

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 23rd November, 1978

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

MEMBER FOR MT. MARSHALL

Party Designation: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): Correspondence has been received by the Clerk of the House from the member for Mt. Marshall indicating that the member has resigned from the National Country Party and as from today's date will take his place in the House as a member of the National Party.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

Photographer: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I wish to inform members that I have given approval for Channel 9 to take in the Chamber in the next few minutes a silent film which is to be used in some work that Channel 9 is doing in connection with the 150th anniversary celebrations.

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Petition

MR WATT (Albany) [2.18 p.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. We, the undersigned citizens of Albany in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Albany Progress Passenger service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.
2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service to make it more economical and more comfortable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 436 signatures. I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 56).

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Petition

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.19 p.m.]: I have a petition from 421 citizens of Western Australia which reads as follows—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. WE, the undersigned citizens of ALBANY in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Passenger service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.
2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service to make it more economical and more comfortable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 57).

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Petition

MR CARR (Geraldton) [2.20 p.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. WE, the undersigned citizens of ALBANY in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Passenger train service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.

2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service to make it more economical and more comfortable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 438 signatures. I have signed to certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 58).

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Petition

MR McIVER (Avon) [2.21 p.m.] I have a petition which reads as follows—

The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. WE, the undersigned citizens of ALBANY in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Passenger service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.
2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service and make it more economical and more comfortable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will every pray.

This petition bears 427 signatures. I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 59).

AGED PERSONS: AUTUMN CENTRE SITE

Dianella: Petition

MR WILSON (Dianella) [2.22 p.m.]: I have a petition from 792 citizens of Western Australia which reads as follows—

We the undersigned citizens of Western Australia—

Call upon the State Government to review the decision not to allow a portion of Reserve No. 29753 to be separately reserved and vested in the City of Stirling for an Autumn Centre in Dianella, particularly in the light of the fact that an appropriate alternative site is not available for this much needed Community recreation facility.

The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 62).

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Petition

MR T. H. JONES (Collic) [2.23 p.m.]: I have a petition addressed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It reads as follows—

We, the undersigned citizens of Albany in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Passenger service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.
2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service to make it more economical and more comfortable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition is signed by 228 people and I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 60).

RAILWAYS*"Albany Progress": Petition*

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.24 p.m.]: On behalf of the member for Warren I have a petition addressed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It reads as follows—

We, the undersigned citizens of Albany in Western Australia:

1. Believe that the withdrawal of the West-rail Passenger service from Perth to Albany and return is detrimental to our town and is not in the best interests of the people of Albany.
2. Call upon the State Government to abandon its plans to withdraw this service.
3. Call upon the State Government to improve and update the service to make it more economical and more comfortable.

The petition bears 422 signatures. It is respectfully worded and ends with a prayer. I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 61).

RACING INDUSTRY*Independent Tribunal: Petition*

MR BATEMAN (Canning) [2.25 p.m.]: I have a very important petition to present and I should like the Deputy Premier to listen to it. It is addressed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, and it reads as follows—

We, the undersigned, residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will urgently support an appeal to appoint an independent tribunal to hear grievances from people so affected by decisions of stewards which have or could cause considerable hardship to themselves and their families. Such a decision has in past years caused the loss of employment in the racing industry to the extent of bankruptcy in many cases brought about by total unemployment. Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 455 signatures and I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 63).

EDUCATION: PERTH TECHNICAL COLLEGE*Art Department: Petition*

MR T. J. BURKE (Perth) [2.26 p.m.]: I have a similar, but somewhat more prayerful petition than the petition I tabled last week. It is addressed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, and it reads as follows—

We, the undersigned request the building of the North wing of the new Perth Technical School and the renovation of the Old Boys School to accommodate the Perth Technical College Art Department should precede the building of the State Library, in order that public money is not wasted and present courses may continue without interruption. The student body resolves that it will not move to temporary and entirely unsatisfactory accommodation.

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

I certify that the petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 64).

ABORIGINES*Yagan Statue: Petition*

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [2.27 p.m.]: I present a petition from 312 residents of Western Australia. It reads as follows—

That the Government erect a statue of Yagan in a prominent position in the City of Perth. The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I have certified accordingly.

Mr Tonkin: Is that a racist smirk I see on somebody's face over there?

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

(See petition No. 66).

PORNOGRAPHY

Exploitation of Children: Petition

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [2.28 p.m.] I have a petition directed to the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the State Parliament. It has been signed by 141 people. I have certified it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly. The petition has been provoked substantially because it is said that certain films being shown in theatres in Perth are classified "M" when it is thought they most certainly should be classified "R". The petition touches on the question of the greater protection of children from exploitation through pornography.

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

(See petition No. 65).

PORNOGRAPHY

Exploitation of Children: Petition

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.29 p.m.]: I have a petition from 101 citizens of Western Australia dealing with the same matter as that contained in the petition presented by the member for Mt. Hawthorn; that is, the prevention of exploitation of children through pornography. I believe the terms of the petition are known to the House. It is respectfully worded and it is very prayerful. It conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 67).

PORNOGRAPHY

Exploitation of Children: Petition

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [2.30 p.m.]: I present a petition from 29 residents of Western Australia. It is directed to the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly and it concerns the matters which have been raised by the two previous speakers; that is, the question of the prevention of the exploitation of children through pornography. It conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I have certified accordingly.

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

(See petition No. 68).

(173)

MINING BILL

Council's Amendments

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Mensaros (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

The amendments made by the Council were as follows—

No. 1.

Clause 49, page 36, line 21—Insert after the word "refused" the words "on the ground that the holder did not accept the conditions".

No. 2.

Clause 67, page 45, line 35—Insert after the word "refused" the words "on the ground that the holder did not accept the conditions".

No. 3.

Clause 99, page 62, lines 25 to 27—Delete the words "on whose application the licence or lease was forfeited" and substitute the words "who applied for forfeiture".

Mr MENSAROS: The amendments made by the Council are quite commendable, and do not alter the meaning of the legislation. In fact, they express more clearly the intention of the provisions in the Bill.

The first amendment which, incidentally, is virtually identical with the second amendment, seeks to insert a few words in clause 49. Members will recall that clause 49, in respect of prospecting licences, actually is the provision which embodies the principle of "finders' keepers". It was always intended that the second part of the clause would ensure that if an applicant refuses the conditions applied to a licence, or finds he cannot live with the conditions which are by necessity imposed on the mining lease at the time when it is applied for, before the termination, or during the duration of the prospecting licence, then the Government should not be in a position to offer it immediately to someone else under lesser conditions.

We thought the clause clearly expressed the intention of the Government. However, in another place it was felt that the words "on the

ground that the holder did not accept the conditions" should be inserted so that the intention of the clause would be better expressed. I agree with the amendment, and I move—

That amendment No. 1 made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr JAMIESON: This amendment, together with the other two amendments, does not improve the position any further as far as the Opposition is concerned. We were clearly opposed to the Mining Bill, and we still are opposed to it. The amendments will not improve it, and because of that we oppose the amendments on the basis of a further protest against the Government's action in putting through this objectionable Bill which has not received the plaudits of the people it is supposed to serve.

