

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 2nd October, 1979

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

THE LATE LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN

Condolence: Acknowledgment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I have received the following letter from the Official Secretary to His Excellency the Governor—

As you are aware, the text of the resolution of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly was passed to Her Majesty The Queen by His Excellency on 30th August, 1979.

You will wish to know that His Excellency has now received the following reply from the Private Secretary to Her Majesty:

"Thank you for your letter of 30th August about Lord Mountbatten which I have laid before The Queen. I should be grateful if you would inform the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia that their kind message of sympathy was much appreciated by The Queen. Lord Mountbatten was indeed a great man and his funeral in London yesterday was an historic occasion and a fitting tribute to one who had served the Commonwealth and indeed the whole free world so well."

WATER SUPPLIES: BORES

Thornlie: Petition

MR BATEMAN (Canning) [4.33 p.m.]: I have a petition addressed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It states—

We, the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will urgently support an appeal from the ratepayers in the City of Gosnells, who are most concerned about the continual use of some wells in the district of Thornlie, where chemicals were discharged into a stream below a chemical factory some years ago. They are also most concerned that fumes, vapours, gases and smells which are

intolerable, are affecting eyes and throats, together with the smell of fumes which remain stagnant after entering their homes.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 47 signatures and I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

See petition No. 94.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Tabling

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I have for tabling the report of the Auditor General for the year 1978-79.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 361).

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report: Tabling

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I have for tabling also the report of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee relating to amendments to Education Act regulations.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 362).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

BILLS (2): ASSENT

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

1. Wildlife Conservation Act Amendment Bill.
2. Police Act Amendment Bill.

HONEY POOL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Carr, and read a first time.

PENSIONERS (RATES REBATES AND DEFERMENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[5.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The amendments proposed by this Bill are aimed at—

- (1) providing for the granting of rate concessions from the 1st July, 1979, to pensioners who at present are ineligible for the concessions, because they own their properties under "purple title";
- (2) increasing the level of the rate rebate from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, as from the 1st July next year; and
- (3) clarifying that, in view of proposed changes to the various water supply Acts in regard to tax deductibility of rates, the pensioner rate concessions continue on the basis previously intended and do not apply to water consumed beyond allowance.

As members are aware, under the provisions of the existing legislation, pensioners owning property under "purple title" are excluded from entitlement to rate concessions if the other occupiers or owners of the property are neither eligible pensioners nor dependants.

It has always been the Government's desire to extend the concessions to pensioners in this category, but the nature of the title itself has been an impediment to this intention.

A "purple title" is a title under which land is owned by persons as tenants in common of undivided shares and it is this "undivided" aspect that presents problems in the operation of the concessions scheme.

Firstly, there are difficulties for rating authorities in assessing the proportion of rates attributable to a pensioner from within a rate levied on the property as a whole. Such assessment is particularly difficult for authorities rating on the unimproved land value.

The second major problem is that as the shares are undivided, rates deferred under the concessions scheme represent a liability on the property as a whole and therefore on all other owners.

Given the inherent practical difficulties associated with "purple titles", it has not been an easy task to find a legislative solution to these problems. However, I believe that in the amendments proposed by this Bill, the Government has gone as far as legally possible to

allow the rate concessions to be granted to the pensioners concerned.

The granting of a rebate or deferment of rates is provided for by a proposed addition to section 4(3)(b) of the Act, which makes a special exemption for "purple title" holders and ensures that the concession relates only to the portion of the land occupied by the pensioner.

The matter of residual liability for rates deferred on a "purple title" is covered by a proposed new section 4(5), which provides that the liability for rates so deferred attaches only to that portion of the land on which deferment was allowed.

However, I must point out that even with these proposed amendments to the Act, there will be limitations in the application of the scheme, whereby the concessions may not be universally nor consistently granted.

It is important to recognise that the apportionment of shares in a "purple title" arrangement can be rather complex and that a person's share in a title may bear no relation to the particular dwelling unit he or she occupies.

For example, a person could own a one-third undivided share in land on which eight units are built, but occupy only one unit. The units could vary in size and quality and this could lead to further difficulty in linking a rate liability to a particular unit.

I expect the majority of cases to which the amendments relate will involve pensioners owning property under less complex arrangements, such as duplexes. However, it must be emphasised that in some instances rating authorities will experience difficulty in issuing or find it impossible to issue, an assessment on a unit to which a concession can be applied.

It is therefore envisaged that in the practical application of the proposed amendments, some authorities may not be able to comply with the Government's intentions and the approach of others regarding apportionment may lead to inconsistencies in the scheme.

But, there is a limit to how far one can go in legislation to cover all contingencies and in the complex matter of "purple titles" shortcomings must be accepted if the interests of most pensioners are to be served.

Mr Davies: Will this apply to the current rating year?

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is dated back to the 1st July; we gave that undertaking. Incidentally, we gave instructions that no-one with a "purple title" was to be pressed in regard

to the payment of water rates until the legislation was passed.

In my recent Budget speech, I announced the Government's intention to increase the rate rebate for pensioners from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, with the increase to apply from the 1st July, 1980. This substantial lift in the benefit to pensioners is provided for by a proposed amendment to section 4(1) of the principal Act.

It has been past practice for local authorities and the country water boards to be reimbursed by the State in respect of rate rebates granted to pensioners and to be financially assisted in respect of rate deferments. With the introduction of the increased level of rebate from next financial year, the Government has decided also to assist the Metropolitan Water Board in meeting the cost of the rate concessions. As from the 1st July, 1980, the State will share the cost of rebates allowed to pensioners on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the board, but the board will continue to bear the full cost of deferment of rates.

It is estimated that the total additional cost to Consolidated Revenue of the increased rebate in 1980-81 will be \$1.85 million, being \$1.1 million in payments to those authorities now subject to reimbursement and \$750 000 in recoups to the Metropolitan Water Board.

The final measure proposed by this Bill is consequential to amendments proposed to the water supplies Acts, through Bills which I will be introducing later this evening.

The changes proposed for the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act, the Country Areas Water Supply Act, and the Water Boards Act, are aimed at enabling all water charges paid on residential properties to be deductible for income tax purposes.

In brief, the respective Bills propose to achieve this aim by redefining the water rate as the sum of the present basic water rate and the charge for water used.

Unless specific provision was otherwise made, the effect of these amendments would be to allow rebates or deferments to pensioners in respect of all water charges.

However, such an effect would be contrary to the well-established principles on which the pensioners' rate scheme is based; namely, that the concessions should apply only to the rate component of charges. In this regard, charges for specific services provided such as garbage collection and excess water have always been excluded from the concessions.

To allow such an eventuality would also be in direct conflict with principles of the current pay-for-use water charge scheme, which was introduced specifically to promote the efficient management of water consumption. The provision of what in effect would be a discount on water consumed by a significant sector of the community would defeat that objective.

Therefore, to ensure conformity with these valid principles, the Bill before the House proposes an amendment to section 4(1) of the Act to exclude from pensioner rate concessions payments for water consumed beyond allowance; in other words to retain the current situation because of the position brought about by the changed definition.

I commend the Bill to the house, and I will be proceeding with some other Bills which will give effect to the consequential amendments necessary in three other Acts.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition).

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[5.29 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill now before the House is to enable all water charges paid in respect of residential properties to qualify for rebate for income tax purposes.

Before the pay-for-use method was introduced by the present Government in July, 1978, water rates for residential properties, as well as sewerage and drainage rates, qualified for rebate under the provisions of Federal income tax legislation, but charges paid for water used beyond allowance did not so qualify.

The pay for use system is based on a shift in emphasis in the overall cost structure from the water rate portion to the charge-for-usage portion.

As a consequence, some domestic consumers could possibly be disadvantaged by a reduction in their tax rebate in comparison with the past. Of course, this applies only to those taxpayers whose concessional expenditure exceeds the standard rebate amount granted by the taxing authority.

It is proposed, therefore, to amend the present Act to meet the requirements of income tax law in regard to the rebate.

The Bill ensures that the rate is one item only for this purpose. In other words, it shows that the charge for service and the charge for water usage, which are separately identified in the present Act, are components of, and constitute, the whole rate.

The advice of the Commissioner of Taxation was sought in this matter. Although it will be appreciated the commissioner cannot be bound either by actions of the State or by rulings given in advance, it is believed that the Bill adequately covers requirements. It applies to all the alternative bases for fixing charges as are contained in the principal Act.

The amendment will be retro-active to the 1st July, 1979, to ensure that the already assessed annual rate is based upon a composite calculation and that qualification for rebate may apply to the income year ending the 30th June, 1980.

To reiterate, the object of this Bill is to ensure full taxation rebate to those income earners affected.

As mentioned previously during the introduction of the Pensioners (Rates Rebates and Deferments) Act Amendment Bill, action has been taken to ensure that pensioners are not able to claim deferment or rebate on that part of the rate which applies to water consumed above the allowance.

Similar amending legislation follows to ensure the same provisions apply to taxpayers in country areas served under the Country Areas Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition).

COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[5.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill to amend the Country Areas Water Supply Act is the second of three Bills seeking to give effect to the Government's wish to enable all water charges paid in respect of residential properties to qualify for rebate for income tax purposes.

At present, domestic consumers supplied with water by the Public Works Department pay for each kilolitre used. This charge, because it is not a rate, in the past has not been a taxation deduction.

The principal clause of the Bill to amend the Country Areas Water Supply Act is that numbered 3. This provides that the water rate payable in respect of ratable land is to be assessed as the sum of the basic water rate, which is the present rate, plus the charge for water used.

The balance of the amendments are machinery ones designed to give effect to this concept.

The draft has been discussed with the Taxation Department and the opinion has been expressed that any payments made under this Act as amended should qualify for rebate for income tax purposes.

I should add the same qualification as I did in respect of the previous Bill, because it is a well-known position that the Taxation Department is not bound by actions of the State or by opinions given prior to a particular action by a taxpayer.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition).

WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[5.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill to amend the Water Boards Act is the last of three Bills seeking to give effect to the Government's wish to enable all water charges paid in respect of residential properties to qualify for rebate for income tax purposes.

At present domestic consumers supplied with water by the various water boards constituted under the Water Boards Act receive a water allowance for rates, but consumption in excess of this allowance is chargeable.

This charge, because it is not a rate in the past has not been a taxation deduction.

Clause 3 of this Bill seeks to give effect to the principle that consumers may obtain a taxation rebate.

As with the previously introduced Bills, the water rate becomes the sum of the basic rate, plus the amount paid for water used.

This Bill seeks to extend the concept outlined in the explanation of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill (No. 3) to those consumers served by the various water boards in country areas.

Again, the draft has been discussed with the Taxation Department and the opinion has been expressed that any payments made under this

Act, as amended, should qualify for rebate for income tax purposes.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition).

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [5.36 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This is a Bill cited as the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act, 1979.

The introduction of the proposed legislation springs from a decision on the 5th June, 1979, of the Western Australian Industrial Appeal Court.

The subject matter of that case was an appeal by the University of Western Australia against the jurisdiction of the Western Australian Industrial Commission to issue an industrial award to cover academic staff of the University of Western Australia. The appeal was successful.

The Crown intervened in the public interest in the Industrial Appeal Court case in support of the argument that the Industrial Commission should not have jurisdiction over tertiary academic staff.

In coming to its conclusions the Industrial Appeal Court's decision made reference to other areas of employment which had, in the past, been assumed to come within the jurisdiction of the Western Australian Industrial Commission, but the findings of the court cast grave doubts on the commission's jurisdiction over employees such as police officers, firemen and others.

The Government decided there was a need to make appropriate amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act to clarify the commission's jurisdiction.

The effect of the Industrial Appeal Court decision that the academic staff of the WA University are not within the Industrial Commission's jurisdiction applies also to academic staff of Murdoch University, the WA Institute of Technology and teachers colleges established under the Colleges Act, 1978.

The Crown's intervention in the appeal case being successful in confirming that the Industrial Commission does not have jurisdiction over the academic staff of the University of WA persuaded the Government that it must take a consistent approach with academic staff of other institutions of advanced education by also confirming the exclusion of Murdoch University,

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the Institute of Technology and the teachers colleges from the commission's jurisdiction.

The staff association representing the academic staff of the Institute of Technology and the teachers colleges was registered by the Industrial Commission in 1974 and subsequently industrial awards were issued.

The jurisdiction of the commission was not tested at the time as it was assumed such jurisdiction existed.

The Industrial Appeal Court decision now confirms that the commission did not have jurisdiction to register the association or issue the awards.

It follows, therefore, that the Government must take a consistent approach for all academic staff of the institutions of advanced education.

It is of the utmost importance to refer to a tribunal established under the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunals Act; namely, the Academic Salaries Tribunal.

This tribunal fixes or determines the salaries of academic staff of tertiary education established by Commonwealth laws. The tribunal also inquires into and reports to the Commonwealth Minister on the rates of salaries in relation to the academic staff of tertiary education in the States that should be used as the basis for Commonwealth grants in funding those institutions which in fact are totally funded by the Commonwealth.

The salaries of the academic staff of the University of WA, Murdoch University, the Institute of Technology and the teachers colleges are reviewed at the appropriate intervals by the Academic Salaries Tribunal for the purpose of informing the Commonwealth Government the levels of salaries which are equitable and for which the Commonwealth Government should fund.

It is appropriate that the Academic Salaries Tribunal's recommendations on academic salaries for Commonwealth Government funding should be applied to the institutions in Western Australia.

If salaries are determined by another tribunal at greater levels than those assessed by the Academic Salaries Tribunal and those higher salaries are applied to the academic staff, difficulties could arise in the funding of the difference.

The Academic Salaries Tribunal should be the umpire for the Western Australian institutions as it is for other States.

The amending Bill, therefore, will exclude from the jurisdiction of the Western Australian Industrial Commission the academic staff of the universities and the other institutions of advanced education.

The amending Bill will clarify and confirm the Industrial Commission's jurisdiction over other areas of the work force which would otherwise be excluded within the meaning of the decision of the appeal court; for example, police, firemen, and prison officers.

Some members might wonder why the Government is introducing this legislation when it has foreshadowed that later in the session it will introduce a totally new Industrial Arbitration Act. The reason is that organisations representing members of the Police Force and firemen wish to put certain matters before the Industrial Commission, and doubt exists as to whether those matters can be heard at this stage. We do not want to delay these matters unduly.

Mr Skidmore: What about the industrial conditions under the award?

Mr O'CONNOR: Although the legislation explains that the tribunal will cover the awards, I have had discussions with the Minister for Education who has given an undertaking that the conditions of employment will be set by a further tribunal. Discussions already have been held between representatives of the academic organisations and the board which is likely to handle this matter. Therefore, conditions such as sick leave, etc., will be handled by a separate tribunal. I have an undertaking from the Minister for Education to this effect; in fact, he has started work in this regard.

With regard to these employees the amendments will validate any act, matter or thing done with respect to which provision is made under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1977 prior to the coming into operation of the amendments, which would have been lawful had these amendments been in force at the time such matters or things were done.

If also has been decided that the legislation should specifically exclude the commission's jurisdiction over people in occupations for which the remuneration payable is determined or recommended by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal established pursuant to the WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Act.

Certain workers at Parliament House and on the Governor's establishment will not come within the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission.

These employees have customarily received the same rates of pay and conditions of employment

as their counterparts elsewhere in Government employment and receive any changes to those conditions from the same time and in the same terms as their counterparts.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin.

ACTS AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (DISQUALIFICATION FOR PARLIAMENT) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier), read a first time.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

In Committee

Resumed from the 20th September. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 13: Section 95 amended—

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the clause after the member for Morley had moved the following amendment—

Page 8, line 5—Insert after the word "vote" the passage "except as provided for in section 90 of this Act".

Point of Order

Mr BRYCE: Mr Chairman, could you inform the Committee just exactly what the state of play is with respect to how many members have exercised their options to speak?

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 13 is before the Chair and we have an amendment moved by the member for Morley. He has spoken once to the amendment and no other member has spoken.

Committee Resumed

Mr O'NEIL: It was fairly late on the 20th September that the member for Morley moved his amendment to clause 13 of the Bill. Prior to that, debate had ensued and in the early hours of the morning of the 19th I reported progress on this very clause when undertaking to have the questions raised by members researched. This I did at some length and I explained to the Committee that I had been persuaded by my research and advice that it was not necessary to amend this particular provision. I indicated quite clearly that it existed in the majority of the electoral laws of all the mainland States of

Australia as well as the Commonwealth. I quoted fairly widely from speeches made and recorded in the Commonwealth *Hansard* on an amendment moved by the Hon. Victor Johnson who was then Minister in charge of the Electoral Act in the Commonwealth.

I gather that my explanations and decision did not persuade certain members of the Committee to change minds and as a result of that the member for Morley proposed to amend the clause. I point out that I am satisfied that the proposal in the Bill does not contain the dangers the member suggests it might and therefore I oppose the amendment.

Mr TONKIN: I can never work out this Government. It says it does not believe in centralism; it says it does not believe in only one Government for Australia; it says it does not believe in only one Parliament or in only one set of laws, yet the only reason given for continuing with this absurd provision which provides that someone who persuades a person to comply with the Act is guilty of an offence, is that it is also an absurd provision in the Commonwealth Act and in Acts of the other States.

We submit that this explanation is pathetic. If the Deputy Premier were saying, "Let us be uniform in our electoral laws" we might agree, but by this Bill he is putting back for a very long time the possibility of having joint Commonwealth and State rolls, a step which other more progressive States have taken. So he speaks with a forked tongue. On the one hand he says, "Let's do what the Commonwealth does", but he then indicates that Western Australians are not to be trusted in the same way as are other citizens of the Commonwealth. The Deputy Premier has said we must have justices of the peace and similar people witnessing Western Australians' enrolment claim cards. It is amazing to me to see just how nimble the Deputy Premier's footwork is; looking at him I would not expect it. He seems adept at spinning around on a one cent piece, on the one hand saying, "Let us not have Commonwealth legislation; let us not have joint rolls; let us have different requirements for filling in claim cards", while on the other hand, in an attempt to justify this, he says, "The Commonwealth is being absurd, so let us be absurd together."

