

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 28 August 1985

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BLF (DEREGISTRATION) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Hon. G. E. Masters (Leader of the Opposition), and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 27 August.

HON. C. J. BELL (Lower West) [4.35 p.m.]: In supporting the Address-in-Reply I take great pleasure in reflecting on the comments made by the Governor, and to support the sentiments expressed by Hon. Jim Brown. It is very heartening to see that the Governor has received an exceptionally good response from the people of WA and I suggest that the nature of that response merely reflects his own attitude to the people of this State. To that extent he should be congratulated on the way he is carrying out his functions.

In the Governor's Speech mention was made of agriculture in several areas and it is my intention to look at some of those areas that involve agriculture and to talk a little about a subject I have looked at to understand what is happening in the administration of agriculture in Australia.

On opening day, Hon. Jim Brown referred to work done by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, and the Governor's Speech also included a reference to the elimination of several statutory authorities and other statutory bodies which were no longer serving their functions.

In looking at statutory agricultural marketing authorities throughout Australia we need to go back to what the original concept was for marketing authorities. The formation of statutory authorities in Australia appears to have emanated in the 1930s, which is 50 years ago, as a response to the Depression. In the main these were producer instigated on the basis that producers were seeking a controlled co-operative system with statutory backing. So, industry by industry we saw various statutory boards evolve.

I have here a paper presented by Mr Trevor Flugge in which he indicates that 11 marketing boards are operating under Federal legislation and more than 50 are operating under State legislation. I believe I could find more than 50. I have not sought to do so, but those that come to mind indicate the number would be a lot larger.

Why did the producers seek to go towards statutory authorities if in fact their main thrust was to achieve the cooperative function of marketing all of the produce through one group? I guess the answer would be that cooperatives have, in the main, failed in agriculture in Australia. I do not wish to say why that has happened, but it is a fact. Statutory authorities appear to have been an alternative adopted by people involved in Australian agriculture.

I will quote from the paper presented by Mr Flugge to the Riverina Outlook Conference at Wagga Wagga on 18 July this year. I quote as follows—

Without question the most distinctive feature of agricultural marketing in Australia is the large number of statutory boards which, to varying degrees, regulate or perform marketing functions. There are eleven marketing boards which operate under Commonwealth Government legislation, and there are more than fifty boards at the State Government level.

These boards—which include selling and related marketing activities—have been set up at the request of farmer organisations, generally to seek price stability and to increase returns by removing merchants and middlemen and by using the monopoly power of boards to raise prices.

Most of the boards are producer-controlled or producer-dominated monopolies. One of the main reasons for having growers on the boards is—ostensibly—to see that things will be done efficiently. That is, to protect growers against the problems of waste and inefficiency which are the hallmarks of monopolies. If growers have a majority on the board—so the argument runs—then growers will control the board and it will act in growers' interests.

Unfortunately, the evidence is that the eagerness of Australian farmers for statutory boards to market and handle farm produce has often resulted in a transfer of control not to farmers, but to Governments and public servants. Most boards

are now subject to—and even the instruments of—State or Federal Government policy.

The Australian Wheat Board, for instance, does not have control over hiring and firing its staff. The Wheat Board is set up as a commercial organisation to get the best price for Australian wheat growers and it is up against top rate international competition, but is prevented from paying competitive rates for the best people. The Public Service Board rules and pay scales which apply to the Wheat Board might be satisfactory for a clerk in Canberra who has never sold anything more valuable than a second hand car, but they fall drastically short of the level and flexibility in remuneration packages which are required to attract the best skills in marketing and finance.

That really outlines the theme I wish to look at today. When I consider the Acts of Parliament which have been introduced over the last 15 years, I must say that every time they have come before Parliament when a Labor Government has been in power, there has been a constant and ever-increasing trend to remove the grower majority on these authorities. I can evidence that by referring to some of the more prominent bodies.

The Australian Wool Corporation is a grower-funded body which no longer has any Government input, yet the producers maintain a majority on the board by accident—the accident being that the Chairman of the Wool Corporation happens also to be a grower. I refer now to the Australian Wheat Board. Recently there was much controversy in the Federal Parliament over its restructuring. After much huffing and puffing the producer position on the board was once again barely maintained. The board sells 90 per cent of the product outside Australia. It does not call on the Government for finance, and has not done so since the mid-1970s. It only uses the Statute to give it power to act. It does not raise any extra funds from the Australian public; it uses what it can get from the marketplace. The producer majority on that board has only been maintained by a last minute concession that one of the members appointed under the special qualifications provisions would also be a wheat grower. To qualify as a wheat grower, under the definition of those words, he must have planted 20 hectares of wheat in the previous year. I do not think that makes him a commercial grower and I imagine Mr Charlton,

Mr Brown, Mr Gayfer, and a few other members with interests in this area would suggest that a man who produces 20 hectares of wheat would have a fairly small stake in the industry. By the definition in the new Act, however, it appears to make him a wheat producer.

The Australian Dairy Corporation has had perhaps a different history in that in the 1930s when the dairy industry sought to overcome some marketing problems it formed Commonwealth Equalisation Limited—a limited company set up by dairy companies throughout Australia. In 1974-75, Senator Wriedt, when he was Federal Minister, changed that body to become the Dairy Corporation and did away with the Dairy Products Marketing Board and Commonwealth Equalisation Limited. The Dairy Corporation has three producers on a board of 10, and the old Dairy Produce Marketing Board was no better, so to that extent the situation has not been advanced in terms of input into the industry.

I refer now to the Australian Meat and Live-stock Corporation. In Monday's edition of *The Australian Financial Review*, the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) lauded his efforts as being a great achievement. There are two producers on a board of 10, but they are handling the products. Mr Kerin said it was a Government achievement. My understanding from producers is that they consider it anything but an achievement.

The proposed WA Meat Board will have only three producers on a board of at least seven. The Dairy Industry Authority of Western Australia has a board of six, two of whom are producers. To illustrate what has been happening I will examine the Labor Party's involvement with the Dairy Industry Authority of Western Australia.

Until 1972 the milk industry in Western Australia was run by the Milk Board. In that year a Bill was introduced to establish the Dairy Industry Authority of Western Australia. The Minister for Agriculture at the time (Mr Evans) proposed that there be a seven-man board, three of whom would be farmers. After much industry resistance he agreed finally that four producers would be on the board and the Government representative would become a non-voting member. It is interesting to note that the next time that Minister was in Government, he changed the Act and reduced the producer representation to two members out of six. He achieved what he set out to do in the first place—to reduce the input of farmers.

There are two aspects to this situation. One is that after the establishment of these authorities they sought access to finance from Governments of various political colours. This was done to enable the boards or authorities to pay their producers after production. They sought access to Government finance or Government-backed finance. This was granted to virtually all these boards, and only the Wool Corporation and the Wheat Board broke away because of the distortion they were creating in the Federal Budget in the mid-to-late 1970s. They became independent raisers of money and no longer sought finance from the Reserve Bank.

No doubt exists that as time went by the Government sought to make these marketing authorities arms of Government. They are no longer statutory cooperatives as they set out to be; in the main they are arms of Government. I refer again to Mr Flugge's paper which states—

Under the wheat marketing arrangements the Australian Wheat Board has the power under legislation to acquire the Australian Wheat Crop, sell the wheat so acquired and pay the net proceeds to growers. Because of the residual power of the State over production and prices, the Act—which gives the Wheat Board pricing powers on the domestic market—requires complementary legislation to be passed by State Governments. The quid pro quo is that in return for giving up their pricing powers over wheat, the State Governments dictate that monopoly rights are granted to the State-based bulk handling authorities and—as far as possible—rail transport systems. These State-based monopolies behave like all other monopolies. They are able to charge higher prices than could be charged if there were competitors.

How much higher? At least 50 per cent in the case of railways. To give you an illustration, a 650 km grain haul in New South Wales costs about \$25 per tonne. The same haul in the United States and Canada (adding back the subsidy under the crow rate) costs about \$15 per tonne. So we are comparing \$25 per tonne in Australia with \$15 per tonne in North America for the same job, a difference of 67 per cent. There are many reasons for the higher cost in Australia but they all have their origins in one basic factor; lack of effective competition.

Lack of competition has also allowed the Grain Handling Authority in New South Wales to have manning levels over five times higher than comparable terminals overseas. The cost of featherbedding is coming out of the pockets of New South Wales grain growers.

Of course, arrangements have only recently been made for that cost to come out of the pockets of New South Welshmen. Prior to those arrangements being introduced, it came out of the pockets of all grain growers in Australia. The article continues—

There is no doubt that something has gone wrong. As growers, we have in many cases allowed both the control of marketing and the benefits of grower controlled marketing to slip away to other groups. It is therefore up to the farmer organisations to go back to basics, set some key objectives in agricultural marketing and make sure that all policies and actions actually do contribute to the marketing objectives.

That is where we come back to the point made by Hon. Jim Brown. Governments have sought to strongarm industries and I will quote a classic illustration of this. I refer to a debate which took place in the Senate on 22 May 1985 when the Opposition moved an amendment to legislation to ensure that a producer majority was maintained on the Australian Wheat Board. Senator Walsh did not agree with the amendment. His remarks appear on page 2365 of *Hansard*. He said—

In so doing, I give notice to the Senate that the Government will not accept the ill informed obstruction of whimps on the other side. The House of Representatives will not accept the Bill as amended by the Senate and if this obstructionism continues there will be no Australian Wheat Board as from 1 October this year. I serve notice on the whimps and wankers on the other side that the Government will not accept their ill informed meddling and grandstanding. They will have to accept the responsibility, if they persist with this attitude, for there being no Australian Wheat Board as from 1 October.

It was an underhanded approach to the amendment. The thrust of the legislation was to ensure that producers would not be in a position to control the Wheat Board. Senator Walsh was prepared to threaten a structure which has served the grain industry well for many years.

There was no suggestion that it was adverse legislation and that if it were not accepted the Government would lose its majority and the legislation would go down the tube.

I refer to another debate which took place in the Senate in which the same Minister incriminated another Minister. The debate was on the Dairy Product Market Support Levy Bill, Dairy Legislation Amendment Bill, Dairy Produce Market Support Bill, and the Dairy Industry Stabilisation Levy Amendment Bill and read as follows—

Senator WALSH (Western Australia—Minister for Finance)—by leave—Prior to the commencement of the debate on the Dairy Produce Market Support Levy Bill, the Dairy Legislation Amendment Bill, the Dairy Produce Market Support Bill and the Dairy Industry Stabilisation Levy Amendment Bill, I wish to draw to the attention of the Senate a matter of great importance. Senators will be aware that a number of amendments to these Bills have been circulated. These amendments are a misguided attempt by certain parties to assist the dairy industry. In particular, I understand that one of the amendments is directed at retaining export pooling for an interim period, yet export pooling is the single biggest contributor to the sorry state in which the industry now finds itself. The Government showed its vehement opposition to these proposed amendments in the other place.

At a Press conference this morning, the Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) reaffirmed unequivocally the importance that the Government attaches to the package of dairy marketing arrangements proposed by these Bills, and in particular the immediate termination of export pooling. The Minister stated that the Government is not preparing to implement these Bills with the amendments which have been suggested. Rather, the Government will allow the existing arrangements to continue to operate. This option would surely see adjustment of the dairy industry, which all parties agree is necessary, but it would be a brutal adjustment with no certainty that the industry would be better off with this adjustment. Senators should note also the Minister's observation this morning that while the legislative framework of the present arrangements will continue to operate, underwriting which is at present

provided by the Government pursuant to administrative arrangements will cease to operate on 30 June 1985. Nor would the Government propose to provide underwriting as long as the old arrangements continue. As well, the Minister would, of course, need to weigh carefully other decisions on key elements of the present arrangements if these were to continue.

There we have it—two Ministers in the Federal Government threatening the industry. The industry was told that if it did not do things the way the Government wanted them done—not on the basis of change—the strongarm method would be used to bludgeon it into submission. That is where the statutory marketing of agricultural products in Australia is heading.

One may ask how the loss of the producer majority applies to the agricultural industry. In order to ascertain this, I visited the Parliamentary Library and sought out the annual reports. Perhaps Hon. Jim Brown and I will have to look at these reports carefully and report to the committee accordingly.