We suggest even at this late stage the Government would be advised not to proceed with it. I repeat: As a means of protest I clearly indicate that we are opposed to the amendments proposed by the Minister.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Blaikie	Mr Old
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Neil
Mr Coyne	Mr Ridge
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Sibson
Mr Grayden	Mr Sodeman
Mr Hassell	Mr Spriggs
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Thompson
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Watt
Mr McPharlin	Mr Williams
Mr Mensaros	Mr Young
Mr Nanovich	Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 17

Mr Bertram	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr Carr	Mr Pearce
Dr Dadour	Mr Skidmore
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Harman	Mr Bateman
Mr Hodge	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Laurance	Mr Taylor
Mr Grewar	Mr Davies
Mr O'Connor	Mr Barnett

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr MENSAROS: The second amendment is identical with the first amendment, except that it relates to exploration licences in the very same way, and under the same conditions as the first amendment. I move—

That amendment No. 2 made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr JAMIESON: Again, we are not happy with the amendments but the Government claims they will improve its Bill. While the Government has the numbers, it can carry the amendments accordingly.

Mr GRAYDEN: I take this opportunity to say that the amendments made in another place obviously improve the existing clauses. Therefore, I support the amendments on those grounds.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr MENSAROS: The third amendment is a correction of an undoubted drafting error. It deals with the forfeiture of tenements. As members will be aware, in the case of an application for a forfeiture, the decision can be made in one of two ways. Either the forfeiture is granted, or alternatively a fine is applied.

As I have explained, part or all of the fine can go to the applicant because no legal costs would be awarded to him. The clause was drafted so that part or all of the fine should go to the applicant, upon the granting of a forfeiture.

In this case there is no forfeiture, and therefore the drafting had to be tidied up. As it stood, it did not really express properly the intention of the provision. I move—

That amendment No. 3 made by the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Report

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

In Committee

Resumed from the 2nd November. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after part 2 had been agreed to.

Part 3: Deputy Premier, Chief Secretary, Minister for Police and Traffic, and Minister for Regional Administration and the North West—

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.42 p.m.]: I would like to comment on the operation of the Police Department, with particular reference to the tow-truck industry which has occupied the attention of the Press and a few people over the last month or so.

Firstly, I am particularly perturbed about the habit of the Minister for Police and Traffic of failing to produce to Parliament the reports compiled by police officers. I can understand quite often there is a need for some confidentiality in such matters, but in these cases possibly the Minister could bring before the Parliament a somewhat abbreviated report. However, the situation that arose in regard to the allegations of corruption among the tow-truck industry in the last few weeks has highlighted the highly unsatisfactory way in which the Police Department operates to investigate its own, and the even more highly unsatisfactory role of the Minister for Police and Traffic in this whole business.

For the benefit of members I would like to run over—if I can use the term “run over” loosely in this particular context—the events that led to a CIB investigation of the tow-truck industry. A tow-truck operator in Kelmscott approached me because he felt that his son's tow-truck business was not receiving its share of work from the RTA, contrary to assurances he had received previously from the RTA that his business was on its roster and that he would be called whenever an accident happened closest to his business if the driver concerned did not opt for another firm.

That seemed a minor complaint from a constituent to me at first, and I asked a question in Parliament. This man, Mr A. R. J. Shord, told me he had approached the RTA to try to obtain a copy of the report that had been compiled as a result of his complaint, and the officer at the other end of the phone told him, in effect, to get lost. Mr Shord approached me about the report, and when I asked the Minister for Police and Traffic about it, although I was not told to get lost—the Minister was very polite—I was no more successful in obtaining a copy of the report than was Mr Shord.

There was some Press publicity and as a result of that I found myself receiving phone calls from many tow-truck operators, and I then tried to find out what was going on. I received many complaints about the way in which the RTA channelled business to specific firms. I appreciate that

these complaints were made by people with vested interests in the industry and those who felt they were disadvantaged by the way the system operated.

I received complaints from so many sources that I felt it was incumbent upon me to make inquiries, and I did that. My initial queries were stonewalled by the Minister and he said in essence that if I had specific allegations I could prove I should bring them along and they would be investigated. As I said at the time, I was not in a position to prove anything specific, but I had sufficient evidence that there were wide-spread rumours that things were not as fair as they should be.

Apparently the Commissioner of Police took a different line from that of his own Minister, and, at the same time that the Minister was decrying the need for an inquiry, the commissioner instituted his own. That must have been somewhat embarrassing for the Minister.

As soon as possible I went down to see the two CIB officers conducting the investigation, and I gave them the information I had. A great deal of it was unremarkable in the sense that it certainly was not proof. As I said in my initial Press release, I could not prove anything definite, but many of the things said to me and many of the allegations made interrelated to a certain extent. This led me to believe that the whole matter was deserving of investigation.

I gave the information I had to the CIB officers, but I did not tell them the names of the people to whom I had spoken, and who had made the allegations. I felt I could not do that. However, I did ring up almost all these people and I advised them to approach the CIB and to tell the stories that they had told to me. In fact, these people did not even have to do that because the CIB sent an officer around to interview all the 104 tow-truck operators in Western Australia.

I did not find it surprising that the inquiry came up with nothing in terms of prosecutions or anything provable, and after some months of investigation a Press release was issued by the Acting Commissioner of Police on Monday of last week. That Press release contains a number of unsatisfactory features, and I will deal with these in a moment. It is a most unsatisfactory report altogether, but I want to draw the attention of the House also to the most unsatisfactory way in which the Press release was issued.

Right from the time of the first specific complaint from the tow-truck operator in Kelmscott, I had been pressing for a public release of the

report so that there could be some public, or at least parliamentary, evaluation of the tow-truck industry and what had been turned up by the police investigation.

I would have thought that there was a strong case for such a report to be released, especially where police officers were investigating other police officers. In essence it was an "in house" investigation. I would have thought that our role as members of Parliament, and my role, as the member who first raised the matter, was to be able to determine the result of the investigation and to say, "The matter was investigated in an above-board manner." However, we were not able to see that report.

By way of a question on Tuesday, I asked the Minister for Police and Traffic about this report, and I was told that it was not intended to produce it to the Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition had already been told, in reply to a question he had asked, that he could see this report on a confidential basis; that is to say, the Leader of the Opposition could go to the Commissioner of Police who would show him the report. But then what could the Leader of the Opposition do about it?

This was most unsatisfactory. What could the Leader of the Opposition then do, having seen the report? He could say to all and sundry, "I have read the report; I cannot tell you what is in it, but everything is all right." Or he could say, "I have read the report; I cannot tell you what is in it, but it is very unsatisfactory."

It is certainly not satisfactory to ask members of the Opposition to look at department records on a confidential basis. Usually, we already have a great deal of the information contained in these reports, and if we see the report on a confidential basis, it is really a way of tying our hands if we are not to breach the confidentiality we have agreed to. This is not the first time we have been offered reports on a confidential basis and the Leader of the Opposition has been quite correct in rejecting such offers.