The Opposition cannot agree to this, and that is why I put forward an amendment. The amendment says that only if a person is persuading someone to have a postal vote to which he is not entitled pursuant to section 90 should he be prosecuted. He should not be prosecuted for

persuading someone to comply with the law. This is the provision being inserted by the Government and we do not agree with it.

Mr BERTRAM: The law on this particular question as it now is, as admitted by the Deputy Premier, was conceived in error. It became law as a result of outright stupidity and neglect and it has remained the law because it has been ignored and has never been enforced anywhere in Australia. Now the Deputy Premier wants to perpetuate that utter and unmitigated shambles.

Mr Tonkin: It is incredible.

Mr BERTRAM: Every member over there sitting behind the Deputy Premier—that is to say, all those who are not too dull and not those who are not taking an interest in the debate because they know they have the numbers—knows that what I have said is accurate. The Deputy Premier, using the words of politicians and lawyers, said he had given an explanation—he did not. To give him the best of the argument, he gave an explanation which amounted to a confession of error; a confession of guilt so far as the Government is concerned, because the Government knows that the amendment being advanced by the member for Morley is proper.

The Government also knows that the present law on this question is an unmitigated disgrace. That is unquestionable. The law which is there, which is not being enforced and which will never be enforced and is sitting there because of the weight of numbers, is there because the Government is saying to the people of Western Australia, "We are going to do this to you whether or not you like it." This is the Government's very familiar "Joe Blow" attitude; where it adopts a certain attitude through its propaganda to the people outside and, then, suffering from amnesia, forgets it is in a different forum when it comes here and states this sort of thing to the people in Opposition, and to some members of the Government, who have read the section of the Act and have read the clause and know the Government's position on this matter is thoroughly untenable.

The extraordinary thing about this Committee is that we go to all sorts of lengths here to cause the public and ourselves to believe that everything in this Chamber is regular; that each member of this Committee must be given so many opportunities to speak, that everyone has to be given an absolutely fair go; yet the real purpose for which we are here—namely, for the making of decent and reasonably sane laws—just does not get a chance at all.

This is not a reasonable or sane law and the Deputy Premier knows that. He has been in this place much longer than I have and he is perhaps the best Minister the Government has; that is why he has been put in this position.

Mr Carr: That is not saying much.

Mr BERTRAM: I am indebted to the member for Geraldton for what must be considered one of the best interjections I have heard for a long time. His interjection had the virtue of being thoroughly accurate.

Mr Acting Chairman (Mr Blaikie) you can see what a bunch of hypocrites we are to allow this to happen. Unfortunately that includes you, because you are a member of the Government and for anyone to sit here and allow all of this paraphernalia and procedure and apparent regularity and unmitigated humbug to continue while taking absolutely no notice of what has been said, is extraordinary.

Oh that the electors of this State would come in and watch this sort of performance! That is what I wish would happen. How many people in this State—the ordinary people outside to whom the Premier refers as Joe Blows, which is another way of saying “nitwits”—know that the Committee carries on in this manner? How often does the media tell the people that this is what goes on? I do not know how often the reporters endeavour to get the communication over; but I rarely see in the papers that this precise sort of situation we have here this evening is communicated to the people.

One of the most significant reasons for this sort of humbug to go on in this place is that the Government has, by drawing crooked lines from time to time in this Parliament in respect of electoral laws, worked itself into a position where it can do what it likes; and boy oh boy, does it do it! A former Premier (Mr J. T. Tonkin) often said so correctly that the merits of arguments are completely irrelevant; it is numbers that matter.

I find it extraordinarily difficult to see the common sense or anything approaching honesty in this rigmarole where we go through the strict observance of rules and regulations upon which the Committee will operate. When it becomes abundantly clear that something is going on by way of legislation which is absolutely exceptional, improper, incorrect, and stupid—I find it difficult to find words adequately to describe it—and everyone knows that is the case, nothing is done about it.

As I have pointed out before, the Government has but one interest in mind—the obtaining of power, which it has done, and the maintenance of

power. It is not at all concerned about whether or not it should have to run the gauntlet of a few hours of bombardment by speeches from the Opposition or anyone else. After all, what does it really matter; the people do not know. The media does not tell the people so Government members just sit there and allow the time to run by, even if it takes three or four more days of debate in this place. The Government knows this Bill will become law and that is all it is concerned about. It is not likely that the media will inform the people of the position here. If they do it will be a departure from the norm.

If I remember rightly, the Minister said a few weeks ago that an oracle had told him that to accept the member for Morley's amendment would throw this legislation awry. For example, difficulties could be created by people who were about to travel. They could, as a result of this amendment, make mischief with respect to their application for a postal vote. Ordinarily in any other reasonable forum or in respect of any reasonable person, the baby is not thrown out with the bath water. Therefore, if the member for Morley's amendment creates a difficulty in another direction then what we ought to be doing is making good that other area with a short, sweet and simple amendment.

Ordinarily one looks for the balance in any question with regard to the advantages to flow from it and if there is some disadvantage it is corrected by amendment. That is fairly simple. The law, as it is and as it has been for years, has been nonsensical. Therefore we now have an opportunity to do something about this legislation and this particular section. The Government introduced this Bill, not the Opposition, and the Opposition when reading it says it is nonsense. For example, if a husband arranges a postal vote for his wife who will be absent on polling day he is then committing an offence under this Act, and also under this clause as it is proposed. He is committing an offence if he is doing the only decent thing he could do in a certain circumstance. A person would be committing an offence if he did the same for his mother, sister, brother, or grandmother. So, it goes on, and on, and on.

Similarly, if a person reminds his neighbour, who may be ill or incapacitated, that if he wishes to vote the only way is by postal vote then he, too, is liable to prosecution. Just how crazy can it be? This sort of legislation indicates to the people of this State the calibre of this Government. This Government is not prepared to do anything, irrespective of the opposition and the meritorious argument advanced by the Labor Party. It is a

clear indication to the people of Western Australia of just what they can expect in the future from a Government of this sort. It is lacking calibre and confidence. It wants to draw up electoral laws and it does not matter how crook they are the Government knows it will still win. This should be a reminder to the people of the lengths to which this Government will go, and it should also be a reminder to the people at the next general election. However, if the people are prepared to cop this sort of measure, this present attitude being displayed by the Government in respect of this clause, they deserve the consequences which will flow from it.

Unfortunately, the Government knows that the people are not aware of the dimensions of this monstrosity. The Government is prepared to go ahead with it. The obvious action here would be to amend this clause in the manner proposed and if there is need for change it is not beyond the wit of the Deputy Premier and his supporters to bring forth additional amendments. There is obvious need for this action. It should not be left in its present state.

Mr BRYCE: Members on this side of the Chamber have attempted to explain to the Deputy Premier that the wording in this clause is quite inappropriate, unnecessary, and in fact in some ways quite dangerous when we consider we are legislating for the future. The Opposition has tried by reason, and by virtue of gentle persuasion but it appears it is now time to be fairly blunt with the Deputy Premier and tell him that this particular clause is downright stupid.

The clause is crazy. It says, literally, that if any person influences another person to have a postal vote, that person commits an offence under the terms of the Electoral Act.

The member for Morley has demonstrated to the Chamber in many different ways that at every election members of Parliament and countless members of political parties and their supporters, advise and influence people's decisions in relation to postal voting. By writing this amendment into the Electoral Act, the Minister is giving the courts the power to interpret a situation literally. This could cause confusion and chaos after the next State election. In recent times we have seen the situation in which the Liberal Party, with the funds at its disposal, employs an army of solicitors to seek out the provisions of the Electoral Act which will suit its purpose best and it is obvious it will screw the literal interpretation out of any section of this Act to achieve its ends.

The net effect of the clause is, if any person influences another individual to have a postal vote

in this State, that person commits an offence in respect of section 95 of the Act. He can be fined an amount up to \$200 or imprisoned for a period of up to three months.

The member for Morley has suggested a sensible course of action to the Committee. We are fully aware that the Chief Electoral Officer recommended this particular course of action to Judge Kay when he reviewed the Act. The Chief Electoral Officer did not say to Judge Kay, "Here is a long list of abuses. Here are the specific circumstances. Here are the examples of how people have acted wrongly; therefore, it is necessary to tighten up this Act in this particular way." The sole explanation made by the Chief Electoral Officer to Judge Kay was that this particular provision appears in the Electoral Acts of the other States and the Commonwealth.

I have suggested to the Committee already that, by virtue of the heat that any debate on the Electoral Act of the various Parliaments generates, this particular piece of legislation is infrequently reformed or brought to the Chamber for improvement; but every politician in Australia knows that Electoral Acts passed by all the Parliaments contain provisions which are old, outmoded, and have not been acted upon. Therefore, why in God's name do we bring an amendment to this place now and say that the only reason for amending the Act is that the other States of Australia and the Commonwealth, in some instances, have had this provision for 30 years?

Gone are the days when we can afford to be unduly sloppy in this place and we cannot now insert clauses in a Bill, knowing that the actual interpretation of those clauses is wide enough to drive a dozen bulldozers through. If members of the Committee have overlooked the point, I ask them to consider the literal interpretation of the following words—

A person shall not persuade or induce, or associate with any other person in persuading or inducing, an elector to make application for a postal vote.

It is very straightforward if taken literally. No person has the right to influence another to have a postal vote. However, every member of the Committee knows that, at every conceivable election, we who, as members of Parliament, are candidates, our opponents who are candidates, and many of their supporters are asked deliberate and direct questions about postal votes. Should anyone answer the questions by saying, "Yes, you should have a postal vote. This is how you go about it and this is why you should, in your

circumstances, have one", havoc could be caused after the next election. This is the reason that I say it is stupid to write this provision into the Act at this stage.

Mr Stephens: Do you feel there is any ulterior motive?

Mr BRYCE: Perhaps the members of the National Party might like to elaborate on that and indicate it is possible; but, on the basis of common sense and experience during many elections, I cannot see that this particular provision will be anything more than a time bomb which is designed to cause trouble. The Minister is one of the most experienced members in the Chamber, and he knows full well that, if the literal interpretation is placed on these words, the legal eagles will have a birthday.

The member for Morley has suggested a sensible course. By virtue of his amendment he is saying that, as we are accustomed to allowing people to have postal votes under certain circumstances at the present time, this particular provision of the Act should allow the status quo to be maintained. The member for Morley is saying we should not have open slather and it is conceivable that the practice of people exercising a postal vote could be abused. He has conceded that, but in his amendment he is saying to the Chamber that if somebody believes he is going to be more than five miles from the nearest polling booth during the hours of polling day; if a person believes he is going to be travelling under conditions which will prevent him from getting to any polling booth; if a person is seriously ill or infirm; or if a person is precluded from voting on a particular polling day by virtue of his religious beliefs, he should be able to exercise a postal vote.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr BRYCE: Prior to the tea suspension I was imploring members of the Committee to recognise the good sense and logic contained in the amendment moved by the member for Morley. The Deputy Premier, as the Minister in charge of the Bill, has not up to this stage given us one identifiable, solid reason for incorporating this particular provision in the Electoral Act. It can be imagined how shocked I was when during the tea suspension someone suggested to me it is possible this provision is being written into the legislation to provide a form of protection for the member for Kimberley. That was seriously suggested. I can only assume that is complete scuttlebutt. It could not be true that the Government would amend legislation which will affect the entire State—every one of the 55 constituencies in the Legislative Assembly and every one of the 16

provinces in the upper House—merely for the purpose of building a wall of protection around the member for Kimberley.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member in making that point to relate it to the amendment.

Mr BRYCE: Assuredly. The amendment before the Chair is based on a very sound argument by the member for Morley that whereas it may be possible for the postal voting system to be abused, the Chief Electoral Officer of this State has never in a public sense submitted one skerrick of evidence to Judge Kay or to the Government, to the best of our knowledge, to suggest that this section of the Act has ever been abused. Yet we find that because the Commonwealth wrote this provision into an Act 30 years ago—and it has never been enforced by the Commonwealth because no-one would be so stupid—the Minister says in this Chamber there is valid reason for proceeding on this basis; but he fails to give us the reason. I would like the Minister to indicate to us whether he has recognised a specific set of circumstances which justifies the inclusion of this particular provision.

Mr O'Neil: I did a lot of research on this two weeks ago and explained it very carefully and at great length to the Committee. I do not propose to do it again.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister's explanation to this Committee a fortnight ago comprised a litany of extracts from Federal *Hansard*, in which we recognised the names of various previous great statesmen who made comments from both sides of the House. Not one skerrick of good sense or logic was advanced to support the inclusion of this provision in the Electoral Act. During the course of reading those statements—I would not venture to suggest they comprised a justification or an explanation—the Deputy Premier suggested the Government was including the provision because Judge Kay recommended it.

All we are asking for is some reasonable justification for its inclusion, and all we can get from the Minister is a statement that it was incorporated in Commonwealth law by the Federal Parliament 30 years ago and in the law of various other States approximately 30 years ago, and Judge Kay said he thought it would be a good idea. But Judge Kay did not have the intellectual depth to justify his finding by explaining in his report precisely why he thought it was warranted. So we see the Minister sitting here shrugging off the perfectly straightforward, valid criticism from people who are looking for a decent explanation as to the need for the provision.

Mr Rushton: The Deputy Premier is a very capable man.

Mr BRYCE: The Deputy Premier is particularly adept at pulling the wool over the eyes of the people outside this place. He is doing a fine job. We place it on record that we will not have a bar of this provision. We have asked the Deputy Premier to see reason; he refuses to see reason. We have asked him to give us an explanation; he cannot give us an explanation. So we suggest, through you, Mr Chairman, that the sensible course of action for this Committee to adopt is to support the amendment moved by the member for Morley, who recognises that abuses could take place, but in the terms of his amendment has suggested to the Committee that in respect of five specific provisions already contained in the Act people ought to be able to persuade or influence others to exercise their right to a postal vote. The provision the Minister is putting to the Committee is simply not justified.

Mr COWAN: The National Party supports the amendment moved by the member for Morley. It is a logical amendment because, when we look at the clause as it stands, there is no question about the Government's intention. Its intention is to make it unlawful for any person to persuade or induce anybody else to make application for a postal vote.

Some members on the Opposition benches queried the meaning of the clause. As far as I am concerned, the meaning is clear; it means exactly what it says. Nobody will be able to persuade any person to make application for a postal vote. In that situation, the Government will then be able to indicate whom it wants to prosecute in the event of this offence being committed, because the law is precise that the Government can dictate whom it shall prosecute. It will purely and simply cater for a situation where party organisers who go out into the field and induce people to make application for a postal vote can be prosecuted.

I am quite sure nobody who in the course of his political duties advises someone to make application for a postal vote will find himself being prosecuted, but certainly those who work for political parties are likely to find themselves in a position where they will be prosecuted. In order to be able to do that the Government must make the law precise, covering everybody, so that it can then use its discretion as to whom it will prosecute.

The amendment moved by the member for Morley changes the entire nature of the clause. It allows any person to determine whether or not another person is eligible for a postal vote, and

then to encourage that person to make application for one. I see that as being a very necessary amendment to this clause, because as it stands now every person in the State of Western Australia who is involved in politics could be prosecuted under this legislation. We know that will not happen but I will bet London to a brick on that any political party organiser who is placed in the field by his party to advise people that they can make application for a postal vote will be prosecuted.

The amendment moved by the member for Morley will get away from that situation. I ask members to support the amendment. Members of the Government will not support it, and I have no doubt that what I have suggested will take place after the next election; in fact it will take place before the election, purely and simply to prevent people utilising the postal voting system.

Mr JAMIESON: Earlier on I had a little difficulty trying to follow the debate, not having been with it when it reached its present stage. However, some recent remarks have indicated that what I wanted to say is quite appropriate.

In maintaining that the reason for the inclusion of this provision is that it has been included in the Federal Act and the legislation of other States, why must the Deputy Premier be so specific as far as the postal voting provisions are concerned? What about all the other provisions of the Electoral Act? He moves away from them in one instance and comes back to them in another instance, without any apparent logical reason.

If this provision, once it is passed, were to be applied in the way section 54B of the Police Act is applied, some supporters of the Liberal Party would be caught up in it very quickly, because it has been our experience over the years that Liberal Party canvassers leave us for dead in collecting votes from the dead. They have had a great advantage over us for many years.

Mr Skidmore: Or the almost dead.

Mr JAMIESON: From the dead or the almost dead. Anybody who disagrees with me need only look at the statistics over the years. We have had many complaints about people going around inducing others to vote. If it is meant to catch up with those people—

Mr Young: Are you suggesting any members of the Liberal Party have actually cast votes in the names of dead people?

Mr JAMIESON: I am not suggesting that at all. I suggest the Minister either listen to all I have to say or—

Mr Young: Read that piece of *Hansard* later.

Mr JAMIESON: It will not read as the Minister thinks it will.

Mr Young: You do not mind my clearing up the situation, do you?

Mr JAMIESON: No, as long as the Minister does not try to put words into my mouth, as he so often tries to do. The position is very clear, and I will repeat it: Liberal Party organisers over a number of years have gathered votes from people who are in a bad way, from the dead or the near dead.

Mr Young: How do you gather a vote from the dead?

Mr JAMIESON: The dead or the near dead.

Mr Young: You include the dead. Why do you keep saying that?

Mr JAMIESON: Because they do that.

Mr Young: Now you are saying they do, whereas a minute ago you denied you said that. I think you had better read it back.

Mr JAMIESON: I think the Minister had better shup up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr JAMIESON: I think I had better direct my remarks to you, Mr Chairman. The crux of the matter is that over the years it has been made abundantly clear that the Liberal Party has a trait of gathering these votes in elections. If it is intended that the law should be carried out in all respects, that is well and good; if all those who induce others to apply for postal votes are prosecuted, we will see droves of Liberal Party supporters being fined. Some of them have been rather heinous in their endeavours in the past. On occasions when Australian Labor Party members have been refused access to nursing homes, members of the Liberal Party have had an entree. This is a feature of the Act which is quite abhorrent to me. Perhaps it is the only section of the Act that Judge Kay really got his teeth into. However, I cannot see what including this provision in the Act has to do with the situation before us. It will merely make the position worse.

For instance, a pastor of the Seventh Day Adventist Church could tell his flock that they should arrange for a postal vote before the following Saturday. As I understand the situation, the sabbath of that church extends from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. A pastor who did that would commit an offence under this proposed provision. That is ludicrous.