A number of the reports showed that producers still have a say in their particular section of the industry and I refer to the reports into the following industries—

- fish markets of New South Wales
- grain industry of New South Wales
- meat industry of New South Wales
- Poultry Farming Licensing Committee of New South Wales
- South Australian timber industry.

I could not identify who were and who were not producers.

The industry organisations which I was able to ascertain were controlled by producers were—

- New South Wales dried fruit industry
- Australian Pear Corporation
- Australian Honey Board
- Soft Fruit Board of South Australia
- Dried Fruit Board of South Australia.

A further investigation revealed a list of those industry bodies in which the growers have either lost their majority or maintained it only at the discretion of the Minister. The industries are as follows—

- Dairy Industry Marketing Board of New South Wales
- Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority

Metropolitan Milk Board of South Australia

Fishing Development Authority of Tasmania

Dairy Industry Authority of Western Australia

Australian Canned Foods Corporation

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation

Australian Egg Board

Australian Dairy Corporation

Australian Tobacco Board

Australian Wool Corporation

Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation

Australian Meat Board

Australian Dried Fruit Corporation.

If members feel it is necessary I will list a few more, but I am sure they understand, from the examples I have given, that there has been a great change in the original concept of the marketing of agricultural products.

I will not continue with this subject because I am sure I will have the opportunity to speak on it again during the Budget debate. Evidence is available to show that Governments seek to make statutory authorities arms of Government which are subject to political direction.

[Questions taken.]

With the background which I outlined earlier in terms of the direction the rural industries are taking, it has been interesting to see the massive marches by farmers throughout Australia over recent months. The actions of the Minister during that period appeared to be little more than fiddling as Rome burned. That can be evidenced by several actions taken by the State and Federal Governments.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much audible conversation going on.

Hon. C. J. BELL: As evidence of that, I take the front page of the *The Australian Financial Review* of Monday, 26 August—"Backroom Advisers Brawling as Rural Disaster Looms" is the heading. That is a damning indictment of what is happening at the moment. It appears that the Federal agriculture experts are spending more time arguing about economic theory than in trying to solve some of the problems.

That same newspaper contains an interview with Mr Kerin, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. Reference to that article might give us an insight into the Minister's

priorities—we might gain some knowledge as to where rural industry is heading. I will quote some of his remarks.

One question referred to the ALP's achievements in farming. Mr Kerin starts out by saying that the best endeavour the Federal Government could make was to get the economy running. I do not think that anyone would disagree with that, but a little further on he goes on to say—

I have been frustrated, there are lots of little areas that I could have spent more and actually got some good for the sector. But the main thing I have been concentrating on is trying to get the statutory marketing authorities working a lot better.

All he is doing is running around tittering while the whole system goes down the tube.

Another achievement listed is "the restructuring of the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation, and the fact that we have got wool-buying on a sensible commercial rational basis".

As far as I can see, the wool industry was doing a fairly good job. I cannot see that the Government has done anything in particular since it came to power. The wool corporation has been long established, the reserve price plan has been in place, and it has been funded by levies on producers. In fact, last year the only thing they may have done—and I am not sure of the exact timing—was to return the revolving fund. The article continues—

The rest seems to have been crisis management with the dairy, dried vine fruit and sugar and all the hell I have had in the Wheat Board. I just thought that was basic fundamental stuff but again the problem is the industry's own politics. For so long the National Party has told them what they want to hear. For so long the Liberal Party has not taken any interest in agricultural policy.

And that's why you don't have good agricultural policy in this country.

To me those admissions clearly illustrate that he has no confidence in the future of agriculture as a whole. He appears to be a lot more interested in the mechanical bits and pieces than in the real problems facing the industry.

I draw the attention of members to the Federal Government's phasing out of the fuel freight subsidy in the mini-Budget last May. That cost agriculture a lot more than it ap-

peared to do and we did not see a whimper from Mr Kerin, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. It cost farmers a lot more than the little concession they received in the recent Budget. Quite clearly, with the "nasties" of the Budget yet to come—we will get them in September—rural industry will be a long way behind by the end of this year even though they are going deeper into a crisis period.

I refer again to the Kerin interview and to where he tries to rationalise what he thinks of agriculture. He was asked as follows—

With exports at a record high last year and hopes for growth in the regional markets, is it true that the export markets and the world trade position cannot totally be blamed for the demise of many farmers?

He lists several industries and then he turns his attention to dairy farmers. I am forced to shake my head and wonder about the man. I quote as follows—

I believe farmers produce because they like producing.

That really is a joke. To continue—

(I'm not going to get on to the old lifestyle issues).

If you're a dairy farmer and your return goes down, if you have the physical capacity you will produce more to produce your way out of trouble.

That is the natural reaction of everyone. To continue—

Now if each individual does that it just makes the situation worse overall.

The most difficult problem I have in the dairy industry is to convince them they should cut back production. But the new vice-president of the UDV seems to believe that you earn brownie points on the world markets if you produce more and the Government should subsidise it. Now, I just find that absolutely staggering.

I find that statement absolutely staggering because the dairy industry representatives went to him with their own plan to cut production. Their plan had clear support from the Australian Dairy Industry Conference and the States. This was two days prior to the Victorian election. He said that the Federal Government would accept the plan, which was for a system of national quotas. The farmers themselves would cut production, and this without any Government input.

Three days after the Victorian election, Mr Kerin dismissed the proposal even though during the vital last few days leading up to the election it had been put forward by the Victorian Labor Government and the Federal Minister as the means of solving the dairy industry crisis. All I can say about the Federal Minister, after he has rejected the industry's genuine endeavour to solve its own problems, is that the man must be in cloud cuckoo land or that he just does not have a grasp of his portfolio.

When Mr Brown spoke in this debate he said that with the depreciation of the Australian dollar the wheat industry would not have a bad year. Let me quote from an article in *The Australian Financial Review* for 26 August, as follows—

Crop export prices predicted to fall despite Australian dollar depreciation.

Clearly Australia's grain industry next year will be heading into a worse situation than the one it has just come out of. This is particularly so in Western Australia where there is no way we will have the crop we had last year. I will not go any further on these matters because I am sure other members on this side will want to join in the debate.

However, I will refer now to a report in the same paper, this time by Sarah Sargent, headed as follows—

Fall in prices, rising costs paint pessimistic outlook for wheat.

Mr Brown said that things were looking good for agriculture, that the forecasts of doom and gloom were false, and that everything was going to work out well for the industry. I do not intend to say anything more for the moment.

Last night, Hon. Graham MacKinnon was addressing the House and made the point that some Press reporting appeared to be deficient and he alluded to a particular journalist without actually naming him.

Hon. D. K. Dans: He named him, all right.

Hon. C. J. BELL: Sorry, I was not in the Chamber at the time. I can only say that last week that same member of the Press misled the people of WA because in his weekly report summarising the proceedings in Parliament he indicated that when this Chamber considered sessional orders it had reverted to the old position. He said that we were anachronistic in going that far back. He did not inform the public of the true position; he did not say that we had agreed to adopt the sessional orders which

had applied last session with the proviso that the Standing Orders Committee would review the sessional orders and submit a report three weeks down the line. He gave the impression that we had reverted to the old position. That reinforces how prejudiced, biased, and unjournalistic is the manner in which he reports on proceedings in our Parliament. If that is the best he can do it is quite disgraceful that this man continues to report on parliamentary proceedings.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Everyone makes mistakes. He really is a very good journalist.

Hon. C. J. BELL: Today I received the Government's *Government Notes*, No. 32, a report the Government publishes to enable us always to know what it is doing. I found a misrepresentation in that publication.

We all know of the problem with putrefaction of the Peel Inlet at Mandurah. It was a major topic in Mandurah before the election in 1983. During that time many promises were made that much would be done for Mandurah and that much money would be spent which would see to it that all would be well tomorrow. Unfortunately that has not been the experience of people in Mandurah. It is about time we laid before the people of WA some of the truths of the present position. Point (8) in this publication reads as follows—

\$40m. spending proposal for Peel/Harvey estuary.

It is important that we consider this matter because further along we see that all that is given is a potential commitment to spend \$40 million over four years. At this stage the only commitment is for \$460 000 to be spent on dredging downstream from the estuary channel.

During the last election the Liberal Party made a commitment to have that work done. That was three years ago, so three years have been wasted. If people had bothered to read the Public Works Department works document on the interchange of waters between the estuary and the ocean, it would have been found quite clearly that two major restrictive factors were identified in the interchange of waters in the Peel Inlet. One was the bar and the other was the Styx Channel. During the last election campaign, Liberal candidates were committed to improving that flow between the estuary and the ocean.

That work should have proceeded immediately. Everyone knew that it had to happen, yet here we are approaching the next

election with no money having been spent in that area and we have just a commitment by the Government that \$460 000 will be spent this year.

The previous Liberal Government would have done that in its first year in office, in 1983. We have wasted three years in which improvements could have been made to the estuary. If the Dawesville cut becomes a satisfactory proposal, I will support it totally; but it is a "maybe" at present. Everybody knew the Public Works Department had clearly identified two major factors which restricted the flow of water—the bar and the Styx Channel. The Liberal Party has been committed to providing a permanent opening for the bar, but this paper clearly identifies that the Labor Government is not. It states—

provision of a two metre deep all-year navigation channel, subject to agreement on cost-sharing arrangements for annual maintenance . . .

The Government is not committed at all. It will carry out the improvements provided that others come up with the money. If people do not come up with the money I assume the entrance to the harbour will stay as it is—dangerous for boating and a major restrictive factor in the exchange of water between Peel Inlet and the ocean. Prior to the last election the Premier promised that his Government would spend \$1 million in the first year in this area. My understanding is that it has spent \$600 000. In other words, the Government has not met its commitment. The main point I want to make is that the only promise the Government has made is to dredge the Styx Channel down to the traffic bridge. In today's money the promised figure is no more than that promised by the previous Liberal Government.

The other area of real concern to me is the flood plain advisory committee which is apparently operating in the Murray River area. The Murray Shire Council has been issued with a writ for \$200 000 for damages because it refuses to approve certain planning proposals on the basis that the flood plain advisory committee has failed to approve them. The advisory committee has not approved the proposals, and my understanding is that the legislation which would give that committee authority has not yet passed through the Parliament. I understand further writs for a sum in excess of \$1 million are in the offing. Yet I do not see on the Notice Paper any proposal to legislate to rem-

edy that situation and make it legal so that the Government takes some responsibility in the matter for the Murray Shire Council. If matters keep on going the way they are it will just about break the Murray Shire Council.

It was announced last week that from 1 September the Dairy Industry Authority will increase the price of milk in Western Australia by 2c a litre. I said earlier this year that if prices to farmers did not increase by 5c a litre shortly, we would need to see what was happening. The 2c price rise means that farmers will get .82c a litre, or 40 per cent, which does not help them much at all. No doubt all industries have been called on to shave their margins, but this industry has had its heart cut out by the Government and unless something is done we will find that Western Australia is no longer able to supply domestic milk products.

In 1983 legislation was passed in this House which amended certain regulations made under the Dairy Industry Act. I said at the time that if that course of action was followed, the dairy industry would be heading for destruction. I am sorry to say that that has begun to happen. The legislation provided an opportunity for two farmers to milk through one premises. That sounded fairly reasonable except that I said we would find it would introduce a type of corporate farming. If that was the Government's intent, it should have said so. That situation has already begun and leasing is becoming a common occurrence.

A small group of farmers at Cowaramup recently circularised every dairy farmer in Western Australia to ask his opinion about certain aspects of the industry. Dairy farmers were asked whether they approve of the system of two quotas in one dairy. The result was that 27 answered "Yes", 209 said "No", and three were undecided. The second question asked about new quotas and whether the cows concerned should be milked in separate premises. The answers were: "Yes", 223; "No", 11; and five did not know. Clearly the proposals in the Bill failed to meet the aspirations of the industry.

The third question asked of the farmers was whether they believed that leasing of quotas was a desirable factor in the administration of the dairy industry in Western Australia. The answer was: "Yes", 53; "No", 179; and seven did not know. The final question asked whether they believed quota preferences for small producers in terms of increment was fair. The answer was: "Yes", 199; "No", 37; with

three who did not know. Four questions were asked relating to the main effects of the Government's legislation, and in three out of four cases the Government got it wrong. That illustrates clearly to me that unless something is done shortly we will have an even greater crisis in the dairy industry. It is not as though it was unpredictable; it was clear for anybody who knew the industry. The Minister who introduced this legislation did not know his industry and relied on too narrow a base of advice. He has put in jeopardy the supply of fresh dairy products in Western Australia.