Mr O'Neil: He has not rejected it that I know of.

Mr PEARCE: I spoke to him, and certainly he said to me that he had no intention of looking at the report, at least prior to my raising the matter in Parliament.

Mr O'Neil: I still say that as far as I am concerned he has not rejected the offer, and you are saying he has.

Mr PEARCE: Fair enough; perhaps he has not. He is certainly right in not going and looking at it prior to my raising the matter in Parliament.

Mr O'Neil: Are you sure he has not been down?

Mr PEARCE: I am quite certain.

Mr Tonkin: Are you sure he has?

Mr O'Neil: I am sure he has not.

Mr Bertram: He is only being provocative and difficult.

Mr PEARCE: Perhaps he is. What the Acting Police Commissioner did as a result of the report was to produce a Press release. He did not send a copy to me, although I had some interest in the matter. However, I was thankful to one of the police officers who telephoned me and told me at the time on or about which—to use the vernacular—the report was to be released, and to tell me of a couple of matters I had raised with officers involved, when I first spoke to them. I should like to read parts of the Press release to the Committee to show how unsatisfactory and inaccurate parts of it were in relation to my allegations.

I wish first to make the point that when the media journalists came in to receive the report, all they were given was a photocopy of the Press release which was headed, "Press Release". They received nothing else, and were not given the opportunity to ask questions about it.

Mr Tonkin: Did they call it a Press conference?

Mr PEARCE: Yes, but it was not much of a conference. However, to be fair to the Acting Commissioner of Police he did not reject questions entirely; he said that if reporters had any questions they could submit them in writing and he would see whether answers could be obtained.

Mr Bertram: Did he mean he would see whether they were capable of being answered?

Mr PEARCE: Possibly. I was anxious to receive a copy of the Press release, and I am grateful the Premier tabled the document.

Mr O'Neil: It was the Premier who was asked.

Mr PEARCE: I am not suggesting the Minister for Police and Traffic would not have tabled the Press release, had he been asked. However, by that time, I had obtained a copy of the Press release from elsewhere.

Perhaps before I quote from the Press release, I should summarise the situation. As I saw it at the time I asked for an investigation, which the Minister would not give me but which the Commissioner of Police did, certain officers of the Road Traffic Authority were showing favouritism to certain tow-truck operators; that is to say, they were channelling business specifically to some operators. I was able to compile a list of six

operators whom a number of people alleged were in receipt of these favours. It was further alleged these officers were being compensated for that channelling of business by the people to whom the business was being channelled.

Mr O'Neil: You did not make that allegation in the first place.

Mr PEARCE: Which allegation?

Mr O'Neil: That certain police officers were in receipt of reward, were receiving *quid pro quo* in return for directing business to certain tow-truck operators. You did not make that allegation; it was the newspaper which did that.

Mr PEARCE: I am going to nail that one now, because that is the first misleading statement which appears in the Press release. I have never made any allegation in this Chamber.

Mr O'Neil: I am saying you did not; I am agreeing with you.

Mr PEARCE: I reported the fact that a number of people—from eight separate sources originally, although subsequently from many more—made allegations to me which I thought serious enough to repeat publicly.

Also, I defend the journalist involved because he did not make those allegations, either, any more than I did. The initial report in *The West Australian*, which followed the appearance by Commissioner Court, covered the same sort of ground; all the journalist did was to report the Press statement I put out. We are talking about the article which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 6th October under the byline of Andre Malan which, essentially, reported the Press release I had put out on the matter.

He then followed up with a statement he had independently checked relating to the allegations which had been made to him and in which he found a very heavy degree of corroboration. He was able to find 10 operators—as distinct from the eight sources to which I referred—who were prepared to make allegations, some of which were made to me.

It was not the case that the reporter from *The West Australian* raised the subject for himself; he raised it after I had issued a Press release on the matter. It was also not the case that the reporter made the allegation on his own. However, during our separate investigations, in the course of which we found ourselves crossing tracks on many occasions, we were both able to put

together a set of allegations about the co-operation between certain officers of the RTA and certain tow-truck operators. So, both of us collected allegations and were able to make an assessment of the state of the industry.

Here is where the Press release issued by the Acting Commissioner of Police gets interesting. The first paragraph states as follows—

In the "West Australian" newspaper of October 6, 1978, a journalist made sweeping allegations of corruption on the part of Road Traffic Patrolmen in their dealings with towing firms.

That is an inaccurate statement to start with, and hardly reflects any credit upon the gentleman concerned, if in fact he compiled the Press release himself. The matter was not raised by a journalist but by a member of Parliament and anyhow, the people made separate allegations for themselves.

The second paragraph of the Press release reads as follows—

Extensive inquiries from the journalist concerned, and those from whom he received his information, reveal no evidence of corruption on the part of the officers concerned.

Each allegation, when traced back to its source, proved to be based on supposition, rumour and innuendo.

Here again, that is an inaccurate statement. However, I concede there is some truth in it to this extent: Neither the journalist concerned, I feel sure—although I am not really in a position to speak on his behalf—nor I, nor anybody else was in a position firmly to establish the truth of guilt of any one individual.

However, I ask the Committee to reflect on that for a moment: Suppose it were the situation that in any area, such as the Police Force or any other department, one person was offered a bribe by another, and the bribe was accepted. In other words, there was an exchange of favours. How could we ever prove that such a transaction took place, if we were not policemen, enabled to have at our disposal all the resources of the Police Force to investigate the matter? Only two parties are involved in the transaction, and presumably since it is a criminal transaction, neither of them will willingly come forward and announce he has been party to such a transaction.

I agree this can happen in isolated cases. For instance, I heard of a case in Sydney earlier this year when one tow-truck operator who claimed to have paid out \$80 000 over a three-year period,

finally became so tired of paying up that he appeared before a commission into organised crime to reveal the details, and four arrests followed on the next day.

Unless one of the parties to an illegal, secret transaction comes forward, these things are difficult to prove. When I first called for an investigation, I had some doubts that even a thorough and fair investigation would prove successfully the guilt of any individuals, although they may have their suspicions.

In fact, the inquiry proved—although one would not think so, to read the Press release—that most of the things I had said and the journalist from *The West Australian* had said were accurate. The first of these is that there is a widespread feeling throughout the tow-truck industry that a degree of RTA-tow-truck operator co-operation is going on. If one takes cognisance of the 19 allegations made by 104 operators, one will see the allegations were quite accurate. In fact, of the 104 allegations, 19 separate allegations were received from tow-truck drivers and persons involved in the industry.

So, it is obvious this is fairly widespread. It was not just a general repetition of allegations, either; they were specific allegations. However, the acting commissioner stated in his Press release that "it was impossible to enumerate them at this time". I cannot see why it is impossible for the acting commissioner to issue a Press release enumerating 19 separate allegations, with rebuttals of them. However, he took it upon himself to deal with three specific points, which I will cover in a moment.