The Act has a provision which enables people to vote on a day other than polling day if it is necessary due to their religious beliefs. But how stupid would the Act be if it were carried to the

extent of prohibiting a religious leader from advising his followers to apply for a postal vote?

I recall that long ago the Electoral Act contained a provision which enabled persons to apply for a postal vote on religious grounds. In those days certain religious groups used to hold camps over long weekends in Advent Park in Queens Park, and a few minutes before closing time the polling booths were inundated by hundreds of absentee voters, most of whom had no alternative because they were within five miles of the booth on the day of polling.

Times have changed, and the Act has been amended. The provision for the present system of voting was introduced since I have been in this place, and it has been an advantage to people in those circumstances.

Why must we now say that we take exception to pastors indicating to their followers that they should vote? The Deputy Premier does not appear to be interested in that aspect of the matter. Undoubtedly, owing to the proposal to apply the guillotine tomorrow, he will sit it out tonight and not take part in any attempt to reconcile our thoughts on this matter. Surely even within his own household the Deputy Premier must be aware of instances when it is advisable to suggest to someone that he apply for a postal vote. A person may have an aged mother-in-law who is unwell and he might say, "Rather than have you walk down to the polling booth on Saturday, it would be better if I arranged a postal vote for you." Is anything more silly than to suggest that person is committing an offence for doing something humane? That is exactly what the provision says, and it is the reason my colleague has moved to eliminate it.

If a person is aware that someone is sick, he has a responsibility to see that the sick person should not have to worry about casting his vote. After all, a sick person would only worry more if he was not able to vote and subsequently received a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer asking him to explain why he did not vote. The object of postal voting is to provide a convenience to people in necessitous circumstances. We should be considering those people rather than tightening up the Act so that if a complaint is made by a Liberal member of Parliament a person may be swooped on in respect of a mere technicality.

Such complaints have been made in the recent past, and it is silly to suggest that a person should be arrested or a warrant to seize goods taken out and his house searched merely because of a technical breach of the Act.

As I understand the situation the Deputy Premier has adopted a lax attitude towards the Act. His attitude on this matter leaves a great deal to be desired. He once told me he had not taken a certain action, but when I was permitted to peruse the file I found he had taken that action. Undoubtedly he had forgotten about it, but his initials were on the page.

The amendment of the member for Morley is most desirable. It will tighten the Act so that people will not commit a technical offence by suggesting that someone in their household obtain a postal vote, thereby leaving themselves open to prosecution if a Liberal Party pimp runs and tells the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr H. D. EVANS: No country member of this Chamber can accept in good conscience the provision as it stands. All country members, in the interests of common sense and fairness, must accept the amendment moved by the member for Morley.

Many people living on farms and in smaller country towns—and especially the elderly ones—are dependent on postal votes if there are no ballot boxes near them. Manjimup in my electorate has a Seventh Day Adventist school as well as a church. Boyup Brook also has a Seventh Day Adventist church. That indicates the number of people of that faith living in the area. To deny them the opportunity to take advantage of a postal vote is ludicrous. In most instances these people live on farms, and it is a normal and human thing to need prompting in respect of many matters, including the need to cast a vote. The member for Welshpool suggested that a pastor making reference to this at a church meeting would be committing an offence. It is often said the law is an ass; it is anomalies such as this which are responsible for that saying.

It is beyond me that any country member could accept this Bill in all conscience. People who are infirm and live on farms need to cast a postal vote. Many of them set great store by voting on election day; it is a point of pride with them. If they are not in good health and their advisers suggest that they apply for a postal vote, an offence could be committed. Of course, it is difficult to understand how this provision will be policed. Is it intended that selective policing will apply, as is the case under the Police Act in respect of the trade union movement? Or is it intended that if a person draws to the attention of the electoral officer that someone has brought in an application or has had mailed to him an application on behalf of another person, the electoral officer will be obliged to take action under the Act?

The question of nursing homes in which a considerable number of the people are infirm and on the verge of being geriatric patients, cannot be disregarded. It seems to me that in my area many elderly ladies of the Liberal Party will run a grave risk of committing infringements of the Act. Certainly it is hard to understand that the Act will be enforced only in the case of political activists; because complaints will be made in all circumstances—there is nothing surer than that. If some charges are proceeded with and others are not proceeded with, the entire Electoral Act will be brought into disrepute. Already this has occurred in respect of too many Statutes in Western Australia.

Those are the points that every country member of this Chamber should accept. Every city member should accept them, also; but in country areas the difficulties are compounded by distance and the inconvenience of travel. Therefore they are much more acute in country areas. For that reason the amendment is appropriate. In the interests of common sense and justice every country member should support it.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am afraid if this legislation becomes law I will join a long list of those who break the law. If anybody suggests to me that I should not assist a constituent to exercise his right to obtain a postal vote I will not accept it. Members opposite can do what they like to me, but I will not accept that. It is quite stupid to tell a member of Parliament that he must not help a constituent obtain a postal vote. That is exactly what this provision does; it can be interpreted in no other way.

If other members of Parliament wish to abrogate their rights, let that be upon their heads. It will not be upon my head. Proposed new subsection (1) of section 95 says that a person shall not "persuade or induce, or associate . . ." I want the Deputy Premier to tell me what is meant by "associate". Does it mean that if I know a person who has apparently induced someone to have a postal vote, I have associated with him? If I say "Hello" to that person in the street, under the strict interpretation of this provision I would be associating with a person who has induced an elector to have a postal vote. That is how stupid it is! Maybe it will not be enforced in that way. Maybe the legislation is not intended to achieve that objective, but it certainly goes a long way towards doing that.

In my electorate there are eight or nine nursing homes with 300 or 400 patients. I do not mean patients in the true sense, but people who are in need of care and attention in the latter part of their lives. Quite frequently those people ask me

to arrange postal votes for them. Should I say to them, "No, I am not going to come along because I will be inducing you to postal vote"? I have news for the Government. It can do what it likes to me. If the legislation is proclaimed in this form, I will do what I do now. I believe I have a right to do that. I will not be talked out of it by an Act of Parliament. I will stand with the other people who feel they cannot suffer the indignity of this amending legislation.

The amendment proposed by the member for Morley will do precisely what is required. It will make it easier for people to refer to section 90—"applications for postal votes". There will be an "out" for people like me to put that into effect. Without that, I will not be able to do my job.

Quite frankly, the only reason for this amending legislation is to take care of one situation alone. If I did in my electorate the sort of thing outlined in the provision, I would not be charged; but if I did it up in Kimberley, members can bet their bottom dollar that I would be prosecuted. There is no question about that. It is a case of horses for courses.

The amendment proposed by the Government is designed to protect the present member of this Legislative Assembly for the seat of Kimberley. It is obvious that no effort will be made to have electors put on the roll. Nobody will explain to them what their responsibilities are. Nobody will ensure they know exactly what they are doing in regard to voting.

I know I will be able to stand up and there will be no retribution on my head. I will not be challenged about whether I induced people to have a postal vote in my electorate. However, if I did it in the Kimberley I would be challenged.

How ludicrous can a piece of law be? People in this country are not very happy with politicians; and, by gee, they have every right to have that thought when one considers the sheer stupidity of the laws that have come from this Liberal Government. The people have a right to call us "nong-nongs". We are a lot of idiots. That is what happens when we bring down legislation like this on the question of assistance to people.

Is there anything wrong with a member of Parliament assisting a person to have a postal vote? Is it considered that I will obtain that postal vote and ensure that the person casts the vote in my favour? I know a lot of people tend to be overcontrolling in this sort of situation. As far as the member for Swan is concerned, my desire is to ensure the hundreds of elderly people in hospitals in my electorate will not be disadvantaged when it comes to the question of postal voting.

I do not persuade people one way or the other. I look after them religiously. I would not have the faintest idea how they vote. I am not one of the members who organise a day to return to pick up the postal votes, like Liberal Party officials do in my electorate. I happened to catch one of them doing this one day. The matron said to him, "Come in. They have all got their papers. We will get them filled in." That man was most upset, and he said, "I am sorry, but they were my instructions. That is what I have to do." I said, "Well, don't do it in my electorate."

Mr Shalders: Are you suggesting no Labor Party people do that at all?

Mr SKIDMORE: I am saying the member for Swan does not do it. I do not care what other members of the party do. It is not my business.

Mr Shalders: The amending legislation will cut out undesirable practices by all political parties.

Mr Bryce: Read the provision; open your eyes.

Mr SKIDMORE: The greatest problem with Liberal members is that they judge others by their own actions.

Point of Order

Mr TONKIN: On a point of order: I am wondering whether it is within the scope of Standing Orders for you, Mr Chairman, to direct the member for Murray to read the Bill before he interjects. Obviously he does not know what is before the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Committee Resumed

Mr SKIDMORE: I was relating what happened at a hospital with a member of the Liberal Party. When I appeared upon the scene, I was able to have the people who were subjected to pressure removed to a room where they could fill out their own papers as they wished to do it. That is as it should be. That is as I want it to be in the Swan electorate. I do not set myself up as being "holier than thou". I simply say I try to be honest with people when it comes to the question of voting.

Mr Tonkin: This does not deal with what the member for Murray was talking about, anyway.

Mr SKIDMORE: If the legislation is proclaimed, I will go ahead and do what I said I would do. I see no purpose in being disqualified merely because a person comes into my office and says, "I want to get mum and dad a postal vote. They are both in the Midland Hospital. Can you tell me how to go about it?" I could say, "I am

sorry, I cannot help you. Go away and find out how you like about it, but I cannot help you. Neither can anybody else." Nobody can help those persons, in the strict terms of the law proposed.

How stupid it is when one tries to help a person in a matter of this sort, and one breaks the law! This is a stupid provision. If it becomes law, the people of Western Australia have the right to criticise members of Parliament because this is the most stupid piece of legislation I have seen since I have been here, and I have seen quite a few stupid pieces of legislation from this Government.

Mr TONKIN: The Opposition does not want to hold up the Committee much more on this. I think the points have been made thoroughly.

The provision in the Bill means it is an offence for anyone to persuade or induce someone else to obey the law. We know that the Premier is not half-witted. We know that the Deputy Premier is not half-witted. Then what is the reason for this legislation? Why would they bring to this Parliament a provision in these terms?

We know that the giddy members who do not bother to read the Bills and who do crosswords do not know what is in the Bill. The member for Murray showed he had not read the Bill; he did not know what he was talking about. He was talking about the provision in the Act dealing with people manipulating postal votes. That is a matter on which this Parliament should legislate.

Mr Shalders: You want to listen to interjections. I was interjecting on the practices being described by the member for Swan.

Mr TONKIN: The practices which we abhor and which this Parliament should condemn, and on which we should legislate in order to prevent malpractice, are not dealt with in this clause.

The member for Merredin hit the nail on the head when he said the Government will use this law selectively. The Minister for Housing is in trouble in Kimberley. That is why this Bill is here. If it appears that pro-Labor people want postal votes and they are being persuaded or induced to comply with the Act, they will be prosecuted.

In righteous indignation the Minister for Health tried to nail the member for Welshpool on whether he was suggesting members of the Liberal Party had ever voted on behalf of dead people. The whole point, of course, is that we know what went on in Kimberley. We know the law was broken. We know the Liberal Party sent five lawyers to Kimberley to prevent people who had a legal right to vote from having a vote. That is why Mr Justice Smith overthrew the election

and said the whole thing had been crooked. That came from a justice of the Supreme Court.

If members of the Liberal Party will break the law, and if they will do things that they do not have the right to do, what will they do when the law gives them permission expressly to attack, to prosecute, to pursue someone because he is persuading or inducing someone to have a vote? That will happen not only in Kimberley; it will be anywhere that the Government feels threatened.

The Premier knows he has lost a lot of popularity. We on this side of the Chamber are willing to accept that the Premier is a good politician. He has been a very good politician, but as has been shown over the last few months, his popularity is slipping and people are beginning to wake up to him as an arrogant person who believes he is always right—a person who is unable to admit that sometimes he might make a mistake. This slipping popularity is to be thwarted by changes to the Act. There are certain seats where the Liberal Party is in danger, and this provision will be used. Let us not pretend that will not happen. We know what happened in Kimberley in 1977, we know what happened with the Brand Government in 1960, we know about the crooked line in Armadale, which is a manifestation of this Government's ruthlessness in electoral matters; so we know very well the Government will use this provision.

As I said, we will not spend all night on this because there are other clauses that are even worse than this one. We do want to make the point that a law which says a person who will be prosecuted for persuading someone to obey the law is obviously an ass, to use a classical expression. We do not believe the Premier and the Deputy Premier are asinine creatures; we know they are not. They are cunning and ruthless politicians who have devised this Bill for their own purposes.

What happened in Kimberley will be repeated. The intention this time is that no judge of the Supreme Court will be able to overthrow the election because the people who will be acting in this scurrilous manner will be acting legally.

The numbers in this place, which are obtained as a result of the corrupt Electoral Districts Act, will provide the Government with the means by which it can twist the law to save the seat of the member for Kimberley and to save the seats of other Ministers.

We want to indicate we are aware of the situation and we oppose it. My amendment is an attempt to bring some sanity and decency back to this Parliament. Sanity and decency go together.

As referred to by the member for Murray, my amendment will provide that, if a person persuaded or induced someone to have a postal vote to which he was not entitled under the law, that would be an offence. We are happy with that. However, we oppose strongly the prosecution of someone who is merely persuading or inducing someone to comply with the law.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister has a responsibility or obligation to answer some of the arguments put forward tonight. He should answer the arguments put forward by the member for Merredin, the member for Welshpool, and the member for Morley. He should answer also the points I raised in connection with people who live in isolated country areas and the inconveniences they face particularly with regard to transport.

In view of the issues which have been raised and the matter highlighted by the member for Swan in relation to nursing homes, I ask the Deputy Premier whether he intends to give some indication of the logic and rationale behind the Government's move and the steadfast line it is adopting?

Mr O'Neil: I have indicated already by way of interjection that I gave this matter a great deal of thought and explained it in detail about two weeks ago.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Deputy Premier did not do so in the light of the new issues raised here.

Mr O'Neil: Nothing new has been brought to light.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If that is the case, I suggest we report progress.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr H. D. Evans.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Second Reading: Budget Debate

Debate resumed from the 20th September.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch) [8.20 p.m.]: I would like to make a few comments in the course of the Budget debate, firstly in relation to some of the points raised last Thursday by the Leader of the Opposition, secondly in relation to a few points which concern my electorate, and thirdly on a matter which concerns all Government members.

Last Thursday the Leader of the Opposition reminded me of Mr Hayden in that he seems to be warming the seat for someone else. His speech on the Budget was one of the worst I have ever

heard him make. It was based on repetition of false accusations, misstatements of fact, wild accusations and, most importantly, a great deal was left unsaid.

Mr B. T. Burke: Why don't you table the rest of your speech? It is the same one you made last year.

Mr Bryce: Let him read it afterwards.

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the Opposition is very much like Mr Hayden and the leader of the TLC in this State who, I believe, will soon be making an effort to get into Parliament to replace his buddy who is not doing the job well enough for him.

The Leader of the Opposition showed also a lack of any real understanding of the State's finances and that is the very reason that—

Mr B. T. Burke: He understands the slush fund.

Mr MacKINNON: —after the election he will no longer be the Leader of the Opposition; in fact, he will probably be lucky to be in Parliament.

In his comments last Thursday the Leader of the Opposition implied that this Government and the Premier in particular lacked any judgment in economic matters. I should like to quote some of the words used by the Leader of the Opposition. He said, "Our total capital funds were reduced by 26.6 per cent in real terms. The total Commonwealth payments to Western Australia were down by \$52.3 million; one of the worst financial packages ever handed out to this State."

Those were the words used by the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, in using those words, the Leader of the Opposition is complimenting our Premier who, despite the massive cut-backs in funds, has been able, through good economic management, to increase the General Loan Fund Budget by 8.8 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about all the people who are unemployed?

Mr MacKINNON: Members opposite do not like what I am saying. There has been an increase of 12.1 per cent in the revenue Budget, despite the cut-backs mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition.

Had the Opposition been in Government, the economy of this State would be in a parlous condition.

Mr Nanovich: We would have an empty barrel.

Mr MacKINNON: Last week the Leader of the Opposition said, "We can scarcely believe the Government would not spend all the money it had appropriated for unemployment." Had the

Opposition been in Government, it would have spent every red cent this State had and put it into hock if it could do so. The Leader of the Opposition admits there have been massive cut-backs in funding, therefore, I should like to ask him what he would have used to stimulate employment as he would have us believe was his intent. As the member for Whitford said, he would have had an empty barrel.

Mr B. T. Burke: At least he would not have had a port barrel.

Mr MacKINNON: As the Premier said by way of interjection, the money can be spent once only. The Opposition would spend it once. It would spend all the money and, in times of economic hardship, it would not have anything to fall back on. Nothing would be put away for a rainy day. It is clear members opposite would not be good managers of this State and the people of Western Australia must be aware of this.

I should like to remind members that between 1960 and 1970 the public debt per head in this State increased by 21 per cent. Since 1970, it has increased by less than 16 per cent. During the last 10 years this State has reduced the level of public debt per head of population at a time when inflation has been increasing at a rapid rate.

Mr B. T. Burke: Thanks to the Tonkin Government!

Mr MacKINNON: That will be the day!

Mr B. T. Burke: It was the Tonkin Government. Check your facts.

Mr MacKINNON: Clearly that indicates the good economic management of this State. The Leader of the Opposition implied that the Premier does not do anything for this State. He said, "On evading the statements one would think he was really battling for the State." He implies that the Premier talks, but does nothing about the situation.

I would like to quote from some Press cuttings and hopefully the Leader of the Opposition will read these and see the sort of effect the Premier has. Firstly, I should like to refer to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 30th June where, under the heading, "Premiers bitter" the following comments appear—

Sir Charles Court said: "I am not going to continue to accept this situation.

"If you come here and you're confronted with a situation that is absolutely impossible, there's just a relentless belief that because they have the money bags, that they call the tune all the time, we're wasting our time coming.

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition read *The West Australian* of that date and saw the action taken by the Premier. Some of the Premiers of the other States did not take similar action. The article reads, in part, as follows—

Three of the six Premiers voted against the offer at the Loan Council meeting.