With those few comments I support the motion.

HON. E. J. CHARLTON (Central) [5.37 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to congratulate the Governor on the address he gave at the opening of Parliament. It certainly was a very well-organised ceremony and the opening procedure and the way in which the Governor presented himself was something which not only members appreciated, but also all those people who had the opportunity to visit Parliament on that day.

My comments will be in line with a great many which have been made during the Address-in-Reply debate. The great problem we all face as members of this House is that there seems to be a great deal of discussion and debate, as well as rhetoric, about the problems confronting the community, but we all seem to be fairly short on ideas as to what is to be done about them. A problem of any magnitude will not be easily sorted out, and remedies are not easily forthcoming. With that in mind I will address my comments to the rural industry. It is something we talk about over and over again until everybody is sick to death of the situation and wonders what is going to happen.

The people out there are looking to governments. We all have to take it on the chin. The problems of the rural sector and country communities are all caused by Government decisions—decisions of present and past Governments—and by all members of Parliament from all parties, including Independents.

Hon. N. F. Moore: You don't think the international situation has had any effect at all?

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Comments like that are typical of the contribution the member makes when he is discussing particular problems and trying to make mileage out of them.

The comment I made earlier was that everybody was at fault. It is about time all members of Parliament realised it is their fault or

the fault of their party, and they should give consideration to what could be done to overcome this problem. I say this with all sincerity because it is something from which members of Parliament should not make political mileage.

It will not be easy to overcome this problem and it will need a few hard decisions that members of Parliament have not been prepared to make in the past.

The fact is that the number of people involved in the rural community and associated industries is minute compared with the total population of this nation, and that community has very little effect on the political consequences of any Government. Members of Parliament talk a lot about the rural situation; they indulge in a lot of rhetoric but make few decisions.

I have based my comments along these lines because one of the things we have taken for granted in the past is that regardless of what happens in the rural industry, production will continue. It does not matter whether we are talking about a farmer and his family, the business sector dependent upon him, or the backup services provided by Government employees and the private sector; it is generally considered that production in the farming areas will continue because if people walk off their farms or are forced to sell them it will make no difference to the rural industry whatsoever.

The rural industry is a different proposition to the motor vehicle and clothing industries. If either of those industries decided to close, thousands of people would be out of work and it would become not only a political problem, but also an economic problem—a problem from which political parties and Governments of the day would not be able to walk away.

The rural industry is a different proposition because there are only 30 000 farmers in this nation and the population in metropolitan areas is obviously greater.

I would like to quote figures to bring home to members and the public at large a few of the problems that confront the rural industry at the present time. I will then make some comments about decisions that should be made by both the Federal and State Governments in order to overcome the problems.

The increase in farm costs over the last five years has been 45 per cent and the increase in the CPI has been 30 per cent. As a comparison I will use the United States because it is Australia's greatest competitor in rural products. The percentage increase in farm costs

in that country over the last five years has been 19 per cent. It is little wonder that our agricultural industry is in such a diabolical situation.

During the same period a farmer has gone from carrying a small debt to a much larger one and the average farm debt is \$170 000. Members would be aware that a number of farming enterprises would not carry any debt at all so obviously some farmers are carrying a debt which is greater than the average debt of \$170 000.

Members will know that some farmers got themselves into trouble because they believed the basic economic situation would continue. However, there is one thing about which we can be sure; that is, things will either get worse or better, but they will certainly change.

A farm debt of \$170 000 involves a high interest rate and a farmer with that debt would be looking at about \$30 000 per annum to service the debt. Of course, many farmers are paying considerably more than \$30 000 per annum to service their debts.

Members may say that they got themselves into trouble so they should get themselves out of it. I remind members that many decisions made by Governments over the last few years have helped to create the problem. Incentives have been given to help the people on the land increase their land-holdings and to help people in farm associated businesses to increase the size of their business or to amalgamate with other businesses. Obviously those people have had to borrow money and they were encouraged to do so. Many different banking systems were established to give people in the farming community the opportunity to borrow sufficient funds in order to expand their businesses. At that time the interest rate was about seven per cent and the money was borrowed over a 15 or 20-year term. From the figures they were presented they believed it was a viable proposition to expand their businesses. However, what has happened since that time is that interest rates have increased to 17 per cent and what was considered a good business proposition a few years ago is no longer viable. As a result, the people involved in the farming community, and the industry as a whole, are suffering. A similar situation would not occur in a secondary or a manufacturing industry, particularly the motor vehicle, clothing, and footwear industries.

The massive tariffs and quotas placed on the rural community have also contributed to its downfall.

I refer now to the Federal Budget which I consider to be a "Claytons Budget" because it is the sort of Budget that we have when we do not really have one. We will see the main thrust of the Budget when the Federal Government releases its taxation package later this year.

At the time the Budget was brought down the headlines in the Press referred to the change to petrol prices. The price of fuel was decreased by 2.4c per litre, but I remind members that during the last 12 months there has been an increase in fuel prices of 8c a litre. Therefore, the decrease of 2.4c per litre represents only one-third of the increase in petrol prices during the last 12 months.

I draw members' attention to the fact that it was not the Labor Government which brought in the policy on fuel pricing. The policies of previous Governments have forced the price of fuel to be as high as it is today. The National Party is as much to blame as any other party for allowing the situation to arise. However, I am pleased it has realised that it can no longer support the world parity pricing and has changed its policy.

Obviously, without crossing the "t's" and dotting the "i's", if or when there is a change of Government Federally, there will be a new pricing policy. I suggest all political parties should have a good look at it and stop putting this matter in the "too hard basket" and saying, "We have the system, we cannot do anything about it."

We have to do something; we have to make changes to on-farm costs because it is unfair to have a policy where one section of the community imposes an excise duty which will dramatically disadvantage another section of the community without affecting other sections very much, although it hurts everyone who has to put his hand in his pocket to buy petrol.

The fact is that the usage of fuel in the metropolitan area and in its close proximity is minimal. I have never taken into account the finance involved in the average weekly spending on fuel by people in the metropolitan area. Obviously it is a small amount compared with the amount spent by people in country areas, where it is one of the three major input costs.

Again, it has had a dramatic effect on transport costs, which are jeopardising those people living the other side of the Darling Range, east of Perth, or north or south.

I would like to make another point regarding the Federal Budget. It is really not associated with the Budget but it is a decision which came

out at about the same time, and that is the dumping duty on DAP. I understand it will cost the farming industry \$26 million to save, or attempt to save, those monopoly companies in the State which produce fertiliser for the agricultural industry.

Hon. J. M. Brown: What about the CSBP?

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: The CSBP is not owned by farmers, it is a subsidiary co-operative. I have nothing against Wesfarmers, or any other business. Whether they are farmers or anyone else makes no difference to me. I do not support the proposition that we should be a party to dumping duty. As members are probably aware, correspondence has been moving around concerning this decision. If \$26 million is the cost to Western Australia, it will cost the users of DAP \$4 000 or \$5 000 each. On top of that is the fuel increase, which is another \$4 000 or \$5 000. Interest rates have gone up in the last few years by another \$4 000 or \$5 000. Before one knows where one is one has an increase in farming costs of \$20 000 on three different items.

Hon. J. M. Brown interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: It is not a fair price.

Hon. J. M. Brown: The existing stocks could be sold at the present rate.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: We cannot wait to see it put on and then say it is okay, we can get another year at the old price and see what happens after that. Everyone realises there have been many seminars with many proposals about the problem. What are we to do about it?

As I see it, we have three main areas. First of all there are interest rates. Many members will say we cannot interfere with supply and demand and finance. Governments have interfered with supply and demand on many things over the years. We all have to ask ourselves, "What is the most important thing for this nation to do, considering the number of people involved in the rural industry in particular?" We must make decisions of that sort and have some input on ruling interest rates. I know there will be anomalies, whatever action is taken, but that is no reason to sit back and say, "What should we do about it?"

We must bring forward a proposal with no limits on the amount of money involved in a particular loan or deficit in working capital. It must be assessed, perhaps by our new rural financing organisation which has just been implemented, to assist those people who have high debt levels. Interest rates must be held down, particularly in the short term, to get rid

of some of this debt. It is pointless trying to talk about the problems if one is creating a situation where these people go further and further into debt.

The other alternative is to let them go to the wall. Let us have more mortgage sales such as those which are going on around the country at all times of the year now. Farms are being sold in a period of the year which detracts from the possible return. As soon as it reaches a mortgage situation, everyone knows it does not sell, or it sells for the proverbial song.

There is a lot of debate about whether one can do anything about interest rates. One can go to the Government, which has put a ceiling on home interest loans. Why can that not be done for a short period to help some of these rural businesses and to save them from the problems they obviously have? If we do not, about 3 000 farmers will go out of business year by year, as has happened over the last 10 years. There will be a greater movement of people out of the industry if we let the present situation continue.

As I mentioned before, great numbers of the population live in the metropolitan areas with all the associated problems of drugs and our education system, and the problems which society faces as soon as there is a build-up of people. Governments over the years have put facilities such as hospitals and schools in country areas. They are only half utilised and they are being closed down. School buses run around only half full of children, yet the nation is still dependent on the rural industry for its survival. The great majority of the rural exports are servicing the debt structure of this nation.

We say to ourselves over and over again the problem is too big, we cannot do anything about it. We say we cannot do anything about interest rates yet the nation is still living on them. I know there are limitations on what the State Governments can do; there is certainly a limit on what the Federal Government can do. I congratulate the State Government on trying to bring home to the Federal Government some of those things it should avail itself of to produce something constructive.

I went to a seminar today at which Senator Walsh spoke. There was talk which was critical of privatisation, asking how one could privatise Australia Post or Telecom. I do not think anybody in his right mind would suggest that. I certainly would not.

The point I would like to make is this: Why is it that members of Parliament have to keep implying over and over again "country versus city"? I have always believed this is one nation, not two.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: It is time we tried to get the message across that this is one State. It is not a matter of seeing it in terms of the Perth metropolitan area versus the country areas. We have a country edition and then a city edition of *The West Australian*. Various other segments of our media tell people in the country what they already know and the same occurs with the people in the metropolitan area.

People must not believe that when goods which we all use on a day-to-day basis and which we purchase from the supermarkets, go up a few cents each week, or certainly each month, the increase can be taken for granted, while as soon as the price of a litre of milk or a loaf of bread goes up by 2c the need exists for the increase to be spread across the front page of the morning newspaper. The message always seems to be that every time there is an increase in the cost of goods, the producer is getting some of it. However, nine times out of 10 the producer is not getting any extra at all because in fact the increase is the result of higher transport charges or extra money wanted by the middle man—perhaps these days I should refer to the middle person.

My last comment reminds me to say something on this aspect of our society because I think we have gone overboard. Certainly we have gone further in this equality debate than the community would like. Throughout the world today it seems the noisy minority get the media attention.

A great many of our rules and regulations have been changed simply to satisfy these minority pressure groups, and in many cases those changes have caused extra costs in many areas.

The people most often hurt are the ones who produce the goods for the nation and of course I refer to country people. It might sound as though I am setting country people against city people, and I would not like to be seen to be giving that impression. We are all dependent on one another.

I hear a great deal of comment made, particularly from members on this side of the House, about the problems we are facing. They have been very critical of the Labor Government, as I am, for some of its decisions. But

they leave a lot to be desired in tackling the problems confronting this nation. I will touch on a number of issues before I conclude. These are matters that particularly affect my electorate.

The first subject concerns the supply of an adequate water scheme to people in the north-eastern wheatbelt. The scheme in question is commonly referred to as the Agaton scheme, and it has been around for as long as I have. As members should all be aware, the scheme has been assessed, using Commonwealth and State funds, and it has been found that we have 660 000 hectares of farm land in this area, in which we have people in communities who last year produced about \$170 million-worth of grain alone. These people therefore contribute a great deal to the national economy, yet we see the major political parties of the State playing politics with these people when it comes to the implementation of the Agaton water scheme.