Subsequently, the acting commissioner went on to admit in a remarkable way—which indeed was the essential base of what I was saying and what the journalist found other people were saying—the following—

It has been established some officers have favoured certain towing firms; however, when interviewed they advised it is because of efficiency of service given and not for any improper reason. The inquiry did not prove otherwise.

In fact, the essential allegation which was made by the people who spoke to me, and which I reported to this Chamber that some RTA officers were favouring certain persons, was proved to be true. Some RTA officers are favouring certain tow-truck firms.

The police investigating the matter went to those officers and presumably pointed out to them that they were favouring certain companies and

asked them, "Why is it so?"—the famous television question. They received the answer, "Because these firms give a very efficient service." That may be so; but one would have to be naive if it did not occur to one somewhere along the line that there are other answers.

Mr Bertram: Did they define "efficient"?

Mr PEARCE: There is no suggestion of that in the Press release. Saying that the inquiry has proved otherwise just demonstrates the difficulty of proving any corruption, if there be corruption.

I point out to the Minister for Police and Traffic, if he is not aware of it, that those officers dealing with certain tow-truck companies are doing so in breach of very specific instructions. The Minister explained those instructions to the Chamber in reply to my initial questions about the Kelmscott tow-truck operator. The Minister said the instructions were to be reiterated.

Mr O'Neil: I did not instruct that they be reiterated. That was the RTA.

Mr PEARCE: I want to mention the role of the Minister in relation to the RTA and the police in a minute. I have been intending to raise the matter.

If it occurs to anybody that there have been possibilities for rumour, supposition, and innuendos—to use the words of the Commissioner of Police—to arise, then surely nothing greater could be assumed to give rise to these three than that favouritism shown by RTA officers to commercial tow-truck companies. One could hardly be surprised if people should ask questions such as, "Why is it so?" If one says that the inquiry was not able to establish the guilt of any of these people who are showing favouritism to tow-truck companies—that is, that the police inquiry was not able to establish that they were receiving favours in return—that does not in fact support the contention made in the second paragraph that each allegation, when traced back to its source, proved to be based on supposition, rumour, and innuendo.

The showing of favouritism by RTA officers to tow-truck companies is a fact. It is not a rumour; it is not an innuendo; it is not a supposition. It is a fact. The Police Commissioner's whitewash Press release does not help by using indefinite terms. The commissioner has been quite dishonest in reporting the way in which some allegations were made.

One of the very first allegations made to me about the matter—it was made also to the reporter for *The West Australian* because he told me—was that a television set had been supplied to the Midland Traffic Office for officers to watch.

I cannot now remember whether the allegation was in relation to a coloured TV set or not. The allegation was that the set had been supplied by a tow-truck operator.

Mr O'Neil: I think, to be fair, the report went on to say, "such gifts as colour television sets".

Mr PEARCE: I take the point. That is not the only allegation. This is not the only time at which specific allegations were made. A number of different sources spoke about television sets. One specific allegation which was made to me and to the reporter for *The West Australian* was that a television set—it may have been a colour television set—was supplied to the Midland Traffic Office. All this ringing around was taking place on a Thursday when the Parliament was sitting.

I went to the ABC studios to appear in the "TDT" programme on the Thursday night. An hour or two before I went, "TDT" rang me and asked me whether I was prepared to appear with Mr Court from the RTA, to allow him to argue the matter. As it turned out, the journalist from *The West Australian* had in fact informed Mr Court of this specific allegation with regard to the Midland Traffic Office. A police inspector had been despatched from RTA headquarters, presumably, to the Midland Traffic Office. On his return, he told Mr Court, as Mr Court told the State on "TDT", that there had never been a television set in the Midland Traffic Office whatsoever. Mr Court told me that that proved the baseless nature of the allegations that were made.

When we refer to the Press release of the Acting Commissioner of Police, we find this statement—

One allegation inferred colour television sets were being supplied by tow truck operators to Police officers, in return for preferential treatment.

That part of it is true. The Press release continues—

This allegation was initially investigated at the instigation of Mr. R. J. Court, Chief Executive Officer, Road Traffic Authority, who, acting on advice received following the inquiry, stated that a television set supposedly provided for a metropolitan RTA office was not there.

That gives weight to the very specific nature of the allegation I have mentioned. The release continues—

The later, more comprehensive investigation has now established a 14" black and white television set was in fact loaned to a Patrol

Office about 18 months ago, to enable Constables at that office to watch Test Cricket during their meal break. Several days later, when it came to his notice, the set was removed and handed back to the owner on instructions from an N.C.O.

That shows that the set was there for 18 months. It was loaned by somebody, and somebody of a rank higher than a constable made the constables hand it back. I wonder why he made them give it back? The real question one asks is: "Who loaned it to them in the first place?" If it was not owned by a tow-truck operator, one would have thought that the Assistant Commissioner of Police would have ensured that the name of the owner of the television set appeared in the Press release.

Mr Bertram: Was it on permanent or temporary loan?

Mr PEARCE: If in fact the lender of this television set was a tow-truck operator, then that allegation would have been proven specifically. In fact, it would have been proven to be not based on rumour, supposition, and innuendo. That might seem a minor point in itself. We do not know the answer. The Minister is not telling us; the Commissioner of Police is not telling us; the report is confidential.

If it were the case that the television set had been loaned by a tow-truck operator, there are clear grounds for investigation. It would appear then that the rumours in the industry are based on fact. If in fact a tow-truck operator had not loaned that television set, why are not the Minister and the Commissioner of Police telling us?

As I mentioned, that allegation was made specifically. The Acting Commissioner of Police has taken it upon himself to lead off with a rebuttal of that incident. That is the one he deals with first. He deals with it in a most unsatisfactory manner.

I would like to mention also the strange case of a gentleman from one of the tow-truck companies who spoke to one of the reporters investigating these matters. A number of reporters were involved in the investigation. They were representing the various media. That gentleman told the reporter that he had been approached by two members of the RTA who asked him to match the \$10 per wreck grant—I suppose that is putting it in a funny way; I should have said "bribe"—that they were receiving from elsewhere. This gentleman made that quite specific allegation to the journalist concerned, and the allegation was duly reported. Subsequently it transpired that that gentleman had previously been to the RTA

and made the same complaint before there had been a journalistic investigation of the tow-truck industry following my comments in the Press. As I say, that gentleman had already approached the RTA and complained about the incident. He then repeated the allegations to the journalist. When officers of the CIB saw the gentleman, he retracted the allegations and said that the incident happened to somebody else. The construction placed on that in the report is that the man is obviously a liar.

Emphasis is placed on the fact that the gentleman lied twice—firstly to the RTA and then to the journalist. However, there is another interpretation that can be placed on the incident, as the man's story did not change until he was seen by officers of the CIB.

This Press release raises questions. It leaves one fairly heavily with the impression that not only is all not well in the tow-truck industry, but also that somebody is to blame for not doing something about it.

