a juvenile, and not being the servant or agent of the licensee or a person acting under, or employed in connection with, a contract with the licensee, enters or remains in any part of licensed premises where liquor is served except for the purpose of obtaining a meal;

commits an offence.

It is a fact that no person under the age of seven years may be charged with a criminal offence in this State, whether it be a criminal offence or a quasi-criminal offence. In my view offences under this Act would be quasi-criminal offences. So a child who has not attained his seventh birthday is free under the provisions of the Act at present to wander anywhere in a hotel at any time when it is licensed to trade.

The second point is that, under the Criminal Code, where a child under the age of 14 years commits an offence against the Statute law of Western Australia, a special onus is imposed upon the Crown to show that the child was fully cognisant of the law and the obligations imposed upon him under the law.

So it would seem to me—and this is the experience of the police—that a child who has not attained his 14th birthday may in many instances enter licensed premises with almost complete immunity. Therefore, under the Act as it stands, the situation is quite open in the case of a child below 14 years of age.

For that very reason I sought to provide in the Bill that children in the presence of an adult should be seated at a table, and that the adult who is taking reasonable refreshment and is required to exercise authority over the children should also be seated at the table. I also sought to provide that children shall not enter a public bar.

In endeavouring to do so I concede that insufficient attention was given to the varying circumstances applying from hotel to hotel, not only in the metropolitan area but throughout the State. We must have regard for the typical suburban hotel where there is a lounge where drinks are served at tables by stewards and stewardesses, and where the actual purchase of liquor and its consumption take place at the table.

However, it is not economical to maintain a full steward and stewardess service in all hotels at all times during the 12

hours of trading. Therefore, in some circumstances, whilst tables are provided in the lounge there is also a bar where a person may purchase liquor and return to his table to consume it. It was to overcome the latter situation that the member for Wembley moved his amendment. After the amendment was moved the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rightfully drew to our attention that in the situation to which I last referred, where there is a bar and tables, and it is required that the liquor be consumed only at the tables and not at the bar, the area would be out of bounds to persons with children.

This matter was referred to the Licensing Court. The court is fully aware of the rationale of the amendment. It has read the debates which took place and it has read of the attempts made to overcome the difficulty. It is also aware of the difficulties existing under the present Act, and of the situation of a child who has not attained his 14th birthday. Certainly the police, who are required to enforce the provisions of the Act, are aware of the difficulty.

So the Licensing Court approved of the present position in which the individual circumstances of a hotel may be taken into consideration. Where hotels provide a steward and stewardess service the Licensing Court can provide that children will be accommodated only whilst seated at a table, and the actual purchase of liquor must take place at that table. Where a hotel has not a steward and stewardess service the Licensing Court can provide that children must be seated at a table and that the adult in authority must consume his liquor at the table.

Mr. Nalder: Does not that mean that an adult with two children in his care who is seated at a table could not go to the bar to purchase liquor and then return to the table to consume it?

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I am trying to create the situation where the licensee of large premises will be required to apply to the court and to say, "I have a garden area or lounge where there are tables and chairs and I will welcome children with their parents in that area, but not in the public bar." The Licensing Court may approve of that situation because it is different from the situation in a country area where there is only one bar—and it must be a public bar—with a couple of tables in the corner. We must have regard for that situation, and the Licensing Court should have the flexibility.

Mr. Bertram: Should not we give the court discretion to lay down guidelines as to what is acceptable, and also give it the guideline that the interests of the child should be paramount when making a determination? Could we not insert that?

Mr. T. D. EVANS: With all due respect, I cannot see the need for it. I propose to move that the following passage be inserted in lieu of the words deleted:—

which, on application which shall be made by the licensee in accordance with the rules, has been approved by the Court for the purposes of this subsection,

This is the general prohibition that applies to children being on licensed premises, and the effect of the amendment will be that the court will be able to lay down rules for areas where there are tables and other facilities for drinking.

Mr. W. G. Young: If in the event of parents, accompanied by children, entering a crowded lounge room where tables are provided, and no seating happens to be available, is it incumbent upon the licensee to refuse to serve them?

Mr. T. D. EVANS: It would be incumbent upon the licensee in that instance to use his common sense. We are trying to introduce some flexibility into the legislation.

Mr. W. G. Young: It would be reasonable for him to use his common sense.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: When we entered the recommittal stage of this Bill I did not think it would be possible to spend 40 minutes on this clause, because it is so simple. At the moment, in accordance with the Act, children can enter licensed premises. The Bill has attempted to rectify that by stating that people accompanied by children can only be served in an area where tables and other facilities are made available to serve liquor. Immediately a problem was raised by stating that there are very few areas in a hotel where liquor can be served at a table.