The people in authority and the members of Parliament involved have continually made decisions to the detriment of the people in the area. They have a lot to answer for. If the will were there, certainly the finance would be there as well.

Before every State election over the last 10 or 15 years, mention has been made of the scheme and the implication has been that the parties would look favourably at the proposition. However, nothing eventuates until we get to the next election when the promises are repeated.

This water supply scheme has been assessed as being double the requirements of the area to be served. Not only would it supply the 660 000 hectares, but also it would hook into the existing comprehensive water scheme and so supply the major water requirements needed to supplement that comprehensive scheme. I refer now to the requirements of the mining industry in the Kalgoorlie and other goldfields areas.

One would think that responsible Governments would have looked favourably at the scheme without playing politics and said, "Here is a requirement. Sure, it will not win us any votes but it is an absolute necessity for these people who have contributed to our economy for so long."

I was in Mukinbudin last week and the people I spoke to were aware that some people say that economically the area is not viable. However, the fact remains that these people are

still out there producing grain and contributing to our economy, and as I said, last year these people contributed \$1.1 million to this State.

What was done with that money? It went into this society in all the ways of which members are aware. Very little of it finished up with the people who produced it. It went to the banks and the finance companies in the form of interest payments. It went in the transport area, to Westrail, to allow that body to continue its good operations. And the people in the country are thankful for the way Westrail moved their produce.

We saw very little of this contribution to the State's economy returned to the people who produced the wealth. The contribution of these country people is not valued greatly enough by the rest of the community.

It is our responsibility to get that message across to the metropolitan people so that they appreciate the value of our export commodities. This nation is still an exporting nation. We have only to cast our minds back to 1982 and the consequences of the drought in the Eastern States. That is the number one reason we saw a change in Government.

As soon as the money dried up from the export industries, bang went the economy! Everybody was in trouble and everybody blamed the Government of the day, and in came a new Government. With a good season afterwards, more money came into the economy and so everybody thought, "That is a great contribution—look what can be done with a change in Government."

Hon. Garry Kelly: It has been a good record up until now, you must admit.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: That is for Hon. Garry Kelly to judge. That is politicking and getting away from what we are talking about, the problems this nation is facing.

The National Party is standing by, and if it has a hand in government at any time in the future, its greatest and number one priority will be the implementation of the water scheme to which I referred, even though it will not be worth a great number of votes. The scheme is a must, a necessity. It is about time we stopped playing around and using people up, and implemented a scheme based on Federal and State research.

I will now comment briefly on the Mining Bill. It seems that every time there are going to be some changes made, it is the country people who make a contribution or a concession. Before the Select Committee makes its report it

should bear in mind that changes cannot be made which will force people to make major concessions along the way.

Another point I wish to make relates to taxation. If members are genuine, their respective organisations and political parties should look at single rate taxation. Everybody, including the present Federal Government and the Federal Opposition, believes and accepts that our current taxation system is anything but adequate. I have just spent two or three weeks interstate, during which time I looked at a number of industries; and while I was there I also had the pleasure and privilege to discuss at length with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen—

Hon. Kay Hallahan: Heaven help us!

Several members interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Yes, it was a pleasure and a privilege. He is the only person in this nation to stand up against the odds and say what he is going to do, and then do it.

The matter of single rate taxes is probably the basis for any reform to the present taxation system. It has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt that our set-up is totally inadequate. It is penalising the low income people. They are having their taxes ripped from them in higher and higher percentages. People at the other extreme—and Hon. Garry Kelly should be agreeing with what I say if he represents all those low income earners, because they are carrying the nation to a large extent—

Several members interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I did not say a flat tax, I said a single rate tax. The member should talk to Sir Joh if he ever has an opportunity.

At the other end of the taxation scale there are people who do not pay any tax at all. The single rate tax is certainly the basis of reform of the taxation system which the National Party will be promoting.

I wish also to comment on the State's education problem. Education has undergone a dramatic change, and it is getting more expensive and more difficult for people in country areas to give their children an adequate education. If people made a decision to send their children to other than the private schools—boarding schools—which they have to do because they are too far away from an existing junior, district, or senior high school, they used to be able to take advantage of a cheaper way of educating their children, and that was to put them in country hostels. The stage has been reached now where we, the

members representing country areas—and I am sure this would go for other members too—are getting letters asking what can be done because parents have to pay out in excess of \$1 000 a year just for boarding their children in country hostels. It is out of proportion to ask people on low incomes to pay that amount. Sure, they have access to some State and Federal Government help, but it is not always available in the necessary quantity to contribute in a meaningful way to allow them to keep their kids at the hostels.

There is need for many changes in the field of education, but the point I wish to make concerns the actual cost of sending the kids to the Government hostels. I would recommend in the strongest possible terms that the present Government look at the situation and take heed of a suggestion that I think is worth considering; that is, that the salaries of people involved in the hostels should be covered by the education pay packet. I understand that Hon. J. M. Brown is looking into this matter, if I heard correctly. I hope that that is so, and that something will be done.

I would like to comment briefly on a couple of remarks made previously about Press coverage. I do not think that there is any member of Parliament, in all honesty, who is completely happy about what is said by journalists, but I do not agree with what was said earlier about a journalist taking such a biased view that it was necessary to make a comment about it in this place, in this debate. Everyone is dissatisfied at some time or another; I certainly have been unhappy about what has been written about some of my comments since I have been a member in this place. But I would like to put it on record that I do not agree that the journalist in question should have been decried in this place as not being a fair and true reporter of the happenings going on while I have been here.

In closing, I make a call to the Liberal Party in particular, the main party in Opposition, which has, on numerous occasions in this place over the last few months, made statements on what should be done about fuel pricing, about taxation, about wages, and about unions. I place on record that the National Party is taking the role of being closely aligned with the Government of Queensland in what it has done in relation to irresponsible people in the union movement. There are only two or three who really cause the great problems—

Hon. G. E. Masters: A few more than two or three.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: —but at least that Government has been prepared to do something about it. I would put it to the Opposition here that we need a little more action and a little less rhetoric.

Hon. N. F. Moore: We are not in Government yet—wait until next year.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: To sum up, I feel we need to be a little more constructive and to have a little more dedication and sincerity in making a few changes to the lifestyle of our society. We should put this nation right, and not have an attitude of country versus city or one side of the House versus the other side. We should consider the main issues, which obviously are for the benefit of all of us and the nation as a whole.

HON. S. M. PIANTADOSI (North Central Metropolitan) [7.50 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion. Like other members of this House I wish to convey to His Excellency the Governor (Professor Gordon Reid) and Mrs Reid my best wishes and to congratulate them for their contribution and service to our community.

I take this opportunity to focus a little attention on the issues which affect a number of my constituents, mainly in the job sphere, and including unemployment and industrial relations. A few comments were made by previous speakers about camaraderie, but then the attacks flowed. They say there is a need to get together on these issues, but it is only as long as it is on their terms and conditions. There has been very little suggestion from the Opposition about what can be done to resolve disputes. Opposition members have put forward nothing concrete. All we have had are massive attacks, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition, on the union movement. Remove the unions and the problem is removed according to his argument.

Hon. G. E. Masters: That is not true at all. I have said militant union leaders should be removed.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: As in all areas of society, there are good and bad employers and good and bad unionists. Unfortunately, the Opposition does not consider that aspect at all. Members opposite just continue—

Hon. G. E. Masters: That is not true.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. P. H. Lockyer): Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI:—their attacks on the trade union movement because it is in their interests and those of the people they represent to embark on that course of action.

What frightens me to a degree is that a State election is to be held in the near future and all we have had in this House from the Opposition appears to be an attempt to get back to a bit of union bashing. Members opposite appear to believe that that will see them through at the election. I have yet to hear in this House or see in the media any objectives and proposals from the Opposition being put to the people of Western Australia for the forthcoming election. I must apologise to Mr Masters—the only initiative Opposition members have embarked on is the proposed reduction in wages.

Hon. G. E. Masters: That is not true at all and you know it. That is a gross distortion of the facts.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: The attacks continue, and rather than improve the lot of most people and help overcome unemployment, the Opposition's attitude will simply make conditions worse in areas where employers might make a little more money and hopefully create a few more jobs.

Hon. G. E. Masters: What about Mudginberri?

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: We are talking about Western Australia and what initiatives the Opposition has put forward, Mr Masters.

During the attacks on the Government and the Minister for Industrial Relations, no mention was made of the initiatives taken by the Burke Government, particularly through the Minister (Hon. Peter Dowding) to alleviate unemployment. In the ethnic community where the unemployment rate is much higher than in the mainstream community, several initiatives have been undertaken by the Minister through the Job Link programme. I would like to mention a few which the Opposition would do well to heed because opinion in the ethnic community about the Opposition's actions in the past and what it has done so far in the run-up to this election—which is nothing—is that it leaves a lot to be desired.

Hon. G. E. Masters: You distort the facts. We have never criticised those programmes. We had our programmes which were very good.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: The Burke Government, through the Job Link programme, has formed a series of committees to look into unemployment and how best it might be improved. A working party was set up which included representatives from TAFE, the Chamber of Mines, the Department of Employment and Training, and employer groups to try to develop a programme or package to assist people, to improve English language skills, with work experience in various industries, and the teaching of other skills. Under the Skills West programmes, funding was provided for several projects which focused on unemployed migrants. This was done by concentrating resources and funding through the migrant resources centres in North Perth and Fremantle, the Chilean community Job Link programme, and the multi-cultural Job Link programme. The Chilean employment officer was also employed under these schemes.

So the Government has endeavoured to cover all areas and give all members of the community, notwithstanding their background, much the same opportunity to secure a job in Western Australia. All these initiatives have been taken, and yet not one word has been heard from the Opposition about what is happening in the workplace. All it is interested in is how to sell newspapers by making alarmist statements attacking the unions and calling for deregistration of certain organisations. They have attacked the union movement as a whole.

The projects I have mentioned have assisted unemployed migrants to secure some skills in order that they might make maximum use of the job opportunities which exist. They have also provided networks of assistance to counteract any disadvantage the migrants might have such as lack of English and other skills. They often act as a liaison between the individual and the prospective employer.

The community employment initiative unit has been involved in this, and from all reports that are available to me, I am sure it will continue this work in future and assist a great many people.

The Chilean employment task force was established to assist people with initiative by providing capital to establish small businesses. The Government is looking beyond creating a vacancy for one person. The opportunities are there as a result of the assistance provided for people to establish themselves in the community and in turn provide further employment for others. The Vietnamese refugees were

assisted in much the same way. Interaction is taking place among ethnic groups in relation to unemployment. A number of employers have been canvassed and many of them have responded and opened their doors. They understand the needs of these people and the disadvantages they face. We have made a big breakthrough there, and I certainly hope when the Opposition releases its proposals prior to the next State election—

Hon. G. E. Masters: When we get to Government next year.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: I do not think that will happen for some time yet. If Mr Masters' efforts prior to the last election and his current actions are any indication, it will be a long time before members opposite are in Government. I recall Mr Masters' efforts as Minister for Labour and Industry when he was invited to attend a meeting held at the North Perth Town Hall to discuss a number of these issues. He failed to turn up; that is how interested he was.

Hon. G. E. Masters: You know very well that I had other commitments.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: People in the ethnic community will not forget the endeavours made by Mr Masters. It appears that Mr Masters' interest in the ethnic community and endeavours to alleviate these problems have not changed.

Hon. G. E. Masters: It is certainly as strong as yours. Remember I came to this country also, but I spoke a different language—that is the only difference.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Mr Masters certainly did not demonstrate that and the people will remember what he did.

Through Skills West '85 many of the ethnic communities have received support. Another area being considered that will be of help to the ethnic groups is that which will provide information on the workplace and its conditions. Migrant women have been exploited in a number of areas and they need all the protection and assistance they can get to help them overcome this problem.

Hon. G. E. Masters: You used to assist some of them.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Yes, I assisted quite a few.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I remember the assistance you gave.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: It is something I believe in doing. I certainly do not believe in making their plight worse.

I well recall that a meeting at which Mr Masters was present he was confronted about this subject; and he quickly departed.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Have you ever heard the story that people in glass houses should not throw stones.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest to the honourable members who are interjecting that, apart from being rude, they are out of order and I suggest that Hon. S. M. Piantadosi direct his comments to the Chair, from which he will get no argument.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Thank you, Mr President.