Other matters which are proved in this Press release deal with discounts given to police officers. It is said that discounts are offered to police officers by certain firms. One of the allegations made was that certain tow-truck firms were in the habit of giving free or discounted services to members of the RTA. In fact, the police investigation claimed to rebut that on the ground that discounts were also available to other people in other walks of life. I would be pleased to know who those people are, and what walks of life they are in.

Mr Shalders: Teachers are one. Members of the union are favoured by substantial discounts.

Mr PEARCE: I know that the discounts offered to members of the Teachers' Union are reasonably comprehensive, but there are no tow-truck operators offering discounts under that scheme.

Mr Shalders: I am not suggesting there are. That is just another walk of life.

Mr PEARCE: The concessions offered by tow-truck operators are not available to other people. People who give discounts work on the system that an organisation with a large number of members can help to bring the price down through bulk sales. Tow-truck operators cannot operate on that basis. Members would appreciate that. The people who offer discounts are looking for thousands of people to operate a scheme. The bulk operator requires the turnover to enable him to bring his costs down and hence provide the discounts. I am sure members will agree that tow-truck operators do not work on that basis.

Mr Shalders: You asked for examples where it happened in other walks of life. I told you one.

Mr PEARCE: I asked for examples concerning tow-truck operators; it seems the member misunderstood me.

The suggestion is that tow-truck firms—and tow-truck firms and panelbeating firms are often linked together—are offering discounts to police officers. It is said that this is done also in other walks of life, and was used as an excuse. That is not the same as discounts in the general sense. I would be fascinated to know the other walks of life that do receive discounts from tow-truck operators.

The fact that police officers were obtaining discounts has been proven by this Press release, and I quote as follows—

It was also implied that officers were invited to parties hosted by tow truck firms because of favours received;—

I passed some very specific information to the police with regard to firms holding parties and giving free beer to certain officers. The Press release continues—

—however, these functions were also attended by other people associated with the industry, and nothing was elicited to show police had any sinister motives or were dishonest in accepting such hospitality.

Members can see how grave these allegations are. Perhaps the things that are going on, as the Press report claims, are just normal commercial practices. That may be the case, but I do not believe police officers do themselves any good by associating with this sort of practice.

The Press release indicated that it had been established some officers did in fact favour certain tow-truck firms, and apparently no-one took it upon himself to do the correlation, to see whether the officers who were favouring these firms were the officers receiving discounts or going to parties run by certain firms. That correlation appears not to have been done. This would indicate incompetence on the part of the officers who conducted the investigations if, in fact, such a correlation was not done. I do not want to suggest it was not done. If the officers did this correlation it was not shown in the most unsatisfactory Press release issued by the Acting Commissioner of Police.

Who can say, with a Press release which states that RTA officers were showing favours to certain tow-truck companies and that TV sets were loaned to the Police Traffic Office by a person or persons unknown in accordance with the allegations previously made, that certain RTA officers were not

receiving discounts from towing firms and were not accepting invitations to social functions? Who can really say there is no substance in the rumours and innuendos circulating? It is a most unsatisfactory effort on behalf of all concerned.

The reason I was so annoyed about the Press release was that I had done sufficient investigation into the industry to realise all was not as it should be. I was hoping, even if we were not able to nail people specifically who might be acting corruptly, the investigations would have the salutary effect of having officers desist from these practices leading up to these rumours and innuendos.

When I first started on this inquiry—almost by accident as members will appreciate—I was reluctant to antagonise the Police Force because it is a powerful body in the community, one which nobody would wish to antagonise. That is especially true of myself as I do so much driving. I was astounded at the support I received from officers of the Police Force and the RTA. Some of these officers said there were some younger chaps in the force who at times went a bit too far. Not all claimed they were actually corrupt, but some of the younger ones did not appear to know the limitations within which police officers are bound to act.

Some of these men said these practices did go on and, if I were able to nail this matter, it would be the best thing for the reputation of the Police Force and the RTA. I am not suggesting the majority of the police or the RTA officers thought that way, but it was the case with the ones who spoke to me.

I want to make another point in defence of myself: I never raised this matter under parliamentary privilege. When these allegations were being made to me one clear course open to me was to come here and raise these matters under privilege where nothing could happen to me in a legal sense. I deliberately chose not to do that. I first raised the matter publicly on the television programme, "This Day Tonight", and I issued a Press release so that if anyone thought he was being maligned by me he could not accuse me of putting myself in an unfair position by placing myself under parliamentary privilege. I chose to make my remarks publicly rather than in Parliament initially.

I was more than somewhat annoyed to find the day after my initial statement had been published the Secretary of the Police Union accused me of making cowardly attacks under parliamentary privilege. He indicated his solicitors were being

given a watching brief on the matter. It was only my second thoughts that stopped me from slapping a writ on him.

I was not using parliamentary privilege and it would seem to me he must be illiterate because if he read the reports in the paper and did not understand the way I was dealing with the matter he strikes me as being a fool of the first order.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr PEARCE: I have never met the man personally. If he read the newspaper report of my Press release and decided I had made a cowardly attack under parliamentary privilege and then went to the Press and made statements without any foundation, perhaps I should have issued him with a writ for a few thousand dollars to cover my next election campaign. I did ask *The West Australian* to correct the matter and it did. I waited for an apology from Mr Fraser, but I did not receive one. I have nothing but contempt for the man and should I meet him I shall tell him so to his face.

I had information which I passed on and which has not been dealt with. If it has, it has not been mentioned in the Press report. I compiled a list of six tow-truck firms and three individual RTA officers whom it was alleged to me were involved in these practices. I make these comments carefully because I do not want to be unfair to anyone. The names of the six tow-truck firms I was given came from overlapping sources. One particular name came out time and time again with discussions I had with separate and distinct people. I do not know whether an investigation of these firms was carried out.

I thought I was providing the police with a lead, but no mention is made of them in the Press report. I did receive anonymous phone calls which named three specific police officers. However, I do not put much credence in anonymous phone calls of that type; the chances of someone being malicious or hurtful are too great. I passed the names over to the CIB men conducting the investigation. There was no suggestion in the report as to whether or not these people were looked at or whether the police checked to see if unfair treatment was evident. That is not possible to establish from the report.

We are entitled to know the degree to which these things have been investigated. If the report has not been published, how are we to know?

I will conclude—I have spent more time on this than I wanted to—by looking at the role taken by the Minister for Police and Traffic in this matter. I understand there is a necessity for a Minister to be a little distant from the chief of

police in any State. This is in the Police Act. It is implicit in the nature of the relationship between the Minister and the Commissioner of Police. This is necessary because one could easily see the situation as has often happened in certain States of the United States of America where the police are totally subject to political control and direction. In certain instances they have become totally corrupt by being directed by people above them who are politically placed.