Sir Charles Court of WA, Mr Wran of NSW and Mr Bjelke-Petersen of Queensland remained implacably opposed to the Commonwealth proposals.

It is clear the Premier does not just talk, he acts and votes where he has to.

The Weekend Australian of the same date refers to the fact that our Premier's actions and that of other Premiers gained extra money for this State. The relevant part of the article reads—

The Commonwealth will also relax special borrowing program guidelines, breaking a three-year moratorium on such loans, agreed to only last year.

Further on in the article the following statement appears—

Western Australia gained \$33.6 million—\$16 million for the Kwinana-Muja electricity project and \$17.6 million for the Kwinana-Koolyanobbing railway.

As a result of the direct action of our Premier we received an extra \$34 million. It is clear the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition are ridiculous.

You may remember, Sir, that the Leader of the Opposition said he made a submission to the Federal Government that there should be an increase of 2 per cent in real terms in the General Revenue Fund. It is a pity the Leader, of the Opposition is not here, because I should like to ask him whether, in that submission, he made any suggestions to the Federal Government as to where the funding should come from. The Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament, and the Leader and members of the Opposition in this State are long on promises but short on giving us any real basis on which to judge their alternative policies.

The Leader of the Opposition—the alternative Premier of this State—gave no alternative whatsoever when he spoke last Thursday. As the Leader of the Opposition of this State, he had a responsibility to show the people what his alternative would be. There was none of that and I condemn him for it.

The Leader of the Opposition also made many false accusations last Thursday. He continued on his merry way saying that, "The fifth reason for

my concern is that the State has been engaging in financial transactions which are illegal." The Leader of the Opposition has shown on several occasions that he is flogging a dead horse in relation to that particular issue. I should like to quote the reply made by the Premier to the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday. It reads as follows—

Public moneys invested on the so called unofficial market are fully secured by securities prescribed under the Public Moneys Investment Act and lodged with the Treasury. At no time have moneys been invested on an unsecured basis.

The Leader of the Opposition clearly shows his ignorance in these areas by his pursuit of this particular line. By his own admission, he indicated his ignorance in regard to the Suspense Account. He also indicated the inefficiency of the Opposition in scrutinising properly the Government's accounts, the Budget, and the full financial affairs of this State. He indicated the Opposition had been lax in that area and had not fully scrutinised the matters to which I have just referred.

He said, "We will never let it go unscrutinised again." Clearly he is admitting the mistakes of the past and the inability of the Opposition to follow the basic economics of this State. We must remember that these comments were made by the alternative Premier of this State.

The Leader of the Opposition also made the comment with respect to the Federal Government that, "The Fraser Liberal-National Country Party Government is the most centralist Government this country has ever known." This was totally unsubstantiated. He did not back up that comment with facts. The Leader of the Opposition did not produce one fact on which to base that statement. It is clear he cannot do so.

As I explained earlier, what the Leader of the Opposition left unsaid was the most important point to be made in relation to his comments. He did not comment in any way on what his alternative policy would be, or what his Government's alternative policy would be if he had been the Leader of the Government. I think that is very important. It is also very important for country people to know that the Leader of the Opposition did not make one comment in relation to agriculture. He did not make one comment with regard to drought-affected areas; he does not know the drought exists. Clearly, here is a man in opposition, claiming to be representative of country people, who could not care less about country people.

Mr Pearce: Why did the Premier take out the allocation for small businesses in drought-affected areas?

Mr MacKINNON: When mentioning country people, the Leader of the Opposition said—

The abandonment of death duties will affect a certain elitist section of the community only, and it will mean that other people will have to pay additional taxes to make up the shortfall. However, no mention was made of that.

I hope every country member in this House from the Government side will let his electorate know exactly what the Leader of the Opposition thinks of country people; "a certain elitist section"—the hard working farmers of this country. The Leader of the Opposition would sell out the country people the day he got into power, exactly as Wran has done in New South Wales where he put off the abolition of death duties. I am sure country people will be able to see the effect of that move quite clearly.

Mr Tubby: They do not forget.

Mr MacKINNON: When speaking about small businessmen, the Leader of the Opposition said—

I am disappointed that more has not been done for the small business sector of our community which is the largest employer of workers in this State.

Those are crocodile tears from the Leader of the Opposition. What really needs to be done for small business in this State is for the Government not to interfere. The small businessmen should be left alone. Their tax levels should be reduced to induce real incentive so that they can get on with the job.

Mr Bryce: The law of the jungle.

Mr MacKINNON: That is something the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would not understand. I have quoted what the Leader of the Opposition said. I will quote from the State Platform of the Australian Labor Party, operative from the 1st September, 1978, so that the people in this State will know the true position. The Leader of the Opposition professes to stand for the small businessmen, but that is a lot of rot. The Opposition has not changed its spots; it is still the socialist leopard—it always has been and always will be.

Mr Sodeman: The platform does not say anything about nationalisation!

Mr MacKINNON: Not much! The platform sets out that the Labor Party would create a number of corporations which would be State-

owned. In other words, socialisation of the means of production. Under the heading "Department of Economic Planning" the Labor Party platform states—

3. establish a Department of Economic Planning, which will

- (a) seek to facilitate an evolutionary process whereby the community wields more control over its economic destiny;

That is real good socialism. The policy also states—

- (c) co-ordinate allocation of funds into enterprises to be set up or acquired by the State;

The Labor Party would assist the small businessmen by taking over their businesses and running them on behalf of the State. That is exactly what the party opposite supports.

The Leader of the Opposition said he found some very good points in the Budget, and he mentioned one or two of them. However, he did not comment on the two largest expenditure items in the Budget—education and health. He did not make one comment on half of the Budget expenditure. That is terrific! That is really responsible! Our education expenditure in this State is up 14 per cent, despite cut-backs in funding. In comparison, health is up 11 per cent.

Mr Bryce: Will that match the rate of inflation?

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the Opposition also did not comment on the Government's initiative in bauxite research. A sum of \$366 000 has been made available for research into the effects of bauxite mining and wood chipping.

Mr Bryce: Why do you not tell the Leader of the Opposition what to put in his speech?

Mr MacKINNON: The Leader of the Opposition repeated himself over and over again and said absolutely nothing.

Mr Jamieson: If you want some enlightenment you should read Brand's speeches when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MacKINNON: In the area of bauxite research Alcoa is to spend almost \$1 million.

Mr Skidmore: Of course, it should.

Mr MacKINNON: We did not hear one comment on that matter from the Leader of the Opposition. I am wondering whether we will hear something from the potential member for Mundaring. Of course not; he has been embarrassed as a result of the stand taken by the

Opposition. He is embarrassed at having to stand for the ALP.

The Leader of the Opposition said nothing about this Government's initiative in solar energy research.

Mr Bryce: Your Government spent more on postage than on energy research.

Mr MacKINNON: It seems I am wasting too much time commenting on the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Pearce: Tell us about the problems of Murdoch.

Mr MacKINNON: The speech made by the Leader of the Opposition contained very little substance.

Mr T. H. Jones: Have you any problems in your electorate?

Mr MacKINNON: At least, I am not making a "number 3" speech as is the habit of the member for Collie.

I will now speak to a few items which affect my electorate, and I trust the Government will note some of these problems. Firstly, I will refer to the matter of police surveillance at Coolbellup. This is something I have taken up previously with the Minister for Police and Traffic. I notice from the Budget speech that an additional 84 police officers will be appointed, and that work involving an additional expenditure of \$13.5 million will be undertaken for the police and RTA. I hope very much that the Minister will see his way clear to appoint an additional officer to Coolbellup so that there will be more surveillance in that area.

The problem of one of my constituents was brought to my attention recently. My constituent's son was apprehended at a local pizza shop by a gang known as the "Coolbellup Rocks". I hope the increase in expenditure will see some increased police surveillance in the Coolbellup area.

Recently I had the pleasure of taking the Minister for Education on a tour of the Lynwood High School. The member for Gosnells commented on this fact. The Minister for Education has looked at our problems and has undertaken to carry out a full-scale review of the situation at Lynwood and Langford, and the projected student population in the future. I hope that undertaking will be carried out promptly so that I will be able to indicate to the parents in the area what is to happen with regard to the important stage 5—the last stage of the Lynwood High School.

The people in my electorate also welcome the extension of the freeway as a result of the money

allocated in the Budget for the construction of the Mt. Henry Bridge. As I have said previously, we are grateful that the Minister has seen his way clear to provide sufficient funds to enable the completion of the extension of the Kwinana Freeway through to South Street at exactly the same time as the freeway reaches Leach Highway. That is most important from the traffic point of view.

I have taken up the matter with the Main Roads Department and I hope that department will be receptive to the submissions relating to the disadvantages which will be faced by some people as a result of this extension, specifically in the area of Annear Place, in Bateman. I have made representations to the Main Roads Department, and I hope the people concerned will receive every consideration.

There is also provision for the extension of Vahland Avenue to connect with Leach Highway. I commend the Main Roads Department for having already installed traffic lights. However, it will be a busy thoroughfare and the people in the area will be cut off from major services as a result of the extension of major roads. I hope the Canning City Council and the Government will look favourably at the approaches made by local residents, and members of Parliament, for the provision of a pedestrian crossover to assist children who attend the primary schools in the area. It will be a very busy road and I hope we will not need to have a fatality before some action is taken.

Finally, I want to present to members a few thoughts I have in relation to statutory authorities in this State, and the reports they make to this Parliament.

I refer members to a report put out by the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Government Operations. It concerns statutory authorities of the Commonwealth. It is an illuminating document and I recommend it to members for their reading. The report of the joint committee made several recommendations.

In passing, I would like to say it is rather disappointing the Public Accounts Committee in this State is not sitting because this is an area in which the committee could usefully operate. I refer to an inquiry into statutory authorities in this State, the role they play, their activities, and how they report to this Parliament. That is a matter of concern to me.

The conclusions of the committee, in summary, were, firstly, that a comprehensive list of statutory authorities be published. That is something which is needed in this State so that

members can be made aware of what statutory authorities exist, and under whose control they operate.

Secondly, the report refers to the creation of authorities by separate Statutes when they seek to vary from departmental structure. Thirdly, it analyses the result of a survey of the economic impact of statutory authorities. Fourthly it refers to the production of annual reports, especially where authorities report to the Parliament. I think that is probably the only recommendation I would not agree with. Finally, the report refers to the accountability of statutory authorities.

A couple of those matters should be considered by the Government in the future. In relation to statutory authorities, there is some need to request them to report to Parliament. Consideration should be given to the contents of the reports, and the time involved in making the reports.

I have made a random selection of some reports for the information of members. I believe the longer they take to reach Parliament the less use they are. If our Public Accounts Committee is reactivated it should address itself to making sure prompt reports are provided to Parliament. I will indicate to members how long it takes for some major companies to report to their shareholders.

I will refer to some of the authorities which issue reports promptly, and some which do not, and I will also refer to some private companies. For instance, the annual report for the year ended the 31st December, 1978, of Swan Portland Cement Ltd. was issued to shareholders on the 9th March—2½ months later. The annual report of Calsil Ltd.—and I am happy to say this factory is in my electorate—for the year ended the 30th June, 1978, was issued on the 20th October, 1978.

The Swan Brewery Co. Ltd.—a large company by any standard—distributed its annual report for the year ended the 31st March, 1979, to its shareholders on the 26th June, 1979; that is less than three months later. These large companies can report promptly to their shareholders with accounts that are meaningful. Their shareholders can gain prompt, up-to-date information from the reports.

In comparison, I would like to refer members to some reports made to Parliament in recent times. I will refer first of all to some of the authorities which have reported promptly. The report of the Racecourse Development Trust Fund for the year ended the 31st July was tabled on the 12th December. Nothing to complain about in that—it was a prompt, up-to-date report, and easy to follow. The same applies to the report of the

Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust Fund which was tabled on the 20th September.

The Western Australian Institute of Technology, once again a large institution, presented its report for the year ended the 31st December on the 7th August. Perhaps with our short autumn session, that was not too bad.

Mr B. T. Burke: What about the Joondalup Development Corporation?

Mr MacKINNON: I will now refer to some authorities where there are problems, and, as I said earlier, the Public Accounts Committee, when it is reconstituted, could look at ways and means to improve accounting procedures in some of these institutions so that the reports can be more quickly tabled in this Parliament.

Probably the University of Western Australia is one of the worst offenders. Its report for the year ended the 31st December, 1977, was presented on the 1st May, 1979. Eighteen months after the end of the financial year referred to, we receive the financial statements and report! I am aware there have been some problems in the accounting department at the university, but with all due respect to the people there, it is less than useless to members to be presented with figures that are meaningless because they are so old.

I now turn to the State Government Insurance Office, which I believe should be run as far as possible on a business basis.

Mr Bryce: Then why don't you open its franchise right up and let it operate on a competitive basis?

Mr MacKINNON: The annual report of the SGIO for the year ended the 30th June, 1978, was presented on the 2nd May, 1979. I am aware these departments have problems in that they all use the services of the Audit Department and that office is placed under extreme pressure. However, the delay that I have referred to is an inordinate one.

Surely the Environmental Protection Authority should not require a long period to present a report. Its financial statement is not very long or involved, and it should not take very long to audit its books.

Mr B. T. Burke: These are not just financial statements.

Mr MacKINNON: I did not say they were. It would be helpful if the member for Balcatta interjected from his own seat.

Mr B. T. Burke: I am close to you here, and you will hear me better.

Mr MacKINNON: I do not particularly care whether or not I hear the member at all. Mr

Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), the member's attitude illustrates the respect some members of this Parliament have for this House and its rules.

The Environmental Protection Authority presented its report on the 7th August, 1979—once again well over 12 months after the end of the financial year to which it refers.

The annual report for the year ended the 30th June, 1977, of the Board of Secondary Education was presented on the 3rd April, 1979—again a period of almost two years. The annual report of the Department of Local Government for the year ended the 30th June, 1977, was tabled on the 19th September, 1979. Certainly I have indicated that some of these departments must show more concern about their annual reports. Perhaps in the new Parliament next year the Public Accounts Committee—whether or not I am a member of it or, indeed, a member of this Parliament—ought to address itself to this matter. The reports can be useful to us only if they are tabled promptly in this Parliament. We can then use the reports to initiate meaningful debate.

DR TROY (Fremantle) [8.50 p.m.]: I would like to make some comments about the Budget which is singly the most important document dealing with the economy of this State. In many respects the Budget sets the pace for the year ahead—not just for Government activities, but for the community as a whole. So the Budget must be assessed in relation to the problems that our economy faces. Of course, once having grasped what the problems are, the Government must put forward a programme to deal adequately with them, and to do that, we must examine our relationship with the rest of Australia and, indeed, with the rest of the world.

When we try to grasp the tone of this particular document, we can see in whose interests it has been brought down. However, before going on to deal with that matter, I would like to refer to some of the remarks made by the member for Murdoch, who is, of course, an accountant, and who has a great grasp of economic matters.

The member for Murdoch referred to the need to reduce tax levels. As an accountant, of course, he would spend a great deal of his time endeavouring to reduce the tax levels of the people who seek to use his services in this regard. Recently, we have heard of a public scandal in which some people were involved in tax evasion on a grand scale. The member for Murdoch, as an accountant, would be familiar with such schemes.

Mr Young: They were doctors, too.

Dr TROY: That is true, many doctors in private practice do that. I do not have a private

practice from which I receive money; my private work is all done *gratis*—at this point, anyway.

Getting back to the member for Murdoch, I suggest that he treats this House and the people of this State with contempt when he is prepared to act as an accountant for doctors involved in the Moll tax fiddle. He may cast all the aspersions he likes—

Point of Order

Mr MacKINNON: I rise on a point of order—

Mr Bryce: He is sensitive now.

Mr MacKINNON: I would like the member for Fremantle to withdraw the remark he made about me being an accountant for anybody involved in the Moll affair, because that is completely untrue.

Mr Bryce: That is not unparliamentary.

Sir Charles Court: It just happens to be untrue.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): There is no point of order. I do not see that the remark is unparliamentary.

Sir Charles Court: Oh!

Debate Resumed

The ACTING SPEAKER: I would remind the member for Fremantle that it is customary for a member to speak in this House from the place allotted to him. He should not walk from one seat to another.

Dr TROY: Thank you, Sir.

Another practice has emerged over a period of time in relation to certain economic activities in this State. People who have an income acquired in one way or another which they do not wish to show, register or lodge that income in places such as Hong Kong. They put their money into pseudo companies which have been set up to avoid tax. I am sure many people in this Chamber are familiar with that business practice, and would understand exactly what I mean. The local company then borrows its own money from the front company.

I would like to take up the member for Murdoch in respect of another matter; that is, his reference to the level of public indebtedness. I might point out that at the end of the Whitlam period of government the level of indebtedness to overseas financiers per head of population in Australia was \$70. Since Fraser was illegally put into office in November, 1975, the level of indebtedness has increased and is now in the order of \$400 a head. That gives us some grasp of

where the Liberal stewardship of our economy is taking us.

Let us come a little closer to home and consider some areas of the economy of Western Australia. It seems the biggest single problem—and I certainly find this is so in Fremantle—is that of employment. When I consider the documents produced with the Budget I find the problem is not confined to Fremantle. I find the level of civilian unemployment in Western Australia has fallen in the past 12 months from 402 600 to 401 100; a decrease of 0.4 per cent. In fact, if we consider last year's figures we find there were already indications that this fall would occur.

When we consider some specific areas of the figures we find that the level of employment fell by 10.5 per cent in mining and 0.6 per cent in manufacturing. In the area that this Government says it gives great support to—that is, private enterprise—the overall level of employment fell by 1.1 per cent. The Government to some extent maintained the level by increasing employment by 1.1 per cent. However, the overall figures for the State showed that at the end of the last financial year job numbers were fewer than at the end of the previous financial year.

So, in terms of the problems we face, I contend that by far the biggest problem is the question of jobs for people. I am aware of the kind of help the people of Fremantle received from the Minister for Transport. He was prepared to shut down the passenger rail service, and in doing so he caused the destruction of other jobs in the area.

The subset of the unemployed which comes in for particularly harsh treatment from this Government is the unskilled area. If we consider the number of jobs advertised at the end of June, 1979, and compare it with the number of people available, we find that 125 unskilled people were looking for every job advertised in this "State of Excitement". Is that a proud record?