I now ask the Committee to forget what has happened and to look at what we are trying to do. We are saying to the licensee, "You must apply to the court to make available an area in which people accompanied by children can still consume liquor." The Licensing Court will then prescribe that the area is a reasonable one for children to enter. At this stage I take it that the Attorney-General is only foreshadowing the moving of his next amendment, but I support the deletion of the words as set out in his amendment which appears on page 11 of today's notice paper.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I move an amendment—

Page 16, line 35—Substitute the following for the words deleted:—which, on application which shall be made by the licensee in accordance with the rules, has been approved by the Court for the purposes of this subsection."

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: Having dealt with the principle of children being accompanied by their parents, I now wish to point out to the Attorney-General that the Licensing Court has taken a mammoth job on its own shoulders. I support this amendment only on the assurance of the Attorney-General that the court is quite happy to carry out this duty. I will now outline some of the risks associated with this task. We are now saying that the court will ask a licensee to apply for permission to serve liquor in an area such as the one prescribed, and it will be incumbent upon the court to look at possibly 1,000 applications for areas to be prescribed.

I accept the fact that these provisions in the Bill may be proclaimed at different times and therefore the Licensing Court will not have to perform this task all at once. However, I can visualise that when the job does fall on the court's shoulders it will have a very difficult time, but I am not going so far as to suggest that we should not accept the amendment because of that. I have some reservations about the amount of work the court will be called on to perform and whether it can cope with it. I therefore accept the amendment moved by the Attorney-General, subject to the warning I have issued.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as further amended, put and passed.

Bill again reported, with further amendments.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER ACT

Rules: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 12th September, on the following motion by Mr. J. T. Tonkin (Premier):—

That pursuant to section 12 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act, 1971, this House makes the following rules for the guidance of the Parliamentary Commissioner in the exercise of his functions—

1. These rules may be cited as the Parliamentary Commissioner's Rules, 1972.
2. In these rules, the term "the Act" means the Parliamentary Commissioner Act, 1971.
3. The Parliamentary Commissioner may from time to time, in the public interest or in the interests of any department, authority, organization, or person, publish reports relating generally to the exercise of his functions under the Act, or to any particular case or cases investigated by him,

whether or not the matters to be dealt with in any such report have been the subject of a report laid before either House of Parliament.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Leader of the Opposition) [5.28 p.m.]: The Premier, when introducing this motion for rules under the Parliamentary Commissioner Act, explained why he felt this particular rule was necessary. By way of interjection I asked him whether the question of *ultra vires* had been checked and he replied that so far as he could ascertain the legal advisers to the Government were of the opinion that the proposed rule would be within the scope of the Act.

We are at some disadvantage, because this motion was introduced only on Tuesday last and, try as hard as I will, I have not been able to get an opportunity to check up on our understanding of the rule as it would apply if it is introduced in its present form. However, from our superficial examination of the rule that we have been able to make since Tuesday, we believe that perhaps it goes beyond our original intention so far as the Parliamentary Commissioner is concerned.

I have, on one short look at the Act in its entirety, studied what is expressed in it. I started with section 12 which is the one quoted for the purpose of making this rule. We find this enables the Parliament under subsection (1) to make rules to guide the commissioner in the exercise of his functions. In subsection (2) of section 12 it is provided that the functions are to be exercised in accordance with the rules made in Parliament.

If we turn to section 28, which is rather important in this study of the rules now before us, we find this section empowers Parliament to authorise the commissioner to publish for certain purposes reports relating to his functions generally, or relating to any particular case investigated by him.

Section 23 provides that the information obtained by the commissioner in any investigation shall not be disclosed other than for proceedings except for the purposes of investigation; and, of course, for any recommendation and report under this Act. The main thing that follows is the provision with which I want to deal with some emphasis, because it refers to the disclosure of any information as a breach of secrecy under the Act.

Under section 15 reports by the commissioner to either House of Parliament are permitted. Under section 27 annual reports are to be made to Parliament; and under section 28 reports under the rules of Parliament are also permitted.

In framing these rules under section 12 of the Act there are a number of matters which we should bear in mind. The first is the secrecy provision affecting the commissioner; the second is the commissioner's powers to override the secrecy provisions and all other Acts, and that is set out in section 20 (2); the third is that the commissioner is immune from civil and criminal proceedings as set out in section 30; and the fourth is that the tenure of office of the commissioner, apart from the five-year term, is substantially the same as that applying to a judge.