With the establishment of the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Office, the Burke Government further demonstrated its concern for the ethnic community. As a result of the establishment of that office a number of policy initiatives have been made; they will ensure that the issue of multiculturalism and the difficulties being faced by members of the ethnic community will be raised publicly. It will be through the sharing of the different points of view and the interest people have in this area that a lot more work will be carried out, and there will be more understanding of the problems that exist. We will also be better placed to meet the needs of the mixed society we have in Western Australia.

From the research carried out by the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Office it has been established that the areas of concern in the ethnic community are employment, industrial relations, recognition of overseas qualifications, and work conditions generally. These areas need to be addressed by the Government as soon as possible.

The basic philosophy behind the sharing of ideas and cultures is that migrants need a support structure when they are affected by adverse conditions on a daily basis. The Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Office has been established to help these people and, in most cases, it is the only support basis available to them, and it will assist in their transition into the Australian way of life.

Members on this side of the House can see positive benefits in allowing people to maintain a tie with their country of origin. I am sure that Mr Masters will support me.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I do.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: I am sure that Mr Masters also appreciates his ties with the country of his origin.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Everybody comes here to be part of this country.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Some people have found it easier than others.

Hon. G. E. Masters: You are lucky.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: I agree with the sentiments expressed by Eric Charlton when he said that people do not always differentiate between the country and the city. I would like to see his suggestions carried through to racial and background ties. If this were done members of our society would benefit and we would all appreciate the cultures of other people.

The greatest satisfaction I have had since becoming a member of this House was when I read that the Opposition had embarked on a policy concerning multicultural and ethnic affairs. As I mentioned earlier, it does not seem to have any policy at all about unemployment. I have not heard one word from the Opposition spokesman on unemployment. I hope for the sake of the ethnic community that we will hear something from the Opposition during the election campaign on what it proposes to do in the field of multicultural and ethnic affairs.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Particularly after it is in Government.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: The people will be waiting a long time.

Members of the Opposition would have friends from various ethnic groups, and I am sure they have discussed the problems with which they are confronted. I find it a little disappointing that the Opposition has not given very much attention to this area. However, with the return of the Burke Government at the next State election, the programmes and initiatives established in 1983 regarding employment, culture, understanding, and folk lore will be fostered further, and it is hoped that eventually the community at large will be appreciative of the role of the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Office.

We hope that the establishment of this office will only be temporary. However, when one talks about its being temporary, one is talking about 10 or 15 years. People might ask why it will take 10 or 15 years before the office will not be required, but I am sure it will take that

long if we take into consideration the lack of attention that this matter is receiving from the Opposition.

If we were able to make decisions in this House to support the ethnic community in regard to unemployment, work conditions, and the recognition of overseas qualifications, it would be possible to do away with the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Office. However, this will need the cooperation not only of the Government but also the Opposition—the Opposition must take an interest.

The Job Link programme will be expanded. Work, especially among the young unemployed, will increase. I hope that the endeavours of the bilingual people running these programmes will lessen the burden on ethnic families by providing job opportunities for at least one member of the family.

Hon. J. M. Brown: There has even been farmer training.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: That is right. A number of people have been assisted with farming training. The Vietnamese have been assisted with a number of farming schemes, as have a number of other ethnic groups. I think they have demonstrated skills in that field. I noticed the expression on Mr Lockyer's face when I mentioned the Vietnamese. We were involved with a Select Committee. It was demonstrated to us that the Vietnamese community was moving into the farming area. Some of them worked very hard and have now established their own gardens. They are now fully self-sufficient and support their families. They have also employed a number of their friends. They need to be given an initial break. In some cases they have been assisted with capital so that they can start an enterprise. From all reports, I believe that in some areas they are exceeding the expectations of the established groups. In some towns they were resented for their enterprise and hard work.

It has been demonstrated that if given the opportunities, ethnic groups are equal to anybody. It is in the interests of all members to ensure that irrespective of our political ideologies, we work towards that goal. We must ensure the future welfare of those groups and ensure that they are given the same opportunities as other groups.

Hon. G. E. Masters: That is to use their initiative, to work hard and make progress.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Many of them have. Only in the last three years have many of them been given any information regarding their work entitlements. The only areas from which they got that—

Hon. G. E. Masters: Go up to the hills in the Swan Valley and talk to them there.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: I point out to Hon. Gordon Masters that their information was gained from the unions, not from the employers. Although information was available prior to the last three years, it was not getting to the workplace. It was available in the office, ready for the day it could be used.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Go to the hills and talk to the people there.

Hon. Tom Knight: All the people who wanted to make it, made it.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: That remark shows the attitude of the Opposition. Mr Knight should go and check the requirements—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest that the interjections cease and that the member on his feet stop inviting interjections.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Thank you, Mr President. I would hate to think that I was inviting interjections, but unfortunately other members dragged me into the argument. Mr President, you would have noticed on other occasions that even when I am just sitting down minding my own business and do not even nod my head, I am accused of making certain statements by Mr Masters. I think I may be digging a little bit close to the bone for some Opposition members.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: Pointing the bone.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: I am glad the honourable member said that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! When I say that interjections are to cease, I mean that they are to cease. I suggest that the honourable member proceed with his speech. There will be no interjections.

Hon. S. M. PIANTADOSI: Thank you again, Mr President. As I said earlier, I share some of the sentiments of Hon. Eric Charlton. There is a clear need for all of us to work together with respect to helping ethnic groups. There should be no divisions. If we could look at the divisions facing our society as representatives of the people of Western Australia, our initiatives would be better placed. We would be better able to serve the community at large without trying to score points in this House. I sincerely

hope that issues are faced and that we give service to people. Rather than scoring points, we should put our heads together. Members on both sides of the House should make suggestions as to how a problem can be solved without point scoring. Only when we take that approach will we serve those whom we represent.

I ask all members to consider the plight of the ethnic groups and their particular problems. Any assistance that can be given should be given because the descendants of these people will be the citizens of tomorrow. I am sure that they will appreciate whatever opportunities are given to them in future years.

HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [8.18 p.m.]: In supporting the motion this evening I will confine my remarks, briefly if possible, to information contained in the Governor's Speech and the comments of Hon. Jim Brown who ably moved the Address-in-Reply. I turn to page 7 of *Hansard* of Thursday, 15 August 1985 and quote Hon. Jim Brown's remarks as follows—

The skill and ability that the Government has displayed over the past two years transcends any previous Government's performance.

There is no doubt that the economic performance spelt out in Professor Reid's remarks is something which all parliamentarians from either side of the political spectrum must acknowledge as being an achievement of real note.

It is quite clear that Western Australia has surpassed the highest expectations in economic performance.

The Burke Labor Government's tax take since gaining office has shot up by more than 42 per cent in just two years, yet this statement is made after only two years in office. More is to come in the Budget to be introduced in September. Hon. Jim Brown's speech continues—

I do not have to remind honourable members that the Government assumed office in 1983 with, in State terms, a massive deficit left by its predecessors.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Absolute rubbish!

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: To continue—

Urgent action had to be taken to reduce the overspending by the Liberal-NCP Administration which had over-committed itself in its search for electoral support after nine years in office.

That also is an incredible statement. Firstly let us consider that massive deficit left by this Government's predecessors. We have already seen Premier Burke deny the fact that any earnings on the investment of Treasury cash balances may be used in an attempt to buy votes for the Labor Party in the forthcoming State elections. He has made no attempt to answer our statement that he is hiding \$42 000 of taxpayers' money. By not disputing the figure, he is, by implication, not disputing the fact.

In the Autumn session, in April of this year, the Government introduced into this House the Supply Bill to cover the Government's financial requirements for the year ended 30 June 1986. That Supply Bill showed an increase of over 20 per cent on the amount in the Supply Bill of 1984. By examining any Supply Bill introduced into this Parliament, members will see this is an increase of at least 50 per cent on the amount required for supply by any other Labor or Liberal-NCP Government.

Another matter also indicated on page 7 is this, and I quote—

For the second year in a row, the Burke Government has been able to keep charges for the State Government services at a minimum level and in most instances below the rate of inflation. It is quite clear that the policy could not be pursued unless efficiencies were being achieved in the areas of government administration which had previously been allowed to run wild.

We have also seen the conclusion of a major Burke media campaign on this subject, telling Western Australians that they have not paid excessive taxes or charges, yet the 1985 Supply Bill to which I referred, with its 20 per cent increase, exceeds a \$300 million tax grab by the Burke Government. I cannot understand how the comment can be related in that Address-in-Reply to these facts of legislation which were actually introduced and debated. The media campaign was obviously due to the market research which indicated that the Burke magic was just not working.

Incidentally, I understand from research organisations the amount of money being used by the Labor Governments in Australia on what is termed Government research is astronomical. I do not know how one actually finds out the amount being spent by Governments on what is called Government research, but I understand it is out of all proportion to what could be envisaged by the organisations. In fact it has been indicated to me there may be some pri-

vate arrangements with these organisations to offset payments for research outside Government for lesser amounts.

I have heard that this Labor Government research overwhelmingly indicates that the general public rightly believes that the Burke Government, like all Labor Governments, is a big spender, a big taxpayer, a "Big Brother" Government and a big economic mismanager. That does not come as any surprise to the general public because that is what they have come to expect from Labor Governments.

This false and misleading campaign has been based on the premise that if one tells untruths often enough, and obtains massive media exposure, it will rub off and some people may believe it. The campaign has certainly conned many Labor members of Parliament, because although they have not had the opportunity, due to parliamentary business, to see the case which has been explained through the TV and other media, they have been bombarded, as shown in *Hansard* last week and on the single sitting day of 4 July to ratify the North West Gas Development (Woodside) Agreement Amendment Bill. They are being bombarded with prepared speeches and research statements eloquently delivered to make sure that they do not stray from the strategies of the run-up to the State election.

Propaganda is a useful instrument of war and it has been skillfully used by military strategists and Governments for centuries. The Burke Government is no exception in the way it disseminates and publishes propaganda. It is very much assisted by the new technology which has expanded these techniques, which are almost endless. It would be hard—in fact, almost impossible—for a skilled political journalist to uncover the real story behind these false and misleading advertisements, let alone convince chiefs of staff, editors, and managers of the various organisations to run with it.

I would like just to bring to the attention of members some of the ways in which one can distort the facts and produce misleading advertisements which, on the surface, to the average person in Western Australia, act as a bait. When I spoke on 4 July I gave fair publicity to this through my electorate. I received a lot of information setting out the fact that the electorate had not been taken in by some of these statements. This is one of the complaints I received.

Country water and sewerage charges have skyrocketed by up to 83.7 per cent since the Burke Government took office. These people who complained to me had already paid their bills and they are not fooled by Labor's carefully selected statistics. The trick Labor has used to try to fool people is to reduce consumption levels allowed before excess charges are made. That is a really smart move. The Government has reduced the threshold at which water is supplied under a user-pay arrangement. It has set the stage where it has reduced water consumption levels allowed on the base rate before extra charges are made.

In 1983, the base level for country water charges and for industrial use was reduced by this Government by 25 per cent. In 1984 that was followed by a reduction of a further 50 per cent.

When increased monetary charges are added to these reductions, the effect is to increase the charge from \$272 to \$500 for a company using 800 kilolitres of water as a proportion of the base rate. The charge for using 80 000 kilolitres of water is increased from \$31 088 to \$46 188.

We heard Hon. Eric Charlton speak about the problems of rural people in comparison with the problems of those living in the metropolitan area. The rises to which I have referred are in the order of 83.7 per cent and 48.5 per cent respectively, which is close to four times the inflation rate for the period. Yet these false and misleading advertisements have appeared in the newspapers and on television and radio telling us that the charges have been kept below the inflation rate and below the Consumer Price Index. Mr Burke has been described as a great leader and a great person for achieving these results.

I challenge any member to tell me that the inflation rate during the past two years has been running at 83.7 per cent or 48.5 per cent, or that the CPI has done likewise. I challenge the Minister for Budget Management to refute the figures or the examples I have just given.

Another complaint I have received in my electorate relates to the claim by the Government that the increase in bus fares has been only a minor one. This has also been handled very skilfully. The Government has embarked on a self-congratulatory advertising campaign claiming that taxes and charges have been kept to a minimum. Once again, it has distorted the true picture. In July 1983 this Government introduced alterations to bus zones which, without any need to increase the actual fares,

automatically increased the costs for people travelling into Perth through the new bus zone boundaries.