Let us now consider some of the perspectives brought forward by the Government, and see what it is prepared to do about the matter; especially about unskilled young people. In the current financial year the Government has cut funding for apprenticeship training by more than 50 per cent. We now have \$70 000 allocated to that area. Last year the amount was a lousy \$149 000, and it has been cut to \$70 000 in the present financial year. Shame upon the Government!

Going further, let us look at the education programme for unemployed youth. The funding for the programme has been cut from \$103 000 to

\$100 000. In the same period unemployment amongst that group of people has increased.

We must start to consider where the economy is going and where we are headed. I believe we are headed for serious strife because the Budget presented by the Government does not deal with the problems at all.

On numerous occasions in the past it has been the proud boast of the Premier that we in this State, with close to 8 per cent of Australia's population, produce something like 22 per cent of the nation's export earnings.

This reflects the vulnerability of the economy of this State in relation to the whole world market, with the result that when downturn occurs on that world market, a whole lot of our industry and commerce suffers in a very direct way. So, we must examine what is happening with those world markets and with world trade in general.

In that respect, one could look at what is happening to the international monetary system, which is the key to what happens in the world marketplace. In looking at that monetary system, one must examine some of the meetings which have taken place internationally in the recent period.

The first such meeting to which I should like to refer took place in Tokyo between the heads of the leading international countries of the world. Some conclusions have been drawn out of that meeting by many people, one of whom was the European editor of the London *Guardian*. His commentary on that meeting, published on the 9th July, was that "international Keynesianism was dead". He went on to say that the leaders of these countries made no pretence of being able to solve the economic problems of the world. When one examines the communique contained in the same issue of that newspaper, one finds they were able to come to agreement about nothing, except to drive down the living standards of the mass of people in their countries—which, of course, means the developed countries of capitalism—and in the process to accept there would be a deterioration in social behaviour which the destruction of living standards would cause.

The person who received all the accolades at that conference for leading this kind of attack was the Tory Prime Minister of Britain (Margaret Thatcher). In that respect, it is interesting to see what the impact has been in the United Kingdom of those decisions at Tokyo. Mrs Thatcher went home and increased Budget cuts from £Stg6 000 million to £Stg8 000 million. She increased public spending in only two areas; namely, the police and

the Army. Since then, she has been busily dismantling the health services and the education system of Britain and busily asset-stripping any public industry in that country, and forcing down the standard of living of the people in Britain.

It was confidently predicted just a few weeks before the Tokyo meeting that the British economy would face a testing period between 1979 and 1981, with the loss of some 680 000 jobs. This information was contained in an independent survey carried out by the Confederation of British Industry, the Treasury, and academic economists. They anticipated that by the end of this year, the inflation rate of the United Kingdom would be 17.5 per cent, and possibly 20 per cent. It is of interest to note it is already up to 17.5 per cent.

One of the other outcomes of the Tokyo meeting was an immediate increase in interest rates in various countries. Interest rates in the United Kingdom went up to 14 per cent, which resulted in a speculative run on the British pound. This will mean that British businesses will find it difficult to invest to expand and carry on and, ultimately, many industries will be forced to close down. This will be as a direct result of the financial manipulation of the British Government, by increasing interest rates. All we can say of British capitalism is that it is old and degenerate, and has nothing to offer the people of Britain. In fact, the Confederation of British Industry in a report published in *The Australian Financial Review* stated that the Thatcher policies meant a disastrous slump for Britain.

Britain is one economy which is important on a world scale and which has a great deal of significance for us. The other important economy is that of the United States. It is very clear what happened in the United States as a result of the Tokyo meeting. Carter went home and for several weeks was in a dead funk, not knowing what to do. In his time in office he had managed to "reflate" the American economy and create between six million and seven million jobs—very largely at the expense of other countries. He indicated his "friendliness" towards the rest of the world when it was declared in the days before the Tokyo meeting that a \$5 a barrel subsidy would be imposed on oil imported into the United States, thereby making oil much more expensive for the rest of the world.

What emerged from the Tokyo meeting was a profound political crisis in the United States. They were forced to change their policies of "reflation" to policies of recession and slump. They changed their political leadership, and brought forward the people who were going to do

exactly that. One of the chief changes has been at Federal reserve level, with the promotion of a very conservative banker (Mr Volcker) who has increased interest rates in the United States. Officially, they are now over the 12.75 per cent level and the discount rate was increased only a few days ago. The result of this is a credit squeeze in the United States; increases in interest rates make it difficult for businesses and industry to carry on.

Contained there is the kind of crisis presently being experienced by the Chrysler Corporation in the United States. It has just approached the Federal Government for an enormous subsidy to enable it to trade its way out of a loss which, last financial year, ran at \$US1.5 billion. There is a profound crisis in the United States economy, which is the driving force behind the collapse of the US dollar. People are getting out of dollars, which manifests itself in the increase in the price of gold. It is not only the "fly-by-nighters" who are buying gold in great quantities; the major banks of the world, such as the Deutsch Bank, the Bank of Canada and Swiss banks also are buying into gold. They have no answer for the collapse of the US dollar and with it, all the paper currencies of the world.

It is no secret that, daily, the price of gold increases and panic is setting in. People are justified in panicking, because the United States is indeed very sick. It is estimated that outside the United States, banks hold something of the order of \$US600 billion. With the increase in interest rates and the slapping-on of the discount rate, it means a limitation on credit and a refusal to extend existing credit any further. It is conservatively estimated that public and private indebtedness in the United States is some \$US4.5 trillion.

The impact of these events on Australia is, and will continue to be, considerable. We see a collapse of the world money system and with it, a pushing-up of interest rates in almost every country. Indeed, we see locally that interest rates are on the rise. We will see a rapid increase in the number of people who are unemployed, and the prospects of major development in this State will be nil, because what happens in Western Australia is determined by what happens financially in the rest of the world.

Just before we went into recess for the Royal Show I asked the Premier a question about the North-West Shelf gas project. Parliament was told many months ago that contracts would be signed by September. The Premier understood what my question was about but, of course, he treated it with his usual disdain and tried to fob it

off. Then, on the last possible day, not in a statement to this House but to the Press, the Premier announced that contracts "might be signed in two months' time". In so saying and so acting the Premier has treated this place—and he is consistent—with complete contempt. The fact is that no contracts have been signed in relation to the North-West Shelf gas project.

In this place we should be discussing the implications of the proposals. They have never been debated here. We have never heard the member for Murdoch coming forward with his estimate of the project.

If the project goes ahead, it is proposed that most of the product will be exported. At the same time, the people in this State will be paying for it with all kinds of increases in charges that this Government is insisting on.

Mr MacKinnon: How would you finance the construction?

Dr TROY: Under the Premier, under the Liberal Party type of Government, and under capitalist control, we will be giving away our resources. We are told that gas is a scarce resource in Australian terms, and we are giving it away. It is something that will be dissipated and frittered away in something like 20 years.

At the same time, under the stewardship of this Government, the living standards of most people here will be reduced. We will see that if we look at some of the specifics, as I mentioned, and the money that this Government has set aside in the Budget for the training of our young people. The Government could not care less.

My analysis of what has happened economically in the financial world is that there is complete chaos in the paper currency system. That is reflected in the massive increase in the price of gold. That is reflected in the very rapid increase in interest rates. Given these aspects, we will not see major allocations of money from the foreigners who are now running scared with their capital. They are running scared, and they do not know what to do. They will not invest it for a long period.

I remind the House that a few months ago one of the leading executives of the Standard Oil Corporation spoke at a conference in Perth. He said that the North-West Shelf project was marginal at best. The second reason this project, under the stewardship of this Government, will not get off the ground—

Mr MacKinnon: You do not want it to get off the ground.

Dr TROY: —is that the parties cannot reach agreement on a price at present. The reason for that is that they do not know what a dollar will be worth in three days' time, let alone in six months' time, or 20 years' time. I contend that it is unlikely the North-West Shelf project will proceed.

We have a Government that brings down a Budget that is miserable and snivelling in terms of the interests of the people of the State. It is designed to serve the interests of capital only. We will see more unemployed as a result of this Budget. We will see a further decline in the living standards of people. The Premier knows this full well. It is for this reason that he has directed, through his police apparatus, the attacks on the trade union movement. He is attempting to blame others for the problems that he cannot solve himself. He has brought forward, in the course of the last 12 months, a whole string of repressive legislation. Why? Because he is afraid! He is afraid to face the real problems faced by the people in this State.

The Premier knows he has no answer. He has always supported capital and the interests of capital. He is certainly consistent in this regard.

There should be some amendments to the Budget documents. Firstly there should be concessions for the unemployed so that they can transport themselves around the town when they are looking for jobs.

I contend the only way our economy will be used in the interests of the vast mass of people is with public ownership. We should have public debates in places such as this about where our resources ought to go. We should have public ownership of all the resources in our community.

Government members: Socialism!

Dr TROY: Members can call it socialism if they like. I am quite happy to be identified with that; do not worry about that. Certainly I would dissociate myself from the pillaging of our resources that goes on under the name of capitalism and private enterprise.

We have to look to the future of our people. I would like to refer finally to a grievous problem existing in Fremantle. I would not know whether it exists anywhere else. In Fremantle today we have something of the order of 1 per cent of our population who are homeless. That is a discreditable record for any kind of Government. That is a discreditable record in a country like this that has such wealth and such potential in its people and its resources. With the present Government and its economic system, it is completely incapable of doing anything about it.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [9.17 p.m.]: I would like firstly to take the opportunity to draw to the attention of the House the fact that a little over 12 months ago we witnessed the end of the Good Neighbour Council of WA. It was pointed out that the budget for the Good Neighbour Council was cut by 30 per cent from the 1st September of last year, and that the council would be disbanded over a time. That has come to pass.

In 1979-80, to all intents and purposes, the budget of the Good Neighbour Council was to be eroded completely, and the council was to be disbanded and was to cease to operate. I am raising this matter at this juncture, because it will not be possible to debate it on the item.

In Part 2—Premier and Treasurer—on page 51 of the Budget documents, the expenditure in 1978-79 was voted at \$2,000, and the actual expenditure was \$1,000. The estimate for the current financial year is nothing. That brings us to the point where the State Government no longer supports the Good Neighbour Council, and the prospects of survival of the council as a voluntary organisation are completely negligible, to say the best.

The organisation to replace the Good Neighbour Council was a twofold body. On the one hand there was to be an orientation centre established at Graylands for the purpose of giving preliminary direction and training to migrants.

The second part of the body was to be a centre with a budget of \$50,000 which was to undertake certain community works for the various ethnic groups. The reason for this was that the Federal Government chose to make a political play to the larger ethnic groups in the community by providing them with finance and a form of social welfare work. In this way, the Government hoped to gain the support of the ethnic groups in the larger cities. That may be so. I suspect that it could apply in places like Sydney and Melbourne.

With the budget of \$50,000, the resource centre would have a very limited opportunity to emulate the work of the Good Neighbour Council which, at the time of its liquidation, had a staff of 12 in Perth compared with two at the resource centre now. The council had 600 registered voluntary workers in 83 country areas. That situation no longer obtains; it cannot because no organisation can work without funds. State assistance has been dropped to precisely nothing in the year 1979-80.

I shall quote a brief letter that appeared on the 26th September, 1979, in the *Daily News*. It has only three short paragraphs but is well worth reading because it highlights the principle that

was held by the Good Neighbour Council. It reads as follows—

May I, on behalf of the Burmese community, thank the Good Neighbour Council of WA for all its help and assistance towards our community in the past and its recent stand against the Immigration Control Association (WA Branch)—countering their emotional arguments against Asian migrants in this country.

It is indeed regrettable to learn that such an organisation as the Good Neighbour Council will be closing down.

When it does, is the government going to permit racist organisations to create misunderstanding and animosity between Europeans and non-Europeans in the name of democracy?

That is just another aspect of the racial and migration problems that this country and this State face. That is just a new aspect of the influx of Asian migrants, the aid they will require, and the attitude adopted by this Government for nothing more than political advantage in the larger cities with the larger ethnic groups. It is as cold-blooded as that.

The Government sold out an organisation of the status of the Good Neighbour Council for the opportunity to gain votes in those areas. It was purely a pragmatic and opportunistic move.

I would like to make some observations about experiences I have had through contact and experience with migrants in an area where, since World War II, there has been a consistent flow of new Australians. One noticeable thing about migrants to this country, although it has not been verified by scientific examination, is the problem of mental disorder. The reasons for this are not hard to imagine. There is the problem of moving from an established situation in a homeland and the re-establishment in Australia. If there is any disorder at all emotionally, or any form of instability, this will be exacerbated by migration.

It is only through organisations such as the Good Neighbour Council that relatives of new Australians have been actually visited on their arrival by officers of the council in order to supply an interpretation service. This is just one of the small acts of assistance the Good Neighbour Council has performed. The reason for its demise is nothing less than shameful.

There are something like 170 ethnic groups in Perth. Some will receive support under the new set-up; the majority will not and members can bet down to their last dollar that the larger groups will receive assistance because this is where the

larger vote pattern will result. This is why another blot has been cast upon the coalition Government opposite.

Of those 170 migrant groups, 160 will expect no assistance at all. It is with some very deep regret that I see there is no allocation in the Budget for them this year.

Sir Charles Court: You know the reason.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is a matter of votes.

Sir Charles Court: It is not a matter of votes. Our sympathies are with the Good Neighbour Council. They have been to see me again and the Commonwealth Government, as a result of the Galbally report, decided there is to be funding on an entirely different national basis.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That is true; it will be on an entirely different national basis. It was blatantly brought down by the Federal Government to assist ethnic groups in areas where there was a possibility of gaining votes.

Sir Charles Court: Do you think Galbally would have a pro-Government background?

Mr H. D. EVANS: His report did not visualise the granting of assistance to five major ethnic groups whilst ignoring the others. The minor groups will receive no support at all. I do not agree with Galbally, but I am telling the Government what the Good Neighbour Council did, and did well. I am telling the Government of the assistance it gave.

We are dealing with something like 600 voluntary workers. Where have they gone? A special centre was established in the Pilbara to replace these people. Now we will have just social workers looking after the major ethnic groups. The Fraser Government hopes this will give the best return at the ballot boxes.

I turn now to development in the south-west which has been heralded as a growing industrial area quite falsely by the Government. In the light of the report which has been brought down about industry in the lower south-west, it can be seen in some areas that not only will there not be the development the Government would like to project abroad, but also there will be a decrease in the population already there.

Sir Charles Court: What is your basis for that?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The report brought down by the South-west Regional Development Committee—the most recent there is—highlights what I have been saying for quite a long time. The Blackwood subdivision, which is the one of greatest concern and comprises four shire councils, had a total population of 16 149. In 1971 that figure had fallen to 14 940 and in 1976,

the year of the census, it had fallen to 14 400. We are talking in terms of a decrease of something like 1 per cent per annum. This must be exacerbated; the policies of this Government will ensure that is so.

In the Blackwood subdivision, the only two major innovations in the past decade were in the time of the Tonkin Labor Government. They were the wood chip industry and the Manjimup Canning Co-operative. These gave some stimulus to the lower south-west. But now the decrease of 1 per cent per annum is evident and an examination of the industries as they pertain at the present time will show this trend is likely to continue.

We can see that the hardwood timber industry is in a state of contraction. At the time of the last five-year report brought down by the Forests Department, the development in the timber industry was contracted by some 19 per cent. When the next five-year report is brought down in 1981 a further decrease of 20 per cent can be anticipated. This must be so, because there is very little chance of even the present level of sawmilling being maintained. The timber resources are just not there.

The overcutting of the forests is such that we are looking at a life of less than 30 years—probably 25 years—if the present level is maintained. As a result of the Forests Department's planting programme, the area of forests will be reduced by at least 20 per cent. It can be seen that a major industry in the area will be reduced also.

Mrs Craig: But they have been aware of that production for some years. It has been offset by the pines.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It has not been offset. The attitude taken was that pine would replace the timber needs of this State. What has not been pointed out, however, is the fact that a dislocation of population will occur. As the pine available for sawmilling and processing comes on supply, it will be taken from the area where it was milled previously and it will be milled further north in the vicinity of Dardanup. That will have a direct effect on the industry. We will not have satellite mills of the kind which would retain employment in the areas where the pine was grown.

Even the siting of the office of the Forests Department in Bunbury was detrimental to the lower south-west. Instead of siting the office in the karri forests where it should be, and where regeneration is required to a greater extent, it has been moved north which is totally detrimental to the area.

This is one of the few opportunities which the Government gets whereby, by judicious use of the placement of Government offices, it can retain facilities for the centres of population; but the Government threw away that opportunity. It threw away the opportunity with the softwood industry and it has now thrown it away in relation to the siting of the offices of the department.

Mrs Craig: When you were Minister for Forests, how much pine planting did you do in that area?

Mr H. D. EVANS: In Nannup there is a small joinery works which was unable to obtain adequate supplies of pine when it was situated in the heart of the pine-growing area. The owner of this works was told that the source had been committed in the south-west by the syndicate set up to control the milling of pine. This works employs a man and his son and two other men. They were unable to obtain pine despite the fact that the works was situated in the middle of the area in which it was grown. To some degree that matter has been resolved for now.

As a postscript, I have been informed that, if this particular market was not met by local products, it would be met by South Australian products. I have made my point with regard to the opportunity which has been lost in relation to the timber industry. It will not come again.

It is virtually impossible to expand the wood chipping industry. The quantity permitted under the terms of the licence will not be extended beyond the stipulated amount. For that reason, wood chipping will remain static.

I will have more to say about agriculture later, but I should like to point out that the trend which has been evident for some time is the decrease in the number of farmers and the increase in the size of holdings. The figures are rather enlightening when we examine them overall and look at them in relation to the economic position of the agricultural industry.

In the lower south-west good prospects remain for vegetable growing and horticulture. Problems are being experienced in relation to fruit growing. In *The West Australian* of the 1st October this year it was predicted that the fruit trade was facing a dire future. Little was being done in the world to finance fruit and vegetable production. These comments were made by Mr A. J. Webster, the State Manager for the major exporting house of Craig Mostyn and Co. Pty. Ltd. He forecasts a diminishing trade in fruit from the southern hemisphere. It is possible this could have been offset to some extent by an integrated industry.