The next point to be borne in mind is that the Parliamentary Commissioner is answerable only to both Houses of Parliament. Under the rules that are now proposed the following appears:—

3. The Parliamentary Commissioner may from time to time, in the public interest or in the interests of any department, authority, organization, or person, publish reports relating generally to the exercise of his functions under the Act, or to any particular case or cases investigated by him, whether or not the matters to be dealt with in any such report have been the subject of a report laid before either House of Parliament.

I gather that in the drafting of this rule the Parliamentary Draftsman endeavoured to go as close as he could to the wording in section 28. Members of the Opposition with whom I have conferred in the time available, as well as I, believe that just because the words are expressed in this way in section 28, it does not mean the rules themselves should be as broad as the particular rule that is written into part 3 of the motion before us.

My reasons for saying that are based on the following factors: It is my understanding that the Parliamentary Commissioner is essentially an officer of Parliament. This was the emphasis placed on his appointment, and there was good reason for that. Initially his main reporting function is not to the public but to Parliament, and this is spelt out in very clear terms. He is to submit annual reports which come before Parliament, and just as the reports of the Auditor-General are tabled in this Parliament so I presume the reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner on his work will also be tabled here. That is the first indication the public should have of the contents of such reports.

Now we turn to the situation as explained by the Premier, where the Parliamentary Commissioner, regardless of whether or not he has reported to Parliament, will be able under the rule I have mentioned virtually to enter into public controversy, correspondence, and debate on a particular case.

I do not think this was ever intended. I can see some irritation being caused where a disgruntled person puts up what is possibly a hopeless case and the Ombudsman rejects it. He rejects it after looking at it, and deciding the case is not one for him to deal with or is not genuine. He may then find this person rushing to the Press making all sorts of allegations against the department, against the Parliamentary Commissioner, and for that matter against other people. I do not believe it was ever intended that the Parliamentary Commissioner should be left free to enter into public debate and public argument even in defence of himself. I do suggest to the Premier that if his advisers look at this they will find, first of all, that the Act does not give us the power to make a rule quite in the form that is proposed.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Is it your idea that there should not be any rules at all?

Sir CHARLES COURT: There must be rules, but I do not think we should come down with a sweeping rule. I thought that when we were prescribing rules through Parliament we would have more detailed and comprehensive ones. That was my opinion and my understanding, but I am open to correction. I will not be dogmatic about this. My understanding was that as a Parliament, maybe through the appointment of a committee of both Houses, we would be able to confer with the commissioner to draw up a set of rules for his conduct; because essentially he is an officer of Parliament. To give him wide and sweeping authority to comment is to my mind to permit him to be involved unnecessarily in public argument. There are times when it will be to his own interests that he only presents annual reports to Parliament, and not become involved in a day-to-day slanging match.

I realise the Premier only intends the Parliamentary Commissioner to use his power with caution and with restraint, and when he feels that a special case has to be dealt with. I am putting forward this suggestion in the hope that before the matter is finally resolved—I have to be quite frank in saying that I have not had a chance to confer with all my colleagues at a proper meeting, and I have only conferred with some by way of a casual discussion—we may be able to prescribe in the rules some procedure whereby if the Parliamentary Commissioner feels it is in the interests of himself, of a department, or any person, for some public comment to be made ahead of his normal report to Parliament, he should be permitted to do so with the leave of the Speaker, the President, or both.

In those circumstances he could then proceed in the matter and make a report thereon. I understood the Premier to say that the power which is sought to be conferred under the rule appearing in the motion to which reference has been made will not only apply to the tabling of documents in Parliament, the reason being that Parliament may be out of session. He envisages a situation where the Parliamentary Commissioner in the period when Parliament is in recess is given the opportunity to defend himself against some person who makes unfair allegations and untrue statements.

I do believe—and this is the considered view of the few colleagues I have talked to since last Tuesday—that some restraint should be imposed. I can see the reason for not wanting to write into the Act a provision that the commissioner should be able to approach a Minister, because that would defeat the purpose of having a Parliamentary Commissioner. I do not know whether it would be advisable for the commissioner to have to obtain the leave of both the Speaker and the President, because it is possible that they will not be here at the same time, and even if they are they may not both be in agreement. However, I am prepared to suggest leave being obtained from the Speaker or the President, whoever is available at the time, for the purpose of clearing up a particular matter.