I am not quarrelling with the Minister as a man—if that gives him any cause for relief—because he has been quite consistent in virtually doing nothing. The Minister says all the time that it has nothing to do with him. It is the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police. He has adopted that policy right from the time I raised questions about male strippers until now when I am dealing with tow-truck operators. He has never had a bar of any of the matters I have raised. I sometimes wonder whether he should not sit in the gallery at question time and allow the Commissioner of Police to sit in his place and draw his salary because then we might get some answers.

Mr O'Neil: I wonder who would win on that salary exchange!

Mr PEARCE: The Minister is consistent in his policy, but it is a wrong policy and this is demonstrated by the tow-truck business. Here we have a situation where the Minister is not directing the police to do something they ought not to do, but he is involved because he is the man in charge. Some police officers are investigating other police officers and in that situation the Minister has a clear responsibility to direct the police to ensure that the right and proper thing is being done. Although he is the Minister for Police he is also a representative of the people in a much wider sense and if we look to anyone to ensure that the priorities are observed, that justice is done, and that justice is seen to be done, we look to the Minister involved. In this respect the Minister has failed, because of his attitude to the whole situation.

It is my impression that when I first raised the matter the Minister was hopeful that if he said nothing the whole business would die down, but he was as embarrassed as I was for him when after he declined to order an investigation the Police Commissioner decided to hold one. That is an embarrassing and invidious position for the Minister in charge of a department to find himself in. Further to that there are ramifications in this whole business over and above the specific allegations.

Both the commissioner and the Chief Executive Officer of the RTA agree that there is room for rumours and innuendoes to occur because there is a fair opportunity for police officers to be involved in corrupt practices even if they are not, and the channelling of business to tow-truck firms for reasons of efficiency will give rise to rumours. One would have thought the Minister would act responsibly to try to sort out the system in a way requested by the Chief Executive Officer of the RTA and the police. They have requested some roster system to take away the initiative and the potential for corruption from police officers. It is the function of the Minister in consultation with other Ministers to take the pressure off the Police Force and the RTA as well as the tow-truck operators and the motoring public, by using his ministerial authority.

What has happened to those calls from me, Mr Court, the Chief Executive Officer of the RTA, and the Commissioner of Police for some other system of tow-truck operation? What has the Minister done? Perhaps he will tell us, but I bet the answer is "Nothing". I know that the tow-truck operators themselves are moving to have a more satisfactory system, but their moves are being resisted, I am told, by a number of large firms some of which, by coincidence, are on the list I gave the RTA. Perhaps the majority of the tow-truck operators will force a system on the industry.

However, what is the role of the Government? Surely it is not for the Ministers to sit by with their hands over their eyes, ears and mouths, hoping that the business will sort itself out thus making everyone happy.

I am sorry to take up so much time at a crucial period of the session, but I felt I had to defend myself in this matter. There was also a need to demonstrate that a lot has yet to be said and done about the tow-truck industry in this State. In some ways it has been an albatross around the necks of the reputation of the police in this State and other States for years. Unless some positive action is taken to discipline people involved in doubtful practices or, better still, to devise a system under which doubtful practices will not be possible, we will have the same sort of questions raised in Parliament, and worse still, in gossip in hotels around the place such as has been the case in the last few months.

The Press release answers none of the questions raised—not one. In fact, it confirms many of the suspicions held by people. It is not a healthy situation when it is widely accepted in the community that at least some of our police officers are corrupt. If there is one thing that astounded

me it is that almost everyone to whom I have spoken—and I have spoken to hundreds—believes that I would not find out anything, but that it was occurring. When there is such widespread belief that there is corruption even in only a small element of the Police Force, it is an unhealthy situation.

Even if it turns out not to be true the situation should not be as it is because it does not lead to a healthy and stable society or to confidence in our law enforcement body. The Minister should have made a move and been more decisive in order to put to rest the rumours by producing the report compiled by the CIB and by moving to rationalise the industry so that the same things cannot happen in the future.

The Minister bears a heavy responsibility in this matter and it is not too late for him to take some action. I hope that by the time the Parliament reconvenes next year the Minister will have acted to accept his responsibility in this matter.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [3.26 p.m.]: I am rising to my feet to discover whether there has been any progress in connection with a school of Governors. I referred to this matter earlier when the Premier was not in the Chamber. There is a serious need for such a school.

At the outset I would like to make it quite clear, as I did before—to the disgust of some of my colleagues—that I am an anglophile. I very much admire the institution of the constitutional monarchy and believe it has operated extremely well.

I will not go through the whole bit as I did before, but it is interesting to note that in the 19th century the monarchy was in a very shaky position.

Mr O'Neil: Are you talking about governors on motor vehicles?

Mr TONKIN: No. I am referring to the Governors of our State because it is included in the part under discussion.

I raise the matter because the British monarchy has not always been popular and it is important to ensure that it stays as popular as it is today. We have seen a remarkable turn around in that situation so that in the 20th century the monarchy has become well established and this has been because the monarchy has seemed to be above the to and fro of politics. This is not happening here. The people have a right to know that a Governor will be impartial and above party politics. Any political party which aspires to Government has a right to know that a Governor will act quite fairly and scrupulously.

If a Governor takes sides in politics then doubts occur in the minds of people as to whether he can be fair and impartial and he therefore impairs the proper functioning of the Constitution to that degree. If a Governor states—as the former Governor of Queensland did some time ago—that it would be better if one side won in the ensuing election, it brings the monarchy and the system of having a Governor into disrepute.

In this State we have had the position where a Governor has actually said that one political party is wrong because it does not believe in a uranium treatment plant. How can the political party which does not believe in the uranium treatment plant feel that it will get a fair deal from such a Governor if it becomes the Government and he has to use his royal prerogative?

The same Governor went up to a member of Parliament and bawled him out in front of several other people because of the Australian Labor Party's policy on bauxite. Can one imagine Her Majesty the Queen going up to Mr Callaghan and saying publicly, "I think you are wrong in this matter"? The Monarch does not interfere in politics, although she meets the Prime Minister once a week in private and does have the right to warn and advise—but in private! Had the British Monarch done the kind of thing that our Governor did recently, I believe Britain today would be a republic.

For the Governor to put the whole system in jeopardy by foolishly taking sides in politics or attacking a political party's policy on bauxite or anything else is very bad. That is why I raised the question of a school for Governors. The Governor could do much worse than follow the example of Queen Elizabeth II and the decorum and finesse with which she ensures the Crown is kept above party politics.

It must be remembered that something like half the people in Western Australia vote for the Australian Labor Party and they have a right to believe the Governor is not against them, that he is their Governor. In fact, that is one of the advantages of the constitutional monarchy system as distinct from the American presidential system; the head of State is above politics. In the United States the President is either a Democrat or a Republican, and to that degree he alienates the people on the other side of politics. But the Queen is neither Conservative nor Labor, and for well over 100 years successive monarchs have scrupulously demonstrated that.