People have been paying higher fares than the Government will admit to since the area covered by each bus zone was halved in July 1983. Ordinary commuters are now paying up to 40 per cent more than they were two years ago before the zones were altered. Pensioners are paying up to 60 per cent more. For example, a person travelling from Glen Forrest or Herne Hill to Perth prior to July 1983 paid a 90c bus fare. Because of the changes to the bus zone boundaries, the cost of making that same journey today is \$1.20, an increase of 33.33 per cent. In essence, if we accept the false and misleading advertisements of this Government, a person boarding a bus at Glen Forrest or Herne Hill prior to July 1983 could travel to Perth for 90c, but today the 90c fare would run out at Guildford and he would have to step off the bus and walk the rest of the way into Perth. That is basically what a true advertisement would indicate.

It goes even further than that with regard to the longer distances; the fare from Sawyers Valley or Upper Swan to Perth has increased from 90c to \$1.30. That represents a 44 per cent increase and it is not the increase claimed in the false and misleading advertisements. The increase for pensioners has been 60 per cent irrespective of the zone from which they travel. Since July 1983, for example, a pensioner travelling from Mundaring to Perth has been paying 60 per cent more bus fare.

I do not know where the Government found the dear little old lady who appears on television and tells us how pleased she is that the increases in the Burke Government's charges are minimal. She certainly does not refer to a 60 per cent increase. I notice there is a smile on the face of the Minister for Employment and Training when I mention the little old lady, but I will not refer to her background, the person for whom she works, or how she came to be in that advertisement.

Fortunately, and rightly so, and I do not think any member would disagree with me, consumer legislation restricts commercial organisations from indulging in such misleading and false advertising. Premier Burke declines to set an example in this regard in the political scene which is very unfortunate. It is most unfortunate that the Government should go about misleading the public in this way.

When reading the speech of Hon. Jim Brown, I saw no mention of employment although many members have spoken on that subject in the Address-in-Reply debate.

We are all aware that the Governor's speech outlines the legislative programme of the Government; that is, it brings to the attention of Parliament and all those in attendance, including the media, the Government's intentions for the forthcoming parliamentary session. The Governor's speech is written for him and he delivers it on opening day. In my opinion it is essential that the Government of the day, responsible for writing His Excellency's Speech, ensures that it contains no inaccuracies. In this connection I refer to page 1 of *Hansard* and I quote from the speech—

The State is also leading the rest of the nation in job creation, with employment growth of 8.7 per cent during the two years to June, 1985, compared with 5.8 per cent for Australia as a whole.

It is significant that since 1980 employment growth has been strongest for the resource-based economies of Western Australia and Queensland and that the impact of the recession has been felt more severely by the manufacturing-based economies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

I would be surprised if Western Australia is the only State that did not experience a significant employment contraction during the Liberal Government's period in office, and in particular during the year of 1982-83 when Australia was in a deep recession. The rate of employment over the last year has been substantially below that of the previous year. For example, over the year to April 1984, total employment in Western Australia increased by 31 800, or 5.6 per cent; for the year to April 1985—the period for which this colourful picture has been painted—total employment in Australia increased by 85 800, or 1.3 per cent; for the same period the increase in employment for Western Australia was 15 200 or about 2.5 per cent. The higher rate of employment growth in Western Australia was due primarily to an increase in part-time employment.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Your figures are wrong.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Minister says that these figures are quite wrong. They are taken from quarterly statistics of the Social Security Department. In fact I have been rather conservative in some of the figures I have quoted because if I update them, they become worse.

In fact I will quote them for the benefit of members. The figures indicate that in Western Australia the reason for the higher rate of employment growth—which is significantly below that of the year of 1985—was primarily a strong increase in part-time employment; for the 12 months to April 1985 part-time employment in Western Australia increased and the change in percentages was 2.1 per cent. In the current year in Western Australia the change in percentages was 7.6 per cent compared with the Australian average.

I believe that this rise in part-time employment in Western Australia is due to the catch-up schemes which offer little more than 13 weeks' employment. There is also an underlying feature, and that is that this growth in part-time employment is business reaction to avoid penalty rates, holiday pay, and holiday pay loadings. These all add up to disincentives for which this Government has given no lead in endeavouring to overcome them in order to increase the number of people who would obtain full-time, long-term beneficial employment.

Hon. Peter Dowding: There is no subsidy for part-time employment. You are absolutely off-beam. The Western Australian Government provides no subsidies.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am referring to schemes that will be introduced in the current Budget.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is not part-time employment; it is 13 weeks' full-time employment.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: When the Minister rises to his feet, he may tell the House how he arrived at these figures. The Government is cooking the books.

I would like to quote from *Hansard*, page 2. The Governor's Speech reads—

The Government expects economic recovery to continue during 1985/86. Forward indicators of activity, such as building approvals and investment expectations, point to increased private sector investment.

I would also like to quote from page 3 of the *Western Australian Economic Review*, Volume 5, No. 1, which was prepared by the Economic Research Service of the Confederation of Western Australian Industry. It reads as follows—

The Australian and Western Australian economies have continued to expand over the first half of 1985, though the rate of

growth will prove to be significantly below that achieved during the rapid recovery phase of 1983-84. At the same time, it is encouraging that the recovery of the private sector is now more in evidence. What is of concern, is the recent deterioration in several key aspects of the economy and an associated loss of confidence in the Government's ability to adjust its economic policies to meet the changed circumstances.

The Confederation of Western Australian Industry undertakes quite regularly a survey of business in Western Australia and it produces what I understand to be a quarterly review and a graph of business confidence in this State. The latest report indicates a recent slowing of the economy.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Oh, rubbish!

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Minister for Employment and Training considers that the *Western Australian Economic Review* is rubbish—

Hon. Peter Dowding: Westpac estimates a nine per cent growth in the Australian economy over the next 12 months. It is phenomenal.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: It is regrettable to see manipulation of the facts and the extent to which this Government will go to hold the reins of office. I would have preferred to contribute positive suggestions this evening to ensure that this great State and nation would return to prosperity, but false and misleading information must be shown for what it is—a destructive misleading attempt to hold back real recovery.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. Lyla Elliott.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [8.44 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Community Services: Fine Payments

HON. TOM KNIGHT (South) [8.46 p.m.]: I do not believe that this House should adjourn before I bring before it a matter that I am sure will stun the members of even this House. I have recently been informed that a few days ago a person charged for false pretences under section 409 (1) of the Criminal Code on 3 July 1985 was subsequently found guilty and fined the sum of \$122.50. He was given time to pay or go to gaol and was released by the court on

that basis. The payment was not made by the time it should have been and two police officers were sent to apprehend this person, who was of Aboriginal descent.

After some days, the officers tracked him down and finally caught up with him in the Social Security Department office in Albany. The officers moved in behind him and, looking over his shoulder, saw that he was filling in an emergency relief form for finance for payment of court fines. The police officer said, "You had better add another \$13.50 to that because we now have the charge warrant to go on to that." This the person did quite openly and presented the form at the counter of the social security office in Albany. The young lady behind the counter said, "Could you call back at two o'clock this afternoon after we process it?", but the officer said, "No, if he cannot pay the fine now he will have to be removed." The lady then said, "Can you do it at 11 o'clock this morning?", to which the officer replied, "No, we have a warrant for this man's arrest and it has to be fixed up now." The young lady then went into the back office, and some three or four minutes later she returned with a cheque that she handed to the person about to be arrested. She told him that he would need to cash it at his local bank or pay it into his account. The man indicated that he did not have an account at any of the local banks and, as he had done in the past, he would take it to one of the supermarkets in the town.

Accompanied by the police officers he then went to the local Coles supermarket where he cashed the cheque. He subsequently handed the amount over to the police officers and was set free.

I have heard a good many stories in the years I have been in Parliament, and even before that, but I think that one takes the bun. I feel that when we start looking at the deficit that the present Government is facing in its Budget, and in fact the deficits faced by Governments in past Budgets, we can wonder whether the Social Security Department should be investigated. I honestly believe that a Senate Select Committee should be set up to investigate this situation, and I hope that this Government will approach the Federal Government in this regard. I approached the police officers concerned and they told me that similar situations to the one I outlined above have happened before. They are deeply concerned about this situation and the fact that the courts

may find a person guilty, but the taxpayer pays his fine, in part from the policemen's tax contribution.

I believe that a situation like this should be brought before this House. In fact, I want it brought before the Federal Government, because I believe that if the deficit is to be brought down we must stop this manipulation and extortion of public funds. This is only one case that can be proved. I intend putting it before a committee, or whatever is set up to investigate the situation. How can policemen be expected to carry out their duties when they know people who have committed a crime and are convicted of that crime can use public funds openly and wantonly to pay a fine? How would you get on, Mr President? I doubt that you would be able to do it. Yet people are obviously in a position to do it, and it has to stop. There really is no penalty if the taxpayer picks up the tab.

I want everyone here to know this sort of thing is going on. Maybe other members have heard rumours of similar occurrences. Now is the time to chase them up. If the people who made the complaint are prepared to stand up and be counted, we must support them. Law and order have to be obeyed and adhered to. People should not be able to wantonly commit a crime—

Hon. Fred McKenzie: What was the crime?

Hon. TOM KNIGHT: The crime was false pretences, but does it have to stop there? On this basis, it could have been any fine. It was either goal or the fine. This person saw fit to go to social security, and was aware that he could find the funds from that source to pay the fine. I think it is terrible, Mr McKenzie, and I believe that the member would agree with me.

The Federal Labor Government is facing a Budget deficit. The Liberal Party has faced deficits in the past. If this sort of thing is going on—and this is just one example which can probably be multiplied a couple of thousand times—it will not help the Budget deficit. It has gone too far.

I feel it has been worthwhile holding the House up in order to make members aware of what is happening. I hope a Senate Select Committee will be set up to ensure that this sort of incident does not occur again.

Parliament House Staff: Repetitive Strain Injury

HON. LYLIA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [8.54 p.m.]: I wish to detain the House

for a short period to raise something that has been concerning me for some time. The matter involves the equipment supplied for use by staff in this building.

I have employed secretaries in my office for more than 14 years and during that time they have been extremely busy. I do have a busy office and a lot of typing is necessary. However, it seems that until recently the secretaries have experienced no problems with the typing load, and it has only been since the typewriters were changed from the old IBM golf ball machines to the electronic keyboards that problems have developed. The staff is being affected by repetitive strain injury.

My secretary has developed RSI and she is receiving medical and physiotherapy treatment. The condition can become quite serious. Not only my secretary, but also other secretaries in this building have experienced the same problem since the typewriters were changed. I understand that *Hansard* has had many problems, and that within three weeks of changing the machines the staff began to be seriously affected. I think nine of them went down with RSI—five of the permanent staff and four casuals.

I know a lot of inquiries have been conducted and that the environment—the conditions in the office, the furniture, and so forth—has been examined, but it seems to me that the problem gets back to the electronic keyboards. This has been going on for long enough and I think we must decide either that we will throw the new machines out and bring back those which do not cause injuries to these women, or that we will get the proper furniture.

I understand that in other countries, before electronic keyboards are introduced, the right furniture is acquired to go with them. This has not happened in Australia, and I hope the Joint House Committee will take this matter seriously because we have no right to subject our staff to conditions that can leave them with permanent injuries.

HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [8.57 p.m.]: In order to allay Hon. Lyla Elliott's fears, as a member of the Joint House Committee I should say that the committee has been aware of the situation for a number of months. An ergonomic study has been conducted right throughout the building and we have placed an order for the furniture that is needed.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: When is it going to arrive?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: This is a very interesting point and I am glad Hon. Lyla Elliott has raised it, because at the relevant time I was acting as Secretary of the Joint House Committee. The committee was one department that was not circularised by the Government about the furniture that was available. We were not considered important enough, and when we did have the ergonomic study carried out and were told that there was a fund set aside for the purchase of the furniture, that fund had disappeared because other departments had used it—only because we had not been told about it.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: That was in April. Surely we should have it by now.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The waiting list for the furniture is something over three months. Hon. Lyla Elliott should have gone to the very active members of the Joint House Committee who have followed this matter through. I give Hon. Kay Hallahan full marks; she has taken this up and worked desperately hard on the whole subject. She has shown a concern far beyond the call of duty, and some others have too.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: The member forgot to tell the President of her problems.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I would have thought Hon. Lyla Elliott's first move was to go to the members of the Joint House Committee—either yourself, Mr President, Hon. Kay Hallahan, Hon. Graham Edwards, Hon. John Williams or me. We have been around the place. If she had asked, we would have told her the history.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: When are we going to get the furniture?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: May I go on, Mr President, without the unruly interjections of someone feeling a little sorry for herself because she has not asked the question of the right people? It is her Government which is at fault, and which is causing these problems, because it did not send the notice to the Joint House Committee. It did not think our secretaries were worth the time, nor that we were running a department here.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: I do not think they were the reasons.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We want to know the reason. I know Hon. Kay Hallahan will find out because she is extremely interested in the subject.