This could be done in a matter of minutes, and certainly not longer than a few hours; so there is some brake placed on the commissioner and we will not find him indulging in daily correspondence with the newspapers, or through the radio and television. To my mind it would embarrass him if he were free to do that sort of thing, because I am sure many people will seek ways to draw him into public controversy. In doing that they would weaken his position. I believe the secret to his success will be the reputation he develops with the public and with the departments.

If the departments realise that they can be as frank as frank with him, that he is fair and only wishes to get to the bottom of a particular situation, and that he will not be gullible to cranks and so on, he will build up a reputation with the departments on the one hand, and the public and the Press on the other.

For this reason I would like to feel we could, before this matter is finally resolved, give more consideration to ways by which we could make it easier for the commissioner to make his reports, but, at the same time, not give him a blank cheque. If we could get some satisfactory answer on that point, we would be more happy with the rule; but in its present form we are not very happy about it at all.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Harman.

ALUMINA REFINERY (MITCHELL PLATEAU) AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta—Minister for Development and Decentralisation) [5.42 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill before us is to ratify an agreement reached between the Government, the Amax Bauxite Corporation, and Alcoa of Australia Ltd. providing for a definite extension of time on the Mitchell Plateau project in lieu of the uncertain deferment provisions under the existing agreement, and also for the immediate expansion of alumina refinery capacity at Pinjarra.

The agreement was reached after a request from Amax for a definite "stay of proceedings" because of the economic impossibility of proceeding with the project at this stage.

The factors which have combined to preclude an early start on construction of the Mitchell Plateau project include the following:—

Firstly, the unsuccessful efforts of member companies of the development consortium to attract additional alumina consumers to the project, despite continuing strenuous efforts to achieve this end;

Secondly, the cyclic downward fluctuation in growth of world alumina consumption which has been a major contributing factor in the consortium's inability to attract further consumers; and

Thirdly, international currency value fluctuations which have combined to increase substantially the cost of establishing the Mitchell Plateau bauxite mining and alumina refining facilities.

The consortium has carried out a thorough re-estimation of capital and operating costs in the light of these factors, taking into account current alumina price levels, and has shown that at a capacity of 1,000,000 tons of alumina a year, the project is not viable. The scale of the project would have to be increased considerably to an output of at least 1,500,000 tons of alumina a year in order to become economically feasible. The member companies of the consortium financing this project did not originally envisage a project of this size.

As their current alumina needs fall far short of the 1,500,000 tons output necessary to ensure a viable project, there is no practical alternative to delaying a start of construction for a period until conditions change for the better.

The agreement reached with Amax, and incorporated in the Bill before us, is for a basic extension of time of eight years with provision for a further four years if this becomes necessary because of lack of secure marketing or financing arrangements at that time. The extension was agreed after taking into account known market factors and projections based on current conditions. However, it is possible that these conditions will change sooner than can currently be predicted.

For this reason, we have taken what steps it was possible to take at this time to ensure that construction of the project will begin as soon as is economically possible. I will deal with these provisions shortly.

In the meantime, while the projected development marks time, additional consumers who have taken care of their near-term requirements for alumina will be able to base their longer-term needs on the Kimberley project. This will help to increase the secure markets for initial capacity to a level sufficient to allow an economically viable operation to proceed.

Amax will review the status of the project annually with a view to starting construction as soon as economic and marketing conditions allow.

To this end the company has agreed to continue maintenance of all airport, road, and existing port facilities at Mitchell Plateau in order to facilitate continued examination of the bauxite deposits by potential participants in the project and to allow a rapid resumption of development as soon as this is possible.

The company has also agreed to accept a very considerably higher scale of leasing fees for the five temporary reserves from which the project will draw its bauxite. Further, these fees will rise on a sliding scale requiring higher payments each successive year until mining commences.

Under the provisions of the Bill before us the original total leasing fees of \$250 a year will be increased to \$5,000 a year for the first three years; and if the required development is unable to proceed by that time, to \$10,000 a year for the following three years, to \$15,000 a year to the end of the ninth year when an annual rental of \$25,000 will apply until the lease is issued and mining begins.

All of the provisions of this Bill have been made consequential upon Alcoa of Australia giving notice of its undertaking rapidly to increase capacity and output from its Pinjarra alumina refinery.

During the interim period of the Mitchell Plateau project, Amax will meet its shortfall in alumina requirements by purchasing additional amounts from Alcoa. This will provide employment for a construction work force building up to a total

of 1,000 men next year. Additional employment will be created for a further 250 men who will be required to expand the permanent work force at the Pinjarra refinery.

The Government is advised that Alcoa will make a start with the construction of its additional refinery capacity before the end of this year, building up to a full-scale construction programme during the following 12 months.