When the Tonkin Government was in office an effort was made to set up an apple exporting authority. This was opposed by the then Opposition at every turn along the way, inside and outside the House. As a consequence, that Bill was not passed. The Legislative Council ensured that the amendments made to the Bill were such that it could not be accepted by the Government of the day. As a result, the fragmentation of the industry has continued. No guiding body has been set up to give cohesion to the export market and the home market. The situation in regard to apples for juicing is in disorder and this will contribute to the overall disharmony of the industry. An authority such as that envisaged by the Tonkin Government would at least have ensured that the savings on the export market would have been achieved as suggested in the extensive report brought down at that time. This, of course, would have favourable repercussions on the home market.

Fruit juicing would have been a very useful and desirable adjunct to the apple growing industry in the lower south-west region. However, it does not look as if it will eventuate in the immediate future unless something unexpected is announced soon. The situation in regard to next season does not look very harmonious.

There is also the question of supplies to the Manjimup Canning Co-operative which is dependent on the apple pack for its economic viability. This will be jeopardised to some extent.

It was hoped that one Western Australian vegetable company would extend into this area, but this has not eventuated. As a consequence, we are importing more peas from the Eastern States than was the case previously. The processing factory at Albany took up some of the slack, but the quantity of vegetables being imported from the Eastern States is still alarming.

It is not yet known whether there was some positive initiative on the part of this Government to establish vegetable processing in this State. The questions asked by me in this House in regard to the matter were answered in a rather evasive manner. Therefore, at the present time, the outlook for vegetable processing is not very hopeful.

The two optimistic notes which will maintain a level of population in the lower south-west must, therefore, be tourism and fruit and vegetable processing. Tourism has not been advanced to the extent that it could have been. The prospect of establishing a scenic railway from Pemberton to Northcliffe has not been examined fully. It is probably one of the best scenic drives in

Australia. There are seven major bridges crossing the Lefroy and Warren Rivers, and Dumbercut stream. However, the answers received from the three departments approached were negative.

Not only am I referring to the failure of the Government to develop specific tourist attractions of that kind, but I am referring also to its failure to make available adequate development capital which is required in the area. As a result, there has been a decrease in population of 1 per cent per annum and it does not look as if the decrease will be stemmed in that area for some time.

The problem is increasing in severity. As I have pointed out, the two major developments in the south-west in the last decade have been achieved as a result of the activities of the Tonkin Government, the Manjimup cannery, and the wood chipping industry.

I should like to turn to agriculture and the policies affecting farmers in this State. To say the least, the record of the Government is rather dismal. By way of background and of putting the situation in its proper perspective, the future of farming beyond the 1980s is fairly clear from the two trends that have been apparent in the past few years—perhaps, the past few decades.

Although it is difficult to be other than general, it becomes apparent that the two changes which will occur will be, firstly, that the number of farmers on active rural holdings will decline. This will be on a general level, though the average size of those holdings will increase rather markedly. The second change is that further technological development and changes in management factors will be introduced and will maintain farming at a viable level—whether at the present level or at a higher or lower level, remains to be seen—and will depend on the extent of the industry and the changes brought about.

The farming population and trends are changing. From 1960-61 to the year 1975-76—in that 15-year period—the rural holdings fell in number from 21 832 to 20 500 and the number of rural workers declined from 37 384 to 36 231. At the same time, however, the production capacity of each rural worker doubled in terms of growth value of production. That resulted from market forces, improved marketing, and improved technological advances. In the years 1972 to 1976—that four-year period—the total number of rural holdings fell by 16 per cent but the number of holdings exceeding 2 000 hectares increased by 11 per cent and on projections it would appear that by the year 2 000 AD—and that is only a matter of 20 years hence—85 per cent of all rural holdings will exceed 2 000 hectares.

Numerically, farmers represent 7 per cent of the work force but by the year 2000 AD that percentage could fall to 4 per cent. At the same time rural production in this State could well rise by between 50 per cent and 70 per cent. So, those trends in the size of farms, in the application of technological change and in the increase of production and decline of population become evident.

In common with commercial farmers throughout the world, Australian farmers are faced with a phenomenon that has been generally and loosely termed a cost-price squeeze. This is the tendency for prices paid by farmers for all manner of goods and services, and especially fuel at this time. With regard to the figures for fuel, it would do us well to observe more closely, with a view to the future, the present policy of the Federal Government and what it has done to fuel prices in respect of the cost factor of everything that goes on to a farm. This needs to be examined in full detail; that is, the tendency for increased prices paid by farmers for all manner of goods and services to increase at a rate faster than prices received by farmers for their products.

To offset the effects of this continued cost-price squeeze, farmers will probably rely on changes in technology, in managerial skills, and in other developments. I illustrate that point by quoting the actual figures that have been incurred in a 15-year period from 1961 to 1976. Developments in this period were of a major magnitude and similar developments will continue. These developments will be continued research into improved plant and animal strains; the use of higher capital investment on the land and in machinery—in other words, bigger farms and bigger machines—improved marketing methods and chemical control of weeds and insects.

It is the changes wrought in these ways which will increase productivity upon which rural industries depend for their continuing viability and to remain productive in the world's markets. The increased productivity in Australia has been dramatic, especially in the 15-year period from 1961 to 1976.

In 1949 an area of 4.9 million hectares of wheat was planted, which increased by 1978 to 10.1 million hectares. Sugar cane increased from 0.1 million hectares to 0.29 million hectares. The output per dairy cow increased from 1 746 litres to 2 404 litres, also indicating the nature of the technological changes. This rate of increased productivity has offset the cost-price squeeze which all commercial farmers face. The index to agricultural productions shows there was a rise from 55 to 116 in that period.

The technical innovations to which I have referred can be expected to advance in a number of ways, but there is a responsibility on the part of the Government to ensure that agricultural industries are retained; at least at the level we know. Only a few years ago agricultural production represented more than 50 per cent of the export earnings of this nation. However, in the late 1940s it fell below that figure. That was the general case—going back to the early years of the 1920s.

The question then of retaining our agricultural industries is one that will exercise the minds of Governments and development programmes will be required to do this in the long term.

It should be pointed out at this stage that the rural section of the Federal Budget in 1979 was not in the interests of the farmers of this nation. We find that probably the most significant action was the adoption of the world parity oil price policy by the Federal Government. That has cost the rural industries in this country approximately \$160 million; that is approximately 20 per cent of the total. The rural communities use about 20 per cent of the nation's fuel and the total increase runs to something like \$800 million.

The amount applicable to rural industries will probably be \$160 million; that is, the cost to them. However, there are other matters such as rural adjustment. The funds have been diminishing considerably and the rural adjustment scheme was reduced under the Federal Budget by something like \$22.3 million. This is at a time when there is a requirement for a large adjustment in rural industries having regard to the projections of the size of holdings and the relocations that will be required. To cut down on rural adjustment funds at this stage is a most ill-advised action. The lack of funds will be felt in Western Australia as in other States. Why this Government tolerated this action is something difficult to explain.

I point out, too, that the livestock slaughter levies and the meat export inspection levies cost the meat producers of this country very dearly. The Fraser Government had given an absolute guarantee that the nitrogen bounty would be retained at \$80 a tonne yet it is now down to \$20 a tonne. That is the sort of thing which has come about.

The superphosphate bounty, although retained, is still at \$12 a tonne, but the current price of bulk superphosphate at the works is just over \$52 a tonne. So, the value of the superphosphate bounty, in real terms, is diminishing considerably. It has received no impetus, increase, or

consideration as a result of any activity by the Federal Government. The Commonwealth extension research fund received a substantial cut, which has placed a drain on the States in ensuring that research programmes are maintained.

It is probably apposite to make reference to another Budget of six years ago when the outcry in this Chamber—and beyond this Chamber—was very substantial indeed. But, we find the matters contained in the Whitlam Budget of 1973 are still not redressed. If they were so heinous, and if politicians—many from this House—could stir the way they did, then surely those matters would have been changed and redressed by this time. However, that is not the case.

We find the measures of the Fraser Government have increased the problems which they claimed would follow 1973. That is the double standard to which we have grown accustomed in this place.

In general terms, the State Budget does not dishonour any promise of legislation of a rural nature because no undertakings were given. In the Governor's Speech, during March of this year, under the heading of "Agriculture", there were some eulogistic statements and some observations on the state of agriculture in this State. There was a total absence of proposed rural legislation.

Not only was there no policy on agriculture in the Governor's Speech, but also there was no rectification of the havoc claimed by a hostile Federal Government—more hostile than the Whitlam Government was reputed to be. That is the way matters have transpired.

In the Liberal Party policy at the commencement of this parliamentary term the undertaking was given that there would be set up a Rural and Allied Industries Conference. That was done, and I have elicited from the Premier the number of occasions the various committees of the conference have met, and also a list of the so-called achievements which have come to light as a result of those committees.

Apart from two matters which are indicated in the Budget—one dealing with livestock research and the other with machinery—there is very little. If we look to a Government's performance in terms of a straight out legislative programme, we find this Government is sadly lacking. I have an analysis of the legislation to which I will make reference at the appropriate time.

I will refer to a study into the marginal cost of production in the dairying industry. This matter was undertaken by the Rural and Allied Industries Conference. At the second meeting I

attended, a previous good supporter of the Liberal Party stated it was purely an exercise in cynicism. That is about all it was; it provided a forum for matters to be aired. The member for Merredin is shaking his head, but he knows full well I am right. The conference provides a forum where matters can be shelved without any action being taken. As a consequence, the conference is working on such things as the establishment of a livestock study; it will go ahead with a study into marginal costs of production in the dairying industry, and it will inquire into livestock saleyard allocation.

The conference also has been called upon to carry out a valuation and submit a report on the abattoir industry. Here again, we have the leaders in those various industries being called upon to make a report which must be biased in favour of their own personal interest.

The Government is using that conference as a vehicle to develop its own policy. Nothing could be more ludicrous. Apart from being a convenient hatch for stacking problems of a rural nature, the conference has achieved nil.

I point out, too, that in the matter of producing documentation or publication for the fruit industry it seems to be a duplication of some of the excellent work undertaken by the Department of Agriculture. The information service which the department has developed, and the distribution of memo sheets, are probably the most effective ways of getting information at a level which is understood and appreciated by the farmers in the area. The information deals with the problems which they understand, and it is prepared by officers who are living with those problems. So, this is an effective vehicle. The conference has been no more than a cosmetic gesture, and probably will lead to more problems than it is ever likely to solve.

When we look at the valuation of real achievement, in terms of legislation, an examination of the legislation introduced in each of the past 10 or 11 years is rather a revelation. There were only three years during which progressive initiatives were taken, and that was during the three years of the Tonkin Government. I emphasise that important statement, because it was only during those three years that any positive policy initiatives were taken. The then Opposition blocked useful legislation with regard to fruit fly.

Going back to 1967, six pieces of rural legislation were introduced, none of which contained any new concept. The Bulk Handling Act was rearranged, but that was purely a matter

of administration and procedure. In summary, of the 36 Bills introduced between 1968 and 1971—a period of coalition Government by the Liberal and Country Parties—not one measure contained an alteration or an innovation to the legislation covering agriculture in Western Australia. It is possible two exceptions could be made: one related to the Durham River irrigation project, which was a new agreement and which had to be ratified. The second one was the Marketing of Linseed Act, No. 115 of 1969, which established a Linseed Marketing Board following upon representations from growers.

But in the main the agricultural measures in that three-year period were designed to assist the administration of agriculture, examples being amendments to the Aerial Spraying Control Act, the Agricultural Products Act, the Argentine Ant Act, the Artificial Breeding Board Act, and the Cattle Industry Compensation Act, and measures which were complementary to Commonwealth

legislation, such as amendments to the Wheat Delivery Quotas Act and the Wheat Marketing Act Continuance Act, the latter Acts having been introduced by Labor Governments at various times.

The 1974-1979 legislative programme of the Liberal-National Country Party Government comprised 52 Bills, and once again an examination of them shows that only one positive policy was initiated. However, as we predicted at the time, it turned out to be a fiasco. The Beef Industry Committee Act of 1974, which required voluntary restraint in the saleyards, was doomed to the failure which was predicted. I will have the opportunity to finalise this summary when dealing with the agricultural vote.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 10.02 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

LAND

North-west Towns

1577. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

(1) What is the current average cost of land—

- (a) now;
- (b) one year ago;
- (c) two years ago;

in each of the following towns—

- (i) Kununurra;
- (ii) Halls Creek;
- (iii) Wyndham;
- (iv) Derby;
- (v) Broome;
- (vi) Port Hedland;
- (vii) South Hedland;
- (viii) Marble Bar;
- (ix) Onslow;
- (x) Carnarvon;
- (xi) Shark Bay;

for duplex blocks and standard residential blocks?

(2) When were lots of land last sold in the abovementioned towns?

(3) What were the sale prices, and the costs involved in the sale of the total lots of land referred to in (2)?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) to (3) The information requested by the honourable member has entailed considerable research and is set out in a schedule which is submitted for tabling.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 377).

- (g) South Hedland;
- (h) Marble Bar;
- (i) Onslow;
- (j) Carnarvon;
- (k) Shark Bay?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Specific "assessed demand" figures for residential land in the townsites nominated by the honourable member are not available. There are various factors or indications which are relevant in determining the need and priority for Crown townsite subdivisions. These include land sale results; the incidence of private or other subdivisional activity; local and regional developments; and input from local and regional authorities. Another indicator is the number of public inquiries/applications recorded in the department. Current inquiry figures registered for the townsites concerned are listed for the information of the honourable member.

- (a) Kununurra—3 inquiries since December, 1978 (last public land release).
- (b) Hall's Creek—1 since 1974.
- (c) Wyndham—Nil since June, 1979.
- (d) Derby—16 since August, 1977.
- (e) Broome—2 since the 6th September, 1979.
- (f) and (g) Port Hedland and South Hedland—Residential land release arranged by State Housing Commission.
- (h) Marble Bar—5 since May, 1969.
- (i) Onslow—16 since March, 1977.
- (j) Carnarvon—2 since March, 1976.
- (k) Shark Bay (Denham)—50 since July, 1976.

LAND

North-west Towns

1578. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

What is the assessed demand for residential land in the following towns—

- (a) Kununurra;
- (b) Halls Creek;
- (c) Wyndham;
- (d) Derby;
- (e) Broome;
- (f) Port Hedland;

DECENTRALISATION

Country Firms: Tendering Concessions

1599. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Are concessions available for country manufacturing firms when tendering for—
 - (a) private works;
 - (b) Government contracts;
 - (c) local government contracts?
- (2) Is consideration given to country firms who employ apprentices when tendering for contracts?

- (3) If "Yes" to (1) and (2), would he supply full details?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) (a) No.
(b) Yes.
(c) No.
- (2) All country-based manufacturers are entitled to a preference allowance when tendering for direct supply to the Government of manufactured goods within their region or a specified radius of their factory.
- (3) The present criteria for concessions are under review and details will be announced shortly.

TRANSPORT: ROAD

Frozen and Chilled Goods

1600. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to question 1540 of 1979 relevant to transport of frozen goods, will his department advise by what provisions of the Transport Commission Act were said licences transferred from Westrail to OD Transport Ltd. and other road transport companies?
- (2) By what means does the Transport Commission "strictly" control freight rates and by what means are costs of operations ascertained and reviewed?
- (3) At what times have the Transport Commission carried out inquiries into the costs of operations of the service between Perth and Kalgoorlie?
- (4) What are the present costs of operation of the service between Perth and Kalgoorlie?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Westrail carried freezer/chiller goods by rail and did not need a Transport Commission licence. OD Transport and others hold licences to transport goods at controlled temperatures to various places in the southern part of the State. As existing services they were entitled to consideration under section 36 of the Transport Commission Act.
- (2) Freight rates on these services are not permitted to be increased without approval of the Transport Commission and cost of operations are ascertained from the operator's audited accounts.

- (3) All services have been under constant review since they commenced on the 31st October, 1977. Before increases were granted on the Perth-Kalgoorlie service in July, 1978, February, 1979, and August, 1979, an analysis was made of the viability of the total freezer/chiller services operated by OD Transport.
- (4) The financial affairs of a company are made available to the Commissioner of Transport on a confidential basis.

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLES

Licences: Replacement of Road Maintenance Tax

1601. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Transport:

As the Road Traffic Authority is under a ministerial direction to adjust the licence fees back to the 1st July on vehicles which previously paid road maintenance tax, will he direct the Road Traffic Authority to adjust licence fees back to the 1st July on haulage vehicles which previously did not pay road maintenance tax and which now pay a reduced licence?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

No. It is not valid to draw a comparison between the removal of the 50 per cent licence fee concession for the unexpired licence period on heavy trucks and the implementation under the new legislation of the 20 per cent reduction in licence fees for the lighter classes of vehicles. As the lighter classes of vehicles were not subject to the road maintenance charge, the same conditions did not apply to them. The established practice under previous legislation for the lighter class of vehicles has been for changes in the scale of vehicle licence fees to become effective from the expiry date of the particular licence and this practice has been specifically followed in the recent legislation covering the reduction in licence fees for the lighter classes of vehicles.

TOWN PLANNING*South Perth City Council*

1602. MR GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) What is the reason for the delay in gazetting amendment No. 12 City of South Perth, Town Planning Scheme No. 2 of the 28th January, 1972?
- (2) When is it anticipated the amendment will be gazetted?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) I am concerned with the effect of piecemeal amendment of planning schemes in situations when a comprehensive review of the scheme, as provided for in the Act, may be more appropriate. I have had discussions with the South Perth City Council with a view to resolving the difference of approach, and hope that I will shortly be able to give my decision on the amendment.

EDUCATION*Burt Committee*

1603. MR WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) (a) In view of the short period allowed for the Murdoch Committee of Inquiry to complete its findings and the announced intention to hold interviews during the month of July and have a published report by August, will all persons who have made submissions be interviewed;

(b) if not, why not?