Let us try to follow what I am going to do for Hon. Lyla Elliott before she so rudely interrupted me.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: We received the results of the ergonomic study at the May meeting of the Joint House Committee. We said, "Put this into practice", and so the House Controller, doing his job, went to the Building Management Authority, which is a new creation of this Government. In the old days the Public Works Department provided the furniture for the House. That is no longer so with the Building Management Authority.

I think this circular came out on 12 January, but we did not get it. He immediately applied for money from that fund, only to be told after a certain amount of delay, as is usual in these cases, that there was no money. The funds had been used up. He came back and the Building Management Authority said that the Joint House Committee had to provide the money so, without any further ado, he went to the President, as the Chairman of the Joint House Committee who said, "Order it immediately", so we ordered it immediately. This was some few weeks ago.

Hon. P. H. Lockyer: We will have to order breakfast in a minute.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Lockyer will be very lucky if he gets out by breakfast if we have any more comments from him.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: When are we going to get it?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am going to finish my story because some people deserve a bit of credit. The President, without hesitation, made the decision to order the furniture.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Without the funds?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: He said the staff needed it. We will cut members' pay to pay for it if we need to.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I don't like that part.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Leader of the House has to wear it. To bring members right up to date, today the Joint House Committee endorsed the President's action and we have been notified that the furniture has been ordered.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: When are we getting it?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The member will get it in three and a half months' time because that is when the suppliers can deliver it. The member may get it before Christmas.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: In the meantime the secretaries are getting more injured.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Is Hon. Lyla Elliott going to manufacture the furniture herself, or can she suggest to the Government that it employs somebody to manufacture the furniture? The House Controller, the President, and the Joint House Committee, in that order, have done the absolute most they can in the circumstances. The furniture is not currently available.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: I accept that. In the meantime perhaps we had better get some decent typewriters that don't cause problems.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I want to go onto that subject.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Let us hire some IBMs while we are waiting.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Let me finish my speech. Mr President, I hope you will protect me from these unwarranted attacks. I am not used to them.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is what *Hansard* did and they found it—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members will cease their interjections.

This is a domestic matter which has been raised in the House and about which I am sorry. Nevertheless, the honourable member is entitled to speak. He is endeavouring to explain the situation.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I will come to a conclusion fairly shortly. Since *Hansard* received its ergonomic furniture, the staff have been able to use the keyboards that are available.

Hon. Kay Hallahan: Plus having the break.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes, together with a break. It appears from evidence given to us today that the ergonomic furniture and the break have stopped their problems. This may only be for the time being because the furniture has not been used for very long and the session has not been going on for very long. We will have to see what happens when the staff are under pressure, but I assure the House and Hon. Lyla Elliott in particular that if she wants some more details on the matter—I have only given members a very slight outline tonight—she can approach Hon. Kay Hallahan, Hon. Graham Edwards, Hon. John Williams, or the President, who, I am sure, will give her any evidence she requires. I would be only too pleased to give Hon. Lyla Elliott all the information she can absorb on this subject. I just felt I had to get up and defend the actions of the President, the Controller, and the Joint House Committee on this matter because we

realise the seriousness of the situation and have moved as fast as humanly possible to improve it. However, if the furniture is not available, we cannot have it. I will tell Hon. Lyla Elliott a story about that matter later.

HON. PETER DOWDING (North—Minister for Employment and Training) [9.05 p.m.]: I seek to detain the House briefly to point out in relation to the domestic matter that has been raised that the Department of Occupational Health, Safety, and Welfare has a section which is available to advise people performing secretarial duties on RSI avoidance.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: We have done that. It is no good without the furniture.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: Yes, it is. It is very good without the furniture. The department is located as close as Construction House, and I would urge any member of the Parliament House staff who reads *Hansard* avidly to take up the offer of obtaining advice on this matter.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: We have done all that.

Unemployment Statistics

Hon. PETER DOWDING: For the assistance of members, I have also a detailed analysis of ABS statistics for June and July 1985 and July 1984. Rather than read the table, I seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

The following material was incorporated by leave of the House—

CMJW02

A.B.S. UNEMPLOYMENT—PRELIMINARY JULY 1985

State	Unemployment as Percentage of:—								
	July 1985			June 1985			July 1984		
	Full-time Labour-force %	Part-time Labour-force %	Total Labour-force %	Full-time Labour-force %	Part-time Labour-force %	Total Labour-force %	Full-time Labour-force %	Part-time Labour-force %	Total Labour-force %
Western Australia	8.1	6.0	7.7	8.6	6.7	8.2	10.0	7.1	9.5
New South Wales	8.6	7.1	8.3	9.2	7.7	9.0	8.9	5.6	8.4
Victoria	6.3	6.7	6.4	7.1	6.8	7.1	7.0	7.3	7.1
Queensland	9.6	7.9	9.3	9.9	8.2	9.6	9.7	7.1	9.2
South Australia	9.0	5.1	8.2	9.2	5.8	8.5	10.1	5.4	9.2
Tasmania	8.8	7.0	8.5	8.6	6.7	8.2	10.0	7.1	9.5
Australia	8.0	6.9	7.8	8.6	7.3	8.4	8.8	6.5	8.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Adjournment Motion Resumed

Hon. PETER DOWDING: In relation to that matter I point out that unemployment as a percentage of the full time labour force in WA in July 1985 is the second lowest in Australia. Those figures show that in the last 12 months there has been a considerable growth of employment and a considerable decrease in unemployment both in terms of unemployment as a percentage of the full-time labour force and of the part-time labour force.

HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [9.08 p.m.]: I will not delay the House but for the benefit of the Minister for Employment and Training, and members of the House, I point out that the overall employment picture in July, to which he referred, was worse than that in July 1982, the comparable month under the previous Liberal Government.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Spot on!

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The rate of unemployment is now 7.7 per cent compared with 7.5 per cent under a Liberal Government in July 1982.

Hon. G. E. Masters: That is dead right.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: In March 1983 you were trotted out and you don't like it.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: While there had been an increase in the total work force—employed and unemployed—of only 7.3 per cent, the unemployment level had risen by 10.2 per cent from 46 659 to 51 400 people, despite Premier Burke's so-called job creation schemes and expensive pre-election reports that Labor would reduce unemployment to between three and four per cent within 18 months of Labor coming into office. I quote the figures in *The West Australian* of 25 December 1982 where it states that the number of employed people has

increased by only 7.1 per cent. For those people on the dole the outlook is particularly gloomy, and I would like to quote from the quarterly survey on unemployment benefit recipients published by the Social Security Department and dated 15 February 1985. It gives more up-to-date figures which are even worse. It states that the average duration of unemployment has risen under this Government by 65 per cent to at least 50.3 weeks, and for the young unemployed the waiting time to find a job under this Government is up by 48.4 per

cent to 37.7 weeks. I would like to add that the threat of the new Labor taxes such as capital gains tax, tax on employee benefits and service taxes which this Premier has supported in his option C report, and which also includes a consumption tax, would be detrimental to those industries and small businesses which could provide jobs so desperately needed for Western Australians.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

18 and 30. *Postponed.*

ENERGY: GAS

Pipeline: Maylands

37. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Dampier-Perth-Caversham-East Perth High Pressure Lateral Pipeline:

- (1) Did Westrail object to the use of the Midland-Perth Rail Reserve for the Western Australian Natural Gas Pipeline?
- (2) If "Yes", what was the basis for overriding Westrail's objection?
- (3) Was any consideration given to the extension of this Railway Reserve to enable the inclusion of the Dampier-Perth-Caversham-East Perth Lateral Pipeline?
- (4) If not, why not?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Westrail gave to the State Energy Commission its conditions for allowing the pipeline on the rail reserve. These conditions are based on Railways of Australia standards applicable Australia-wide. The key condition is that the pipeline should be a minimum of 10 metres from the track. This could not be satisfied with the available railway lease.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Not applicable.

41. *Postponed.*

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE ACT

Amendment

42. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

Does the Government propose to amend the Aboriginal Heritage Act during this Session of Parliament?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

No.

TOURISM COMMISSION

Hotels

43. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) Has the Tourism Commission invested in any Western Australian hotels?
- (2) If so, which hotels?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Overseas Trips

44. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Tourism:

In view of the response of the Minister to my Question Without Notice No. 19 of Thursday 22 August 1985 will he give further consideration to my Question on Notice No. 6 of Wednesday 21 August 1985, namely—

- (1) Was the Minister engaged in any overseas trips for the month of September, 1984?
- (2) What was the purpose of the trips?
- (3) Where did the Minister go?
- (4) What was the duration of the trips?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) to (4) I refer the member to my response to question without notice 19 of Thursday, 22 August 1985.

PLANNING

Swan Shire Council: Scheme No. 9

45. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Does the Minister intend to grant final approval to the Shire of Swan Town Planning Scheme No. 9?
- (2) If "Yes", when can it be anticipated that approval will be finalised?
- (3) Subject to the date of approval when is the most likely date of publication in the *Government Gazette*?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) and (2) I am advised that the Minister for Planning will approve scheme No. 9 as soon as the council has completed the required modifications to the document.
- (3) The first opportunity available for publication after approval.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Establishment: Interest

46. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Is there any substance to the statement that there has been renewed interest in the establishment of an aluminium smelter?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

There is continuing interest in the development of an aluminium smelter in Western Australia. The establishment of a viable project awaits an improvement in metal prices and a reduction in industry overcapacity world wide.

CHEMICALS

Ammonia-Urea: Gas Use

47. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Has the current proposal for utilisation of North West Gas for an ammonia-urea project been totally rejected by the Government?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

No. To the contrary, the Government is vigorously pursuing initiatives to assist the establishment of an ammonia-urea project in Western Australia.

The Government invited firm proposals from a number of groups which had shown interest in developing an ammonia-urea plant following Government initiatives in this regard. A number of proposals were received by the 22 August deadline, and these are currently being evaluated.

48 and 49. *Postponed.*

FORESTS: WORKERS

Boots: Purchase

50. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) What Department is responsible for the purchase of work-boots issued to forest workers in the South-West?
- (2) What guidelines are set by that purchasing Department in selecting suitable footwear?
- (3) Are the forest personnel, e.g. fallers, consulted in the selection of such footwear?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) The Government Stores Department—on a State Tender Board annual contract—current contract No.56A85.
- (2) Footwear to comply to Australian Standard 2210/1980.
- (3) No.

LAND RELEASES

Walpole: Industrial Blocks

51. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Lands:

In reference to my previous inquiries re the release of Industrial Blocks at Walpole.

- (1) How many blocks are to be released?
- (2) What area will those blocks be?
- (3) What is the envisaged cost of the blocks?
- (4) When will they be ready for sale?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) to (4) The sum of \$25 000 has been included in the Lands and Surveys Department's budget proposals to cover the provision of 5 lots averaging 2 000 m². There is no guarantee that the project will proceed until after finalisation of the Budget.

I will advise the member in writing when full financial details are available.

HEALTH

Noise Abatement Regulations: Register

52. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

With regard to Noise Abatement Regulations:

- (1) (a) Will the Minister consider setting up a Register of noise levels in stock production items of plant, e.g. different popular makes of heavy trucks, graders, loaders, scrapers, tractors, etc., so that these items would not have to be surveyed individually at a location maybe hundreds of miles from an inspector?

(b) If not, why not?

- (2) Further to "(1)", would he provide for an employee/operator the right to appeal to the Health Department if he or she reasonably believed such an item of plant as mentioned in part (1) of this question is noisier than the registered noise level also mentioned in part (1) of this question.