Alcoa will bring a second unit into production at Pinjarra increasing its annual capacity to 420,000 tons a year. Additionally, Alcoa will begin a two to three-year construction programme costing at least \$25,000,000 to increase the capacity of the refinery to a minimum of 800,000 tons a year.

This expansion would have been impossible at this stage had it not been for the additional alumina requirement of Amax following the decision to delay a start on the Mitchell Plateau project.

In essence, this agreement means that the Government has successfully negotiated additional development which will take place now, when there is an extreme need for major projects to go ahead to lift Western Australia out of its development pause.

The alternative course of action of holding the Mitchell Plateau consortium to a shorter development time-span would have been fraught with the likelihood of no development for a considerable period for either of the major projects I have mentioned.

Now, instead of two alumina projects facing difficult world price and demand situations, with both likely to defer expansion in the interim, this agreement has guaranteed that one project will go ahead quickly at Pinjarra, while the other at Mitchell Plateau has been given a chance to become even bigger than originally envisaged and on a time scale which is still within reason for a project worth \$350,000,000.

The Government's decision to negotiate a variation agreement to allow the original consortium to proceed at a later date with its development proposals was reached after taking account of the fact that member companies in this consortium have already spent \$7,600,000 on exploration, planning, and preliminary development.

This is an investment on which members of the consortium will want to see a beneficial return as soon as possible, and they can achieve this only by proceeding with the development. However, as a result of the development work and planning so far carried out by Amax and its partners, the original consortium is in the best position to proceed rapidly with the development once it becomes economic as a result of increased world demand for alumina.

It has become customary for us to comment on these proposals which have already been signed prior to their presentation to Parliament. This agreement, being an amendment of an existing agreement and not an entirely new one might be considered as a deferment of the commencement of the Amax alumina refinery. Of course, that is not necessarily so, although it appears that there is every likelihood of this at the present moment.

There is nothing in the proposal now presented to Parliament to prevent Amax from commencing operations next year, or in two or three years' time. All that the company sought, after its survey of the world situation—and knowing that it required additional supplies of alumina—was that it should be able to enter into an agreement with another refinery; because it would be impossible for the company to outlay the tremendous capital investment to produce the comparatively small amount of alumina for which it has need at the present time.

I would point out that there is nothing to prevent Amax from purchasing its requirements from any one of several different places outside of Australia if it decided to leave Western Australia and not to continue with the Kimberley proposition. Therefore, we are fortunate that the company was here in Western Australia with a commitment set out in the agreement passed earlier. That agreement gave the company an interest in Western Australia, and the company was anxious to remain here and show its bona fides. Because of that we have been able to negotiate an agreement under which the refinery at Pinjarra will be given the opportunity to proceed with what could be a full expansion of the industrial establishment at that location.

The Alcoa refinery at Pinjarra had ambitious plans of its own but the company found it necessary to postpone certain additions to its refinery and to work only one-half of the plant which had already been completed. Therefore, I think we are very fortunate that it has been possible to bring these two giants—Alcoa and Amax—together with advantage to Western Australia in the difficult international situation which exists at the present time. This applies more particularly because of the impact the agreement will have upon the economy of Western Australia. As already outlined, work will be available on the site for approximately 1,000 workmen. Of course, many hundreds more—perhaps 500—will be employed in fabricating and servicing those working on the site.

I am certain that the announcement made recently, accompanied by the signing of the amended agreement between the Amax company and the Premier on behalf of the State, was welcomed in very many quarters—not only by workmen

who are experiencing employment difficulties, but also industrial establishments which are not having as flush a time at present as they would wish.

Arising out of the unfortunate international situation it has been possible to do something, at very short notice, of great advantage to our State at a time when it badly needs some impetus along these lines.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 19th September, 1972

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Report of Superintendent Monck: Tabling

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [4.32 p.m.]: I desire to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the general report of the Superintendent of Traffic, Mr. Monck, on his overseas visit this year. A copy will also be available to each member of the Parliament.

The general and principal recommendations arising from this report are being evaluated and will be announced at the appropriate time.

The report was tabled.

AGE OF MAJORITY BILL

Assent

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

TRADES HALL BUILDING PROJECT

Government Guarantee

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Leader of the House:

With reference to my questions last week on the matter of a Government Guarantee to Trades Hall Inc., and also my remarks made on the motion moved by the Leader of the House on the adjournment of the House, on Wednesday last, the 13th September—

(a) will the Minister please advise the House whether, in accordance with the request made of the Minister by me, he has had discussions with