- (2) When does he expect the committee to report?
- (3) To whom will the committee report?
- (4) When will the report be made public?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) I am not aware that there was an "announced intention" for the committee of inquiry into the future of Murdoch University to hold interviews during the month of July or to publish a report by August. On the question of interviews, I can only repeat a comment I made in response to an earlier question: namely, that this is a procedural matter which is properly the concern of the committee of inquiry. I am informed, however, that the committee has received some 80 submissions; and, in view of the limited time it has in which to complete its task, has decided at this stage to meet only with representatives of Murdoch University, the Murdoch University Academic Staff Association, the University Salaried Officers' Association of Western Australia (which represents the Murdoch University general staff), the Murdoch University Guild of Students, the University of Western Australia, the WA Institute of Technology, the Colleges, and the Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission. Again, as I said in response to the earlier question, I have the utmost faith in the chairman and members of the committee and I am sure that appropriate consultation will take place during the course of the inquiry.

(2) Towards the end of October.

(3) The Minister for Education.

(4) After the Government has had an opportunity to consider it, a decision will be made regarding its release.

LIQUOR: SPIRITS*Minimum Alcohol Strength*

1604. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Further to the answer given to question 1246 of 1979 relevant to alcohol strength, what consideration has been

given to the possible effect of the enforcement in Western Australia of a minimum alcohol strength for spirits substantially higher than that applying in other States on the problems of alcoholism and drinking driving?

- (2) In view of the fact that adjustments have been made to regulations governing the minimum alcohol strength of beer which have facilitated the production of low alcohol beer, is he prepared to consider changes to the regulations which appear to enforce higher than necessary alcohol strengths?
- (3) If "No" to (2), why not?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (3) Reducing the alcohol strength for spirits would most probably lead to reduced revenue to the Government, and probably an increase in price to the consumer or, at least, no reduction in price, with negligible social advantage to the community and no predictable effect on alcohol or drinking driving.
- (2) No. The member should be aware that the beer in question is a reduced alcohol level beer and not a low alcohol beer.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS

Allinjara, Ballajura, Koondoola, and Waddington

1605. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When is it planned to build a primary school to serve the new areas of Allinjara and Ballajura?
- (2) Is it a fact that, in the interim, children from these areas will be accommodated at the Koondoola Primary School?
- (3) What are the anticipated increases in enrolments at the Koondoola Primary School in 1980 and 1981 resulting from new housing developments in Allinjara and Ballajura?
- (4) What proposals in terms of changes to school boundaries are planned to help alleviate the impact of these enrolments on the Koondoola Primary School?

- (5) What other special arrangements are proposed to alleviate the impact of increased enrolments in 1977 and 1978 prior to the opening of the Waddington Primary School?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) A school is listed for the area and an opening in 1981 or 1982 will depend on the actual rate of housing development.
- (2) Koondoola is the nearest school and parents will probably want to have their children attend there.
- (3) 1980—Approximately 40 students in February and possibly 70 by December. 1981—Possibly 120-160 by the end of the year if the current rate of building development continues.
- (4) There are no proposals for changing existing boundaries in this area.
- (5) Temporary accommodation will be provided, as required, at the Koondoola Primary School.
Where possible, the Ballajura-Allinjara children will be grouped to minimize changes in organisation at Koondoola when the new school opens.

HOSPITALS

Capital Expenditure

1606. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Health:

What capital expenditure has there been in each of the last five financial years for each of the following metropolitan hospitals:

- (a) Royal Perth Hospital;
- (b) Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre;
- (c) Fremantle Hospital;
- (d) Wanneroo Hospital;
- (e) King Edward Memorial Hospital?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (a) to (e) The information requested by the member is tabled.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 378).

LAND

Broome: Auction

1607. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Lands:

Further to question 1019 of 1979 relevant to the sale of residential and duplex lots, will the Minister advise the

number of residential and duplex lots sold and the total amount received from the sales?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Auction 30th May 1979

- 75 single residential lots.
- 11 duplex lots.
- 55 single residential sold at auction.
- 2 duplex sold at auction.
- 7 single lots allocated to SHC.
- 4 single lots allocated to GEHA.
- 2 single lots allocated to administrative services.
- 1 single lot allocated to medical.
- 6 single lots withdrawn from sale.
- 2 duplex lots allocated to SHC.
- 2 duplex lots allocated to GEHA.
- 5 duplex lots withdrawn from sale.

Auction 6th September 1979

- 6 single residential lots.
- 5 duplex lots.
- All lots sold at auction.

Ten per cent deposit of the price bid is payable at auction. Balance may be paid by eight instalments over two years. Purchase money received to date amounts to \$203 047. Assuming all purchasers meet their payment commitments, total proceeds from the sale will amount to \$664 650.

SEWERAGE: TREATMENT PLANT

Shenton Park

1608. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) How much has been spent, in each of the past three years, on upgrading the Shenton Park sewerage treatment plant?
- (2) How much was allocated in the 1979-80 budget estimates for upgrading of the plant?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| (1) | 1976-77 | \$28 031 | |
| | 1977-78 | Nil | |
| | 1978-79 | \$179 000 | |
| | —predominantly progress payment to consulting engineers. | | |
| (2) | \$263 000 | —predominantly | progress payment on plant design. |

SEWERAGE: TREATMENT PLANT

Shenton Park

1609. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has a study of the Shenton Park sewerage treatment plant been completed?
- (2) If so, has the Government received it?
- (3) When will it be released?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) The consultant's report is expected next month.

ALUMINA REFINERY

Alwest: Worsley

1610. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Mines:

Can he give any indication when a formal announcement on the future of the Alwest project will occur?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The participants are proceeding to conclude their intercompany agreements with view to formal approvals. We will be meeting early in November when a timetable for the project may be announced.

APPRENTICES

Government Departments and Instrumentalities: North-west Towns

1611. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Further to question 1580 of 1979 and the employment of apprentices, will he advise the maximum quota of apprentices, in numerical terms, which can be employed by Government departments and instrumentalities in each of the towns mentioned in that question?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

As indicated in my answer to question 1580, it is advised that Government departments and instrumentalities in the towns mentioned are currently employing maximum numbers of apprentices in the light of all relevant circumstances. These circumstances include such things as—

Ability to provide the full range of training for apprentices;
The availability of skilled tradesmen to act as trainers and supervise training;
Adequate training facilities; and
A comprehensive range of work functions to enable the apprentices to obtain necessary experience and skills on varied tasks.

ENTERTAINMENT

Theatre Trust

1612. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

What action is being taken to set up a theatre trust to control Her Majesty's Theatre, the Entertainment Centre, and other venues?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

A Bill is to be introduced shortly to establish and constitute a theatre trust.

CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS

Government Dealings

1613. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Is there a new business registration called "campaign consultants", registered proprietors of which are Peter Bevan, Brian Bevan, and W. W. Mitchell?
- (2) Does the Government have dealings of any kind with this organisation?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The information is readily available at the Corporate Affairs Office.
- (2) Not to my knowledge.

1614. *This question was postponed.*

RAILWAYS

Midland-Perth

1615. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

Has there been a withdrawal of any train service on the Perth-Midland line since the closure of the Perth-Fremantle line?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

There have been no reductions in passenger trains. Freight trains are adjusted on a daily basis in accordance with the traffic offering.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Two-airline System

1616. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

In view of decisions made by the Australian Labor Party at Federal and State levels and the Liberal Party in this State for the termination of the two airline policy, will he inform the Federal Minister for Transport that there is widespread support throughout Western Australia for an end to the two airline policy and request its withdrawal?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Under the relevant Commonwealth Act withdrawal or abandonment of the two airline policy requires five years' notice of an intention to do so.

In any event the Government is by no means certain that blanket abandonment of the policy would be in the best interests of Western Australia.

We believe that our best approach is to seek modification of those features of the policy which clearly disbenefit Western Australia and we have been working with the Commonwealth along these lines for some time.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Fares: Perth-Sydney-Perth Extensions

1617. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact that an economy fare from the United States or New Zealand involves an extra \$483 for a Sydney-Perth-Sydney extension?
- (2) Is it a fact that an economy fare from London to Perth involves only an extra \$152 for a Perth-Sydney-Perth extension or only \$150 on the same basis for a passenger from Johannesburg or Mauritius?
- (3) Can he outline the reasons why this occurs and advise what its effects are on tourism in this State?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) The cost of a Sydney-Perth-Sydney extension to a trans-Pacific flight depends upon the type of international ticket purchased.

For a traveller with standard economy ticket which permits stop-overs, the Sydney-Perth-Sydney extension involves an extra \$483.

For a traveller with a point-to-point economy ticket or an economy ticket which is part of a promotional or tour package, the Sydney-Perth-Sydney extension involves an "add-on" of 70 per cent of \$483 or \$338. Such a ticket holder can purchase the cheaper Sydney-Perth-Sydney ticket either abroad or in Australia. Advance purchase conditions do not apply to the extension.

- (2) The costs of Perth-Sydney-Perth extensions to flights from Britain, South Africa or Mauritius also depend upon the type of international ticket purchased.

If a traveller has a one way economy ticket, then the costs and conditions of a Perth-Sydney-Perth extension are the same as those applying to the trans-Pacific traveller described in (1) above.

For a traveller with a return economy ticket who is prepared to comply with certain conditions, the cost of a Perth-Sydney-Perth extension can be as low as \$176 if his origin was London or \$166 if his origin was Johannesburg or Mauritius. It would not usually be necessary for such a traveller to "return" over his outbound route.

- (3) As the Leader of the Opposition is well aware, air fares over international and domestic routes are the subject of negotiations between the Commonwealth and the international and major domestic airlines. This is essentially an area of Commonwealth responsibility. Put in the simplest terms, the reason for a difference, where there is one, between Perth-Sydney-Perth and Sydney-Perth-Sydney extensions is that an international air fare has been negotiated for the former but not for the latter.

In an explanation of this situation earlier in the year, the Federal Minister for Transport said, and I quote him—

..... The standard worldwide practice is for international fares to be established on the basis of the major terminal points in each country, which normally coincide with the largest population centres, and the direction of the principal traffic flows to and from the particular country.

Through fares are derived by adding domestic fares to international fares either side of the gateway city. The adoption of this fare construction rule is a direct reflection of the pattern and frequency of services actually operated; in other words the through journey is basically a combination of a domestic flight plus an international flight.

The Sydney/Melbourne to London fare is the base fare between Australia and the United Kingdom, by virtue of the historically operated service pattern and the situation that over 80 per cent of the total Australia/United Kingdom passenger traffic flow has its origin or destination in the eastern states.

Services between Melbourne/Sydney and London are through international flights whether they operate directly via a point in South East Asia or, as in some cases, via Perth. Such services do not represent a combination of a domestic flight plus an international flight and this is reflected in the fare structure accordingly, with the Perth/London fare being fixed in relation to the basic international fare between Sydney/Melbourne and London.

We do not accept that explanation as reasonable. The high cost of the Sydney-Perth-Sydney extension, obviously places Western Australia in a most disadvantaged position in attracting to this State overseas tourists currently arriving on the eastern seaboard.

The \$483 to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred in his question is

the domestic economy return air fare between Perth and Sydney. My colleagues in Government and I have made numerous representations to the Commonwealth on the subject of the high cost of air travel between Perth and the Eastern States for both domestic and international travellers.

A little more than a month ago, I again formally expressed our concern to the Federal Minister for Transport and urged him to introduce a new two tiered formula as a basis for the calculation of domestic air fares. Under the suggested formula, the cost of a return economy ticket between Perth and Sydney would be reduced by about \$80, and the effect on other users of the air system would be only marginal.

I am awaiting a response from the Federal Minister on this and other matters related to the economic welfare of tourists and other travellers on international and domestic flights to and from this State.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Darwin-Perth

1618. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware of the reasons for a ten month delay in approval of TAA's application for a second DC9 service each week from Perth to Darwin via Port Hedland?
- (2) If so, will he advise the House?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) No. The member should direct his inquiries to the Commonwealth Government.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Fares: Interstate

1619. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has he written to the Federal Minister for Transport concerning a better fare construction formula to apply for longer distances on interstate air routes throughout Australia?

- (2) If so, will he table a copy of his submission?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not at this time. I would prefer to await the outcome of my negotiations with the Commonwealth Minister for Transport.

CONFEDERATION OF WA INDUSTRY AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Grants or Loans

1620. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Further to question 1206 of 1979 relevant to grants and loans, will he state—

- (a) the trade fairs in which the Government and the Confederation of Industry or its predecessor have shared costs in the past three years, and the breakdown of costs;
- (b) the trade fairs in which the Government and the Perth Chamber of Commerce have shared costs, in the past three years and the breakdown of these costs?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) and (b) There have been no direct monetary contributions by the Government to these organisations, but on occasions some assistance has been rendered to these institutions by way of providing floor space rented or leased by the Department of Industrial Development and provision of State promotion material.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Employment Agencies: Use by Government

1621. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Was an advertisement for a position as a trucking inspector lodged in the situations vacant column on page 86 of *The West Australian* on the 6th September, 1979?
- (2) Did the advertisement state whether the position was within a Government department or authority?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Who placed the advertisement and paid for it?

- (5) With which department or authority is the successful applicant to be placed?
- (6) Is the inquiry number for the advertisement that of P & G Employment?
- (7) Do Government departments and/or authorities regularly arrange inquiries for advertisements to be made through private employment agencies?
- (8) If "Yes" to (7), which department and/or authority?
- (9) When did this practice begin?
- (10) With which private employment agencies does the Government deal?
- (11) How many positions have been advertised in this manner in the past 12 months?
- (12) Is a commission or any other fee charged by the private employment agencies for their services against the Government and/or the successful applicant?
- (13) If "Yes" to (12), on what basis are fees charged?
- (14) Why do P & G Employment refuse to reveal the name of the Government department in which the successful applicant will be placed?
- (15) Was the position advertised in the Public Service notices?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) The advertisement was not lodged by a Government department or authority.
- (4) Placed by P & G Employment following an approach by the Transport Commission.
- (5) Transport Commission.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) I am advised that departments and authorities do not regularly arrange inquiries for advertisements through private employment agencies.
- (8) to (11) The answers to questions (8) to (11) would require extensive inquiries, the cost of which is considered not to be warranted in the circumstances, especially in view of the answer to (7).
- (12) and (13) My understanding is that the equivalent of one week's salary for each person appointed is charged to the employer.
- (14) This is a matter for the agency concerned.
- (15) No.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to know the special circumstances in this case, I will be only too pleased to tell him.

HEALTH: TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Pushers: Hay Street Mall

1622. MR BERTRAM, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is it a fact that a huge haul of drugs was recently seized on a ship in Fremantle?
- (2) Is it a fact that at the same time and since drugs have been openly pushed in the Hay Street Mall?
- (3) Is it a fact that the drugs being pushed in the Hay Street Mall are being pushed by young women in uniforms?
- (4) If "Yes" to (1), (2) and (3)—
 - (a) who employs these young women pushers;
 - (b) is it the Government's policy to allow this pushing of drugs or does it intend to do something about it;
 - (c) if "Yes", when?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) No evidence of this.
- (4) Not applicable.

STATE FINANCE

Consolidated Revenue and General Loan Funds: Receipts and Payments

1623. Mr BERTRAM, to the Treasurer:

- (1) For each of the years ended June 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1979—
 - (a) what was the total Budget and what total actually resulted in the—
 - (i) Consolidated Revenue Fund;
 - (ii) Loan Fund?
 - (b) what total receipts and payments occurred in the—
 - (i) Consolidated Revenue Fund;
 - (ii) Loan Fund,
 in each of the months of May, June, July, and August?
- (2) (a) Are all receipts and payments in the Consolidated Revenue Fund and Loan Fund dated on the day money is received or payment is made as the case may be;

- (b) if not, what are the exceptions?
- (3) Is the daily total extracted of receipts and payments in the—
 - (a) Consolidated Revenue Fund;
 - (b) Loan Fund?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), how long after each day is that total extracted?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) The information requested involves two pages of tabulated figures and I seek leave to table the relevant papers.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 379).

- (2) (a) Yes, as a general rule. However, it must be appreciated that given the very large volume of transactions and the wide dispersion of Government activities throughout the State, there are inevitably exceptions to the rule.
- (b) The most common exceptions are as follows—
 - (i) Receipts taken up to the close of business (normally 3.30 p.m.) on any one day are dated the same day and brought to account on the next working day. Receipts taken after 3.30 p.m. are dated the next working day and brought to account on the day following.
 - (ii) Outstation receipts are not brought to account until the bank deposit advices are received at the department's head office.
 - (iii) Cash order expenditure is not brought to account in the Consolidated Revenue Fund or General Loan Fund until a clearing schedule is submitted by the issuing department.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The following day.

TRUSTEE COMPANIES

Details

1624. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) (a) Will the Minister supply the name, address and occupation of each of the directors of—

- (i) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;
- (ii) The West Australian Trustee, Executor & Agency Company Limited?

- (b) Have there been any changes in these directors in the last six years;
- (c) if "Yes" will he supply particulars thereof;
- (d) if "No", why?
- (2) Which members of this Parliament, their spouses or dependants or part-dependants are shareholders or have a financial interest in either—
 - (a) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;
 - (b) The West Australian Trustee, Executor & Agency Company Limited?
- (3) Will he arrange for the members of this Parliament to have access to the financial and other records of—
 - (a) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;
 - (b) The West Australian Trustee, Executor & Agency Company Limited,

in order that they may satisfy themselves by direct evidence of the full facts relating to the two Bills touching on these companies which are currently before the Parliament?

- (4) If "No", why?
- (5) (a) Is it possible that The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited may take over The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited or vice versa;
- (b) If "Yes", when;
- (c) If "No", why?
- (6) (a) As to The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited and The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited, is it the Government's policy that there should be—

- (i) no amalgamation of these companies;
- (ii) no take-over of one of these companies by the other of them;

- (b) if "Yes", why;
- (c) if "No", why?

- (7) (a) In each of the last five years how many new deceased estates were introduced to each of—

(i) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;

(ii) The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited; and

- (b) of these, how many did each company refuse to act in or renounce, and why?

- (8) Is it a fact that this Parliament fixes the rates of commission in respect of deceased estates which may be charged by each of—

(a) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;

(b) The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited?

- (9) (a) Is it the Government's intention to continue fixing these rates from time to time;

(b) if "No", why;

(c) if "Yes", why?