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

The Minister for Industrial Relations is now the Minister responsible for the Noise Abatement (Hearing Conservation in Workplaces) Regulations.

- (1) An approach similar to the register of noise levels proposed by the member is already incorporated in the provisions of the Noise Abatement (Hearing Conservation in Workplaces) Regulations 1983. These regulations permit the measurement of noise from a sample of stock items of plant. The sampling approach is required since the noise produced by any particular model of plant will vary from unit to unit and will also depend on operating conditions. Where the particular type of plant is used at more than one workplace, special arrangements are required and officers of the Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare have held discussions with representatives of several organisations, in-

cluding the Country Shire Councils Association, to facilitate this approach.

- (2) If, at any time, workers believe that an item of equipment has not been adequately measured by a noise survey, they should raise this with their employer and if necessary, with the relevant workplace inspector.

Currently workers do not have a clear right to see the results of the noise survey, and the Commission of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare will examine this aspect of the regulations as part of a wider review of their operation.

HEALTH

Noise Abatement Regulations: Enforcement

53. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) With reference to noise abatement regulations in local government is the Minister aware that the enforcing of these regulations is costing each country shire council thousands of dollars in noise-survey costs of workplaces and vehicles?
- (2) Is he further aware that some shires are willing to supply all workers and plant-operators with ear-muffs now, and in many cases already do so?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), why is the Minister forcing shire councils to expend more money on surveys, rather than leaving the onus on the operator or worker to use the protective hearing provided by those shires?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

The Minister for Industrial Relations is now the Minister responsible for the Noise Abatement (Hearing Conservation in Workplaces) Regulations.

- (1) The cost of noise surveys will vary with the size of the shire's operations and with the rates charged by the noise officer. Surveys for very small shires could be less than \$1 000 while those for larger shires may cost up to several thousand dollars.
- (2) Yes.

- (3) Simply providing earmuffs is not an effective way of preventing workers suffering noise induced hearing loss. The Government introduced these regulations in 1983 to ensure provision of comprehensive programmes to tackle occupational noise problems.

The noise survey is needed to delineate which areas and operations constitute noise hazards and to provide information so that cost-effective decisions can be made on the most appropriate noise control measures. The noise survey also provides the information necessary to select the correct type of hearing protection.

The regulations correctly place primary responsibility on employers to protect their workers, with the workers then having an onus to comply with all reasonable directions in relation to the use and safeguarding of the hearing protection.

54. *Postponed.*

EDUCATION: COLLEGE

Kalgoorlie: Tenders

55. Hon. P. H. WELLS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) What was the name of the person/firm tendering for work at the Kalgoorlie College—Stage 2 and 3 Fixed Furniture?
- (2) On what date were each of the above tenders received and what was the amount tendered?
- (3) Who was the successful tenderer?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) to (3) As the formal acceptance of this tender is being reviewed, the Minister for Works has undertaken to write to the member conveying his response to this question as soon as the successful tenderer has been determined.

TRAFFIC

Speed Limits: Freeways

56. Hon. P. H. WELLS, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Minister set up a committee to examine the question of speed limits on the freeway?
- (2) On what date was the committee set up and how often has it met and on what dates?
- (3) Who are the members of the committee?
- (4) What are the terms of reference of this committee?
- (5) Has the committee reported to the Government?
- (6) Will the Minister table the report of the committee?
- (7) If the committee has not reported when does the Government expect the report and when will it be made public?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) to (7) No committee has been formed. The Government is, however, considering a submission on the freeway speed limit.

EDUCATION

Schools: Vandalism

57. Hon. P. H. WELLS, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Education:

Will the Minister provide the following information on the subject of vandalism of education property—

For the last five years or up to five years in which information is available—

- (1) Number of cases reported?
- (2) Estimated cost of damage?
- (3) Number of cases where the offenders were known?
- (4) Number of cases where offenders were charged?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) 6 321 from 1 August 1981 to 31 July 1985.

(2) Since 1983 (estimate)	
3 749 vandalism	\$159 000
2 546 breaking and entering	\$53 600
26 arson	\$1 693 000

\$2 388 000

(3) and (4) Only available from Police Department.

58. *Postponed.*

HOUSING: LAND

Alinjarra: Development Conditions

59. Hon. P. H. WELLS, to the Minister for Employment and Training representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) (a) Has the SHC decided on any conditions for the Development of Land at Alinjarra?
- (b) If so what are those conditions?
- (2) Did the Minister undertake that there would be a requirement of any developers to liaise with the local ratepayer association?
- (3) If not what was the commitment relating to the involvement of the local ratepayer association in any planned development of this area?
- (4) At what stage and when can the local ratepayer association expect to be involved in this proposed development?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) (a) No. The matter is in the process of negotiation with interested parties;
- (b) not applicable.
- (2) to (4) During discussions with the ratepayers association I indicated that if the project was to proceed as a joint venture with the State Housing Commission, I would involve that organisation.

60 and 61. *Postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Victim

43. Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Was there any previous relationship between Ronald Joseph Dodd and his victim, Brown; and, if so, what was the nature of that relationship?
- (2) Was Brown a witness at any previous trial of Dodd, or did he provide information to the authorities concerning Dodd?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) I am advised that Mr Brown was described as a "casual acquaintance".
- (2) Advice on this matter is not yet available. I will inform the member when it comes to hand.

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Appeal

44. Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Attorney General:

What were the reasons for the Court of Criminal Appeal allowing Dodd's appeal against his conviction for wilful murder?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

I am advised that these were based on questions as to the adequacy of the trial judge's direction to the jury on the point of "intoxication" and its relationship to "intent".

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Parole

45. Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Following the first statutory report of the Parole Board on Dodd in 1982, what further reports have been made by the board, and when?
- (2) What were the board's recommendations in those respective reports?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) October 1984 and April 1985.

- (2) The 1984 report indicated that Dodd then appeared appropriate for release but that his position should be further reviewed after he had served at least three months in a low security prison.

The 1985 report recommended without qualification that Dodd should be released on parole on specified conditions.

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Jigalong Community

46. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is Dodd to be sent into the Jigalong community when he is released on parole?
(2) If so, why is he being sent there?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, this is on the advice of, and is one of the conditions recommended by, the Parole Board in recommending his release on parole at this time. My understanding of the basis of this recommendation is that it is thought that this will maximise the prospects of Dodd's orderly reintegration into the general community.

GAMBLING: LOTTERIES COMMISSION

Financial Statements

47. Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (for Hon. JOHN WILLIAMS), to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Has the Minister received the annual financial statements for the year 1984-85 from the Lotteries Commission?
(2) If "Yes", when will he table them?
(3) If "No", why the delay in view of the fact that the Secretary of the Lotteries Commission was able to give a digest of salient facts and figures yesterday evening on Channel 9 news?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) No.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) Statements are with the State Audit Department for checking and will be tabled as soon as I receive them.

There is some explanation for this. As members know, every month I table financial reports to Parliament; and the June statement would also cover

the 12 month period. This is the only statement which does. The June statement has not yet reached Parliament. The Audit Department goes through the statements and sends them to the Minister. From there the Minister tables them in the House. As soon as I receive them I shall table them. I do not know what stage that statement has reached at the moment.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING:
APPRENTICES**

Farming Scheme

48. Hon. J. M. BROWN, to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Following the successful launching of the farming apprenticeship training scheme last Friday in Perth, would the Minister detail to the House the scheme and what programmes are designed to further promote this worthwhile initiative?
(2) Would the Minister also ensure that the Western Australian Rural Training Industry Committee gives full details of the apprenticeship scheme to all members of Parliament?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) and (2) The answer to the second part of the question is yes, I will. I thank the honourable member for the suggestion implied in the question that we should do so. I understand that some honourable members and others are not aware that on 8 January this year a farming apprenticeship was proclaimed as a new industrial training trade.

Some 20 people are employed on probation or registered as farming apprentices. The Industry Training Advisory Board, which has developed this programme, has arranged for the TAFE component of the farm apprenticeship to be available in either September or October of this year.

This is a system of indenture which was introduced following very lengthy consultation with and the encouragement of the rural industry. It has been strongly supported by the Primary Industry Association, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, and the WA Rural Training Committee. I am very pleased to have been associated with

its introduction, and it does reveal the very considerable attention that this Government pays to the interests of the rural community of Western Australia.

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Jigalong Community

49. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Did Ronald Dodd have any association with Jigalong prior to his imprisonment?
- (2) Has the community at Jigalong indicated it is prepared to accept Dodd during his parole period?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) My understanding is that any earlier connection between Dodd and the community would have been very early in his life. It was certainly not at the period immediately before his conviction.
- (2) Of course the community has been very closely consulted on this matter. It was only on the assurance that his residence with them was acceptable that the proposal for his release was approved at this stage.

MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Overseas Trips

50. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to question on notice 44 and the Minister's reply. In reply to a question on 22 August, when I asked the Minister what overseas trips he had made during the month of October, he will recall that he answered that question for trips in October. In the question on notice today I asked for trips that the Minister made in September last year. The Minister has referred me to the answer to the question in which he answered for October. Is the Minister mixing up the two questions, and if so would he be prepared to give me an answer to the question I asked today in relation to what trips the Minister made for the month of September 1984?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

I must make an apology to the Leader of the Opposition, because I have since read *Hansard* and there is a small piece left out. If he had been listening when I said that I had done two trips—

Hon. G. E. Masters: Yes, it has got two trips there.

Hon. D. K. DANS: I said, "Now, I want to rephrase that"; and that is not in there, because it looks the same. If the Leader of the Opposition had used his imagination and been listening, he would know the first trip was made in September. That was the trip, as I explained, when I went to Hong Kong and Macau, and had the assistance of the Federal Police and other people; and when we returned to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia we saw the Malaysian Police, the Treasury, our own Federal Police, and the Assistant High Commissioner, because the High Commissioner was away. We did all those things. Then, I said, I returned to Western Australia.

In October, after a discussion in Perth, I returned—and it is all in there—to Singapore and Malaysia, and to Kuala Lumpur in particular, with a detective sergeant of our own fraud squad, and met on that occasion with the High Commissioner and the Chief Superintendent of the Federal Police for the South-East Asian region, and other people. I was accompanied by Detective Sergeant Les Ayton. When that trip was completed we returned to Australia. To the best of my knowledge, I think we left on 27 October. I cannot recall this—

Several members interjected.

Hon. D. K. DANS: I returned to Perth from the second trip on 4 November. As I recall it, we had some problems returning to Perth by air. The detective Sergeant came back on one flight while we came back on a later flight. Apart from those two trips, I made no other overseas trips during that period—Just the one in September and one in October.

MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Overseas Trips

51. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Tourism:

So that I am absolutely clear, may I ask the Leader of the House whether the answer to question without notice 19 refers to September and October 1984, and are the trips recorded in that answer the only ones that the Minister made for September and October 1984? If he says "yes", I will understand it.

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Yes.

PRISONER: RONALD JOSEPH DODD

Parole

52. Hon. I. G. MEDCALF, to the Attorney General:

In view of the way that Dodd dealt with his casual acquaintance, the late Mr Brown, is any action proposed or are there any conditions of parole laid down which might protect other persons who may be casual acquaintances of Dodd?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

With great respect to Hon. Ian Medcalf, I really have to suggest that this question is not up to his usual standard, nor does it reflect the understanding which I am sure he has of the complexities of the parole system.

This is not a situation in which guarantees can be sought, as I noticed Mr Hassell was attempting to do earlier in the day in another House. The same must be said, however, of

every person who commits any serious offence and is released from prison, whether on parole or simply by the expiry of his sentence.

Every precaution will be taken and steps have been taken to ensure as close supervision as possible by an honorary probation officer in the community. I am quite sure that this matter will be dealt with in terms of supervision with the seriousness which it requires. That will be in keeping with the procedures which always apply in such cases, including those many cases when Hon. Ian Medcalf, as Attorney General, was associated with the release of prisoners on parole after much shorter periods of imprisonment than occurred in this case.

GAMBLING: TWO-UP

Cycle Race Meetings

53. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

Would the Minister consider allowing two-up at pushbike race meetings in the country under the same conditions as at horse race meetings?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

That is a very complicated question and I would ask the member to put it on notice because I do not quite understand it.