We in this State have the right to the same kind of treatment, and if Governors do not already know how to behave and observe correct decorum

in these matters, they should be instructed. It is certainly not correct for a Governor to go up to a member of Parliament and try to start an argument with him in front of other people. Fortunately the member of Parliament concerned had more breeding than the other gentleman and did not indulge in debate. He realised it was a very touchy situation and showed good manners by not taking issue with him. It should not be left to a member of Parliament to give the Governor a lesson in the proprieties, and that kind of thing should not occur again.

If Governors do not already understand their important role before they take office, they should be instructed in the very important constitutional role they have. They must be like the Queen. They must be above politics so that every political party can know it will get a fair deal if it should become the Government. I think that is very important to the way the whole Constitution works.

In relation to the Police Force and the Road Traffic Authority, I draw attention to something which occurs on the roads every day to a great extent; that is, the sport of tailgating, especially by young people who fancy themselves as speedway drivers and like to drive within a yard of another car's bumper. Of course, every driver has the right to put his brakes on to the maximum extent at any time. A child could run across the road; anything could happen. I want to know what the police are doing about this matter.

I think the problem is that the police in their marked cars cannot detect this kind of thing because one would have to be a lunatic to do that to a police car. I suppose the only way it can be detected is with unmarked cars.

I believe in the unmarked car system and am prepared to debate it. Some people think it is unfair. If one thinks killing people on the road is sport, I suppose it is unfair; but if we are serious about the carnage on the roads we must feel we never know whether or not the car alongside is an unmarked police car, even if it does have a man and a woman inside it, because they may be police officers in plain clothes.

We should not be so worried about the people who drive 10 kilometres over the speed limit. I was pulled up for doing that the other day; I thought it was a revenue-producing action. I believe that driving 12 or 13 kilometres above 60 kilometres an hour on a road alongside the railway track where there are no cross-streets is not very dangerous.

Mr Blaikie: It is breaking the law.

Mr TONKIN: That is true.

Mr Blaikie: If the law is wrong, change it.

Mr TONKIN: I am not arguing about that but I am saying the laws are broken every day. We should have the limited number of RTA officers preventing breaches of the law which cause death on the roads. I am not arguing in favour of breaking the law, but, with the limited number of RTA officers, we should enable the RTA and the Police Force to operate so that they have an influence on life and death.

The road criminal—the person who does extremely dangerous things and uses his motor vehicle as a weapon, causing death—will not be caught by radar traps or marked cars. He is the person who will be caught by the police officers in plain clothes. When someone has committed a murder and is caught by a detective in plain clothes, no-one says that is unfair.

We all think we have a right to a driving licence and that it is a game to try to beat the police. Driving 10 kilometres over the speed limit is a bit of a game because it is not really dangerous, but it is breaking the law. Attention should be directed to the really dangerous habits of a very small percentage of drivers.

One of the problems in detecting such drivers is that they have a personality defect. Psychologists are not clever enough to be able to detect in a personality test those who have a personality defect. Those people soon learn the answers expected of them. There are means to detect that, but it is not easy to do.

It seems to me we should be concentrating on the road criminals—those who do not care about other people, who are not driving 10 kilometres an hour faster than they should be but are indulging in activities which cause death and injury.

DR DADOUR (Subiaco) [3.39 p.m.]: I wish to speak on a matter related to the police. I thought the police existed to protect people, but I find in my electorate certain people are being disadvantaged. I thought it was the Minister's responsibility to ensure the police did their job, but I find I am probably quite wrong and that the Minister does not want to accept any responsibility. He says he will not direct the police. Perhaps he is right in adopting that attitude; but who does direct the police? Somebody must.

Obviously the Opposition would not direct the police; yet we are told by a Minister from the Government benches that he does not direct the police and there are ways of doing things, other than by telling them. Suggesting something is wrong and saying something should be done about it is not in any way directing the police.

My gripe is in respect of a matter I raised during a grievance debate this year. The handling of the matter was quite unsatisfactory in every sense of the word. I am very critical of the fact that the police will not enforce the law in a certain part of my electorate, which happens to be in the vicinity of a wine saloon. The point is that people who live nearby are disadvantaged to the nth degree. I pointed this out previously, and was at great pains to do so. However, I have received no satisfaction whatsoever. I would have thought the Minister would do something about the matter, but obviously he does not intend to do anything constructive about it.

I am at a loss to know why this should be so. The simple fact is that if anybody is disadvantaged surely it is our responsibility to see he is made equal to other people and advantaged to the same degree. Yet I find outside my electorate the police give "the treatment" to a wine saloon. They regularly stake out this place and make a number of arrests. However, they just do not seem to care about the wine saloon in my electorate of which I am speaking, which is situated in Keightley Road, Subiaco.

This prompted me to write to the Minister earlier this year. I did not pull any punches in my letter. I said this had been a festering sore for some time in my electorate, and I asked him kindly to investigate it. I do not know what kind of investigation was carried out, but I received a letter from the Minister saying the place was being run in a proper manner and mine host was extremely co-operative and helpful in every way. Obviously the police did not look outside the place.

I do not care what happens inside the wine saloon; it is what happens when people come outside that worries me. It seems that people who have been drinking wine behave differently from those who have been drinking beer. People who have been drinking wine are often abusive and aggressive; they do not seem to be aware of their ordinary inhibitions; they seem not to be aware of where they are; and they seem to urinate whenever and wherever the mood strikes them.

What is even worse than that is that after I received that letter from the Minister telling me there was nothing wrong with the place, that it is beyond reproach, and that no more investigations would be carried out, I staked out the wine saloon with some of the people who live in the area, and what I saw was quite interesting. On the very first night I saw two gentlemen standing on the footpath.

Mr Barnett: Gentlemen, you say?

Dr DADOUR: I do not suppose they could be called gentlemen.

Mr O'Neil: Were they prosecuted?

Dr DADOUR: Had the Minister listened to this previously, I would not have had to bring the matter to the Parliament again. I saw those two gentlemen urinating, and they were approached by the police. On the following Tuesday I came to the Parliament and saw the Acting Minister for Police and asked him whether the police would do something about what I had seen. On the next morning the Acting Minister told me that the police were not going on with the matter. I said, "That is rather peculiar because I am an eye-witness; I actually saw the police catch the men in the act and take their names."

Subsequently I placed a question on the notice paper asking whether the police would prosecute. The answer now was, "Yes". There was a change of mind; perhaps because I had witnessed the event. Perhaps there was some other reason of which I am not aware. However, the outcome was that the men were prosecuted.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

Dr DADOUR: As I was saying before the tea break, I am at a loss to know why the Minister for Police and Traffic has been so reluctant to do something about the problem in my electorate. I would have thought the least he could do would be to look into the situation more thoroughly. The situation should be considered at a higher level than it was looked at on the first occasion.

After the police reported that everything was above board, I found that things were occurring which were not above board—far from it. I related this information to the Minister, but the Minister refused to believe what I was trying to say.

I have heard a lot said about there being no ministerial direction of the police. I wonder who directs the police. The police seem to know when to be in the right place at the wrong time, or at the right time. The situation does not add up to me.