- (10) Were each of—

(a) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;

(b) The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited,

established by private Bills passed by this Parliament and

(i) how many amendments have been passed to each of the original Acts;

(ii) how many of these amendments have been by private Bills in the case of each of—

(A) The Perpetual Executors Trustees & Agency Company Limited;

(B) The West Australian Trustee Executor & Agency Company Limited?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) to (d) This information is readily accessible by search at the Corporate Affairs Office.

- (2) (a) and (b) This information is available from the companies concerned upon payment of the prescribed fee.

- (3) (a) and (b) and (4) The annual accounts of the companies are accessible by search at the Corporate Affairs Office. Copies of the annual reports are available from the companies on request.

- (5) (a) to (c) This is a hypothetical question seeking an expression of opinion and is therefore out of order—(pp. 327 and 333 Erskine May 19th Edition).

- (6) (a) to (c) These matters were covered in a Press statement by the Premier dated the 24th August, 1979. A copy of the statement is submitted for tabling.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 380).

- (7) (a) and (b) This information is personal to the companies concerned and it is suggested that the member may care to direct his question to them.

- (8) (a) and (b) The member is referred to the Acts under which each company operates. These set the maximum rates which can be charged.

- (9) (a) to (c) There is no intention to alter the respective Acts of Parliament in this regard at present.

- (10) (a) and (b) Yes.

(i) The Perpetual Executors Trustees and Agency Company Limited Act—6. The West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act—9.

(ii) (A) 3.

(B) 5.

1625. *This question was postponed.*

WATER SUPPLIES

Muradup

1626. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has the town of Muradup any organised type of water scheme?

- (2) Has there been any concerted effort by the residents of Muradup to have their town connected to scheme water via Kojonup?
- (3) Has the Government any plans to supply scheme water to Muradup and if so—
 - (a) when is it anticipated that it would be supplied;
 - (b) from what source will the water be supplied?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The Public Works Department is not aware of any concerted effort by the residents of Muradup for a reticulated water scheme. The comparatively few requests have resulted mainly from requests made by a few individuals to a member of Parliament or the shire.
- (3) The Public Works Department has no firm plans to supply Muradup with scheme water. In the light of a recent request, the department is currently reviewing the possibilities of a scheme to serve the township.

- (3) The use of regulation 91 is a statutory provision and the Mines Department accordingly can have no objection to its being used where applicable.
- (4) All applications for mining tenements are dealt with on their respective merits and this also applies to those applications where the provisions of regulation 91 have been used.

HOSPITAL

Wyndham

1628. MR JAMIESON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is there any contemplated action by the Government to downgrade the Wyndham Hospital?
- (2) If so, what are the details?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) No.

MINING: MINERAL LEASES

Aboriginal Reserves

1627. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Is he conversant with the practice of "arm-chair" pegging of mineral leases on Aboriginal reserves?
- (2) Have such actions taken place on the Aboriginal reserve of Yandeyarra?
- (3) Does his department approve of the practice of "arm-chair" pegging?
- (4) Is it his department's policy to approve the applications made by "arm-chair" pegging?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) It is presumed the honourable member is referring to the provisions of regulation 91 of the regulations under the Mining Act, 1904, which allow applications for mining tenements to be made in respect of reserved or exempted lands without first pegging the ground, if marking off is not possible. The following answers are based on this presumption.
- (2) Yes.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Local Purchase Arrangements

1629. Mr JAMIESON, to the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Have the various State Emergency Service centres in country areas access to local purchase arrangements in time of emergency?
- (2) If so, what are these purchase arrangements?
- (3) In view of the past experience of wardens having their instructions disregarded in respect of safety precautions where an emergency is deemed to be imminent, is it the Government's intention to give greater powers to such wardens?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) An understanding that essential items required urgently in an emergency may be purchased on the authority of the Local Counter Disaster Committee up to a maximum of \$1 000.
- (3) The whole question of authority relating to emergencies and disaster situations is currently under consideration.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kununurra Office

1630. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for the North West:

- (1) What were the costs of maintaining the regional development office at Kununurra during the last financial year in the various costings of salaries, rentals, transport, etc.?
- (2) How does the cost of running the Kununurra office compare with that of other regional directors' offices?
- (3) What staffing numbers occur in each of the regional directors' offices?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

	Salaries \$	Rentals \$	Travel, Vehicles Tele- phone etc. \$
(1) Kimberley —Kununurra	77 526	12 059	38 444
(2) Pilbara —Karratha —Pt Hedland	80 217	31 679	44 218
Gascoyne —Carnarvon	45 645	6 000	27 483
Greenough —Geraldton	57 026	9 467	22 664
Goldfields —Kalgoorlie —Esperance	75 365	8 269	31 607
South West —Bunbury	67 637	3 564	30 207
Gr Southern —Albany	59 986	7 500	18 082
	Staff numbers		
(3) Kimberley —Kununurra	5		
Pilbara —Karratha —Pt Hedland	4 2		
Gascoyne —Carnarvon	3		
Greenough —Geraldton	4		
Goldfields —Kalgoorlie —Esperance	5 2		
South West —Bunbury	5		
Great Southern —Albany	4		

COURTHOUSE

Wyndham

1631. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) In view of the Minister's reply to my question 960 on the 8th August, 1979 that 'some' corrective maintenance had been carried out on the Wyndham courthouse and that from recent personal inspection this building is still very unstable, is it the Government's intention to stabilise this building?

- (2) In view of the building's historical significance, if no further repair work is contemplated, what is to be the future of this building?
- (3) Has the Government any plan for providing an alternate courthouse in Wyndham?
- (4) (a) Is there any contemplated intention by the Government to close the court-house facilities at Wyndham; and
(b) if so, when?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) This will be considered next year, following an examination by the Crown Law Department of the locality's future requirements.
- (3) The Crown Law Department, which has the responsibility in this matter, has not requested the Public Works Department to take any action.
- (4) (a) Not to my knowledge
(b) Not applicable.

FISHERIES

Denham

1632. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it a fact that fish processed at the fish factory at Denham is sold to Perth consumers after being transported to Adelaide and back?
- (2) If so, what quirk in transport regulations causes this to happen?
- (3) Will he use his good offices with the Minister for Transport to overcome this situation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) Yes, the parties at Denham have an arrangement or a contract with a national distributor in South Australia. Their fish are forwarded to South Australia and some comes back through the national distributor.

LAND

Denham

1633. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) How many conditional purchase residential housing lots have been made

available to the public in Denham during each of the last 10 years?

- (2) What was the range of prices paid in each of the last 10 years?
- (3) Are such conditional purchase lots made available for commercial purposes such as the building of town houses and duplexes to let?
- (4) If conditional purchase lots are not made available for commercial purposes, what policing is indulged in by the department?
- (5) Is it a fact that flats, cottages, town houses, and duplexes have been built and are being let on conditional purchase lots in Denham?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) 1969 none
 1970 none
 1971 33
 1972 none
 1973 none
 1974 40
 1975 31
 1976 9
 1977 none
 1978 none
 1979 to date none.
- (2) 1971 \$450—\$475
 1974 \$475—\$1 020
 1975 \$475—\$510
 1976 \$600—\$3 125.

- (3) and (4) Residential lots were released subject to a condition that a residence, in compliance with building by-laws, was completed within a stipulated time. Upon receipt of advice from the shire that the building is complete and in conformity with by-laws, a Crown grant (freehold title) may issue.

- (5) Not to Lands Department knowledge.

TOWN PLANNING

Offensive Trades

1634. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) (a) Can offensive trades such as a wet fish retail outlet be conducted in a rural zone;
 (b) if not, what zoning is required for such a business?

- (2) What is the difference between an offensive trade and a noxious industry?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) (a) In general, no. A zoning of 'rural' normally precludes non-rural uses such as noxious industry. However, it should be noted that "noxious industry", as defined under the Town Planning Regulations, 1967, means an industry in which the processes involved constitute an offensive trade within the meaning of the Health Act, 1911, (as amended), but does not include fish shops or dry cleaning establishments.

- (b) A wet fish retail outlet would, in the normal way, require a commercial zoning.

- (2) See answer to (1) (a).

STOCK: LAMBS

Skins

1635. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the WA Lamb Board deducting a commission on growers' returns for lamb skins?
- (2) (a) If so, how much;
 (b) is commission shown on account sales?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The board deducts a charge to cover the costs of the skin operation.
- (2) (a) This charge is 5 per cent.
 (b) Account sales show a net return to producers in the same format as the carcase account sales.

FERTILISER

Blood and Bone

1636. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) In view of the increased slaughter numbers at Robb Jetty which necessitated an additional shift being

put on at the abattoir, can he give an assurance that blood and bone fertilizers which have increased in price as a result of decreased slaughter numbers over recent months will now be brought back to their previous level?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) and (2) The sale prices for meat meal and blood and bone fertiliser ex Robb Jetty are set by the Meat Commission and are periodically reviewed in accord with normal commercial practices. No review is proposed at this time.

I understand the current sale price of these products is competitive in relation to other sources in the State.

HEALTH: CHIROPRACTORS

Irradiating Apparatus

1637. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many chiropractors in Western Australia are licensed to use irradiating apparatus for chiropractic radiography?
- (2) If there are none, why is this so?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Twenty three.
- (2) Not applicable.

HERBICIDE 2,4-D

Geraldton: Buffer Zone

1638. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Does the 50-mile radius buffer zone still exist around Geraldton, inside of which it is not permitted to use ester 2,4-D for crop spraying because of damage to tomato crops?
- (2) Has he received any reports of spraying with ester 2,4-D within the restricted zone?
- (3) If "Yes", have there been any prosecutions as a result?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) High volatile 2,4-D ester formulations are not permitted for use within a radius of 50 kilometres of the Geraldton Post Office. However, low volatile 2,4-D ester formulations approved by the Director of Agriculture can be used between 19 and 50 kilometres of the Geraldton Post Office.
- (2) and (3) No reports of unauthorised use of 2,4-D ester formulations have been received by my department.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE FINANCE

Short-term Interest Transactions: Unauthorised Dealers

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) At the 30th June, 1979, were any public moneys standing to the credit of the Public Account invested with any dealers in the short-term money market, other than authorised dealers, with established lines of credit with the Reserve Bank of Australia as a lender of last resort, in any securities which were not issued in or endorsed to the name of the State of Western Australia?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), what was the amount so invested?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) Fairly late this afternoon I received notice of the questions to be asked by the Leader of the Opposition, although I understand he had sent the questions to my office earlier. When I received them I thought they had been answered already.
I have asked that the information be forwarded to me, so that I can hand it to the Leader of the Opposition.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Relief Funds

2. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Why was \$2.3 million of the \$4 million appropriated by Parliament for expenditure on unemployment relief during 1978-79 unspent as at the 30th June, 1979?

- (2) Why is there no provision for expenditure on unemployment relief in the Consolidated Revenue Estimates for 1979-80?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) I cannot recall receiving any notice of this question, but I will be only too pleased to supply the Leader of the Opposition with the information.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Electronics Industry

3. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Would the Minister indicate to the House what initiatives, if any, he or his department has pursued to encourage and assist the development of the electronics industry in Western Australia?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Obviously, this question can be answered only in a general way.

I quite agree with the tenor of the question. The policy of the Government, and the intention of myself and the department, is to try to encourage a wider range of electronic industries in Western Australia than presently exists. The simple reason, which I think is easily understandable, is that if the assertion that if there is further computerisation to some extent there are fewer jobs is true, I do not think those jobs disappear, I think they go to the electronics industry. We might as well have those jobs here in this State as somewhere else.

In a little more concrete way, there are various industries in Western Australia which probably could come under the umbrella—as a definition—of the electronics industry. I refer particularly to two-way radios, photocell storage of material, warning systems used for fire prevention, message posting for hospital use, and there is also an industry under the name of Deltec Pacific. As a result of our representation, Deltec Pacific recently received a considerable sum of money from the Commonwealth Department of Productivity, or its instrumentality, for further research.

HOUSING: BUILDING SOCIETIES

Interest Rates: Increase

4. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that building society interest rates for home loans in Western Australia were increased today?
(2) What does he intend to do to honour Government promises to reduce interest rates?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) No, I am not aware that there has been a general increase, if that is what the member is referring to.

I am aware there has been a slight change which will apply to a particular section of the home-lending industry.

If the member would care to put his question on the notice paper, I would be prepared to obtain the relevant information.

Mr B. T. Burke: The increase applies to PBS and Town and Country.

POLICE

Aboriginal Children Incident

5. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has he received a report from the Commissioner of Police concerning the recent incident outside the Perth Railway Station involving several Aboriginal children?
(2) Will he table the report or make a detailed statement to Parliament concerning the incident?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) No.
(2) The matter is the subject of an internal Police Department investigation.

HOUSING: INTEREST RATES

Increase

6. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that the latest increases in interest rates could eventually add several dollars per month to the average repayment on a home loan as a result of extended repayment terms?

- (2) Is he also aware that this latest impost comes on top of the \$6.50 per week Western Australians are paying because of broken Liberal tax promises, the \$3 to \$4 per week we are worse off because of revised health care arrangements, and the extra \$50 per year extracted from Western Australian taxpayers through fuel tax increases in drainage and water rates and electricity charges?
- (3) What measures does he intend to take to ease the financial plight of Western Australians paying building society home loans.

The SPEAKER: If that question had been placed on the notice paper most of it would have been ruled out of order. However, I will allow the Minister to answer if he so wishes.

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (3) I was about to suggest that several of the questions asked by the member would not have any relation to the portfolio I hold.
I request that the question be placed on the notice paper.

SHIPPING

"Obo Duke": Oil Spill

7. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Transport:
 - (1) Was there a major oil spill from the ship *Obo Duke* at Port Walcott recently?
 - (2) If "Yes" to (1), what efforts were made by the master of the ship and/or the port authorities to contain the oil leak?
 - (3) What equipment is available for the containment of such oil leaks or the dispersal of oil leaks at this port?
 - (4) If the leak did occur, what were the reasons advanced by the ship's master for the leak and how long did it take before the leak was stopped?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) An oil spillage estimated to involve approximately 400 litres was attributed to have come from the vessel *Obo Duke* at Cliffs Robe River jetty, Port Walcott, on September the 21st, 1979.
- (2) The port authority arranged for the oil importers to place detergent on the heavier portions of the spillage.

- (3) No equipment is available at this port for the containment of oil spillages. However, 400 litres of dispersant are held by the owners of the jetty.
- (4) The master stated the oil had come from the slop tank which was being used as a pump water cooling tank and the leak had stopped when the spillage came to notice.

HOUSING: INTEREST RATES

Increase

8. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Housing:

In view of the latest imposts on home buyers in Western Australia will he—

- (a) ask the Fraser Government to reinstate the housing loan interest tax deduction scheme, and upgrade the home savings grant provisions;
- (b) remove or reduce State Government stamp duty for first home buyers;
- (c) ensure there are reductions in the charges that home buyers incur when they take out mortgages, as he promised to do in Parliament on Thursday, the 12th April, this year?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (a) to (c) I am not aware of this latest so-called "impost".
If the member would like to put his question on the notice paper, I will see that an appropriate answer is given.

HOUSING: BUILDING SOCIETIES

Interest Rates: Increase

9. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:
 - (1) Is it correct that he approached building societies in November last year seeking a reduction in interest rates as a result of letters to State Governments from the Prime Minister requesting their assistance to reduce interest rates?
 - (2) Is it not also correct that he claimed interest rates were reduced 10 months ago in response to his calls for a reduction?

- (3) Does he now concede that attempts by the Premier, himself, and the Prime Minister to manipulate interest rates without taking into account the effects on other lending institutions have been an abject failure?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (3) In the first place, it is correct that I did approach the building societies seeking a reduction in interest rates. That was not done following a request from the Federal Government; it was an initiative taken by myself before the Commonwealth bought into the matter. As a result of that initiative, the building societies did, in fact, reduce interest rates to some extent. I am not quite sure what the member means by "manipulation". If success in having interest rates reduced is manipulation, I agree it has assisted a great number of people in the community.

HOUSING: BUILDING SOCIETIES

Interest Rates: Increase

10. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

My question is supplementary to the last question.

Is the Minister informing the House that the major lending institutions in this State have made a major alteration to their lending rates without consulting him?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I am not suggesting that at all. The building society movement, through one of the building societies, approached me very recently and indicated that it intended to increase—very slightly—a particular area of interest rate. The increase does not apply across the board.

As I have already indicated, if the member will put the question on the notice paper I will see that an appropriate answer is given.

The SPEAKER: I want to say something about the type of questions just asked of the Minister for Housing.

It has been my practice to allow a fair number of questions without notice. So far today there have been 10 questions without notice already. I believe that is getting fairly close to being enough.

Four or five of the questions asked of the Minister for Housing were all based on the premise that there had been some increase in interest rates. The Minister for Housing, in answering the first question, undertook to familiarise himself with the matter put forward by the member for Balcatta, and he undertook to provide a reply.

Frankly, I believe the balance of the questions which were asked were taking up the time of the House during which other members might have asked questions which, perhaps, might have been more appropriate.

WASTE DISPOSAL

City of Stirling: Baled Refuse

11. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that earlier this morning I telephoned through to his office some 13 questions dealing with tenders called for by the City of Stirling for the delivery of baled refuse into a bale-fill site at Wanneroo or Dianella?
- (2) Although I agree that the Minister may have been busy in other areas today and may not have had the opportunity to determine the answer to those specific questions, can he tell me whether the Public Health Department has approved of the two sites as ones into which baled refuse can be disposed without fear of health hazards or environmental problems?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes, I was aware of the fact that the member telephoned 13 questions to my office. I instructed my staff to tell him I would not be able to supply an answer to all the questions and I suggested that he should put them on notice for tomorrow as this was the answer I would have to give him in the House.
- (2) To my knowledge, no approval has been given by the Public Health Department, and certainly not through me.

WASTE DISPOSAL*City of Stirling: Baled Refuse***12. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:**

Is he aware that this morning I telephoned through to his office three questions regarding the proposal by the City of Stirling to dump municipal waste on a site north of Dianella and that his office advised my office that I would be required to put these questions

on notice? In view of the fact that my questions sought fairly direct answers to quite simple questions, can he say whether there is any connection between the fact that a decision is to be made on this matter tonight by the City of Stirling and his wish that I put my questions on notice?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The unequivocal answer is, "No".