When I find something in my own electorate which is a problem, and when people are disadvantaged by the behaviour of others, it is the place of the police to rectify the situation. There are laws which the police can rely on to rectify a problem. However, I find that the police do not proceed with the obvious cases—those with which they should be proceeding. The actions of the

police should have a deterrent effect on the community. Law-abiding citizens in our society should be protected; but apparently that is not the case.

Mr Bertram: Apparently they have a selective type of "firm hands" policy.

Dr DADOUR: Whichever type of policy they have, it is unknown to me.

I find that the actions of the Deputy Premier, in his capacity as Minister for Police and Traffic, are totally unsatisfactory. There is no other description but "totally unsatisfactory". He is not doing his job as I understand the job should be done.

I am a member of Parliament. If I go to the Minister with a problem, I expect him to listen to me. If he investigates my problem and he finds to the contrary, and then I return to him with proof to establish that there is definitely something wrong, and that the person who conducted the investigation has done wrong, I expect the Minister to believe me. I expect him to take steps to have something done about the matter. I maintain, as a member of Parliament, that that should be done.

I have no vendetta against anybody, as the Minister might have thought I had. I have no vendetta even against the person who owns the wine saloon. I do not know the person and I do not want to know him. I have never spoken to him. Do not let us think I have a vendetta. All I am worried about is that 28 people in my electorate are being disadvantaged six nights a week. That is too much.

I have a copy of a summary that has been prepared by people in my electorate. They have kept a diary this year of the events that have occurred. It can be seen from the summary that there is a great problem.

The last time I raised this matter in Parliament, the Commissioner of Police made certain statements to the Press. Those statements are obnoxious, as far as I am concerned. The commissioner blurted off a denial. He knew nothing about the circumstances. That is wrong. It is all right to deny something when one knows what is occurring; but the commissioner has made his denial without any knowledge of the situation.

When I questioned the fact that police officers were seen in the saloon, the answer came back that they were in the saloon investigating my complaints. I have not made one complaint about the wine saloon itself. My complaints are about the actions of the people when they come out of the wine saloon. I could not care less what is done inside the wine saloon. It could be a brothel, for all I care. It is when people come

out and disadvantage my electors living in that part of Subiaco that something should be done. The people of Subiaco have lost confidence in the local police, and that is an indictment of the Government and the Minister. It is the place of the Minister to see that these matters are dealt with.

The Police Force is a disciplined body. If members of it are not doing their job, they should be disciplined. They should do their job. It is the Minister's task to ensure that the members of the Police Force do their job. Under the Westminster system, the Minister is responsible. He cannot hide and say, "I cannot direct." I am not asking him to direct. I am asking him only to see that justice is done. He is not prepared to do that.

Mr Bertram: Why is he playing favourites?

Dr DADOUR: I refuse to have the people in my electorate disadvantaged because of the attitude of the Minister. If we still had the previous Minister for Police and Traffic, I have no doubt he would have considered these problems. I find the present Minister is most wanting. The best way to describe the Minister is to say that he is a sawdust Caesar, full of water and wind, because we receive nothing else from him.

I hear reports from members of the Police Force that the Police Commissioner has the Minister in the palm of his hand. This is terrible!

I want to know why I am not receiving satisfactory responses from the Minister. Other members of the Parliament tell me I go about it the wrong way. They say I should go and talk to the police, and they will sort it out for me. They tell me to be nice to the police. It is not my place to be nice to them. It is not my place to go to them. I go to the top; and the top is my Minister. If my Minister will not do it for me, then he is wrong. He should be relieved of his portfolio.

Mr Bertram: Could you not go to the Premier?

Dr DADOUR: The Premier stands by the Minister. In the party room, I receive no satisfaction at all.

That is the story of the problem. I still have not received any of the answers that I want. I want an answer which indicates that something will be done; that the matter will be looked at.

The lack of action is an indictment of the Government. It is wrong in every sense of the word. It is terrible when a member of Parliament goes to his own Minister and finds that his own Minister will not attend to a matter.

I will not go to the Commissioner of Police. It is not my place to go to him, and I have no right to go to him. I should not approach any of

the departments. I know what would happen if I walked into the Public Health Department; there would be panic! I would not go to any department or any bureaucrat. I deal in the correct way—through the Minister.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Dr DADOUR: Mr Chairman, I would ask you for protection. I am very far from the *Hansard* reporter; and it is most distracting when people right alongside one are interjecting. It is not asking too much to have those interjections stopped. That is a reasonable request. I ask for a fair go. The last *Hansard* reporter had to come to me and ask me what I was talking about. He could not hear me.

Mr Pearce: A lot of people ask him that.

Dr DADOUR: I ask for this common courtesy to be extended to me.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask members to refrain from interjecting. The member for Subiaco.

Dr DADOUR: I do not mind interjections from anybody else. It is just those who are right next to my ear. It is the interjections from close to me that I find difficult.

Mr Bertram: Surreptitiously.

Mr Herzfeld interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Dr DADOUR: May I come to the Table of the House to speak?

Opposition members: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the House to come to order. I ask the member to continue his speech.

Dr DADOUR: It appears to me that when I speak against my Government—which is a difficult thing to do—it is hard when I am constantly being interjected on. No-one else can hear what is said.

The CHAIRMAN: I can hear the member quite clearly.

Dr DADOUR: I can hear you, too, Mr Chairman.

Points of Order

Mr TONKIN: The Standing Orders permit a member to come to the Table of the House with the concurrence of the Chairman or the Speaker. Are you ruling, Mr Chairman, that he may not come to the Table of the House?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. I ask the member to continue from his present position. If there are difficulties experienced, then I will take other action.

Mr BERTRAM: In order that the member for Subiaco may be given a fair go—and he obviously is greatly disturbed—I seek your guidance, Mr Chairman. Am I permitted to move that the member for Subiaco be permitted to address the Committee from the Table of the House? It is obvious that he has an important contribution to make. The people of Subiaco want their member to be heard, and members of the Government seem to be intent on preventing him from being heard.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not necessary to move a motion and, as I understand it, it is not appropriate to have one. As I said, I will pay particular attention to the member for Subiaco and if I feel he is having difficulties I shall take other steps.

Mr Bryce: It is the member for Bunbury—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Committee Resumed

Dr DADOUR: I shall continue. I should like the position to be correct for the record. I received a letter from the Chief Secretary concerning the behaviour of the people in the vicinity of this wine saloon. He said everything was above board, the saloon was being run very well indeed, and no more complaints from the same source would be investigated. I believe those were the words used; at least words to that effect were used.

After receiving that letter, on six nights running I went down to the wine saloon to observe what was happening outside it. On the first night I found two gentlemen urinating on the verge outside No. 12 Keightley Road. I could not only hear the gentlemen speaking, but I could hear the sound effects of what they were doing also. A car containing two plain clothes policemen pulled up. These policemen were from the liquor and gaming branch. The two gentlemen were illuminated by the headlights of this car. They were immediately apprehended by the policemen who took their names. Whilst this was occurring mine host walked down from the front door of the establishment. The policemen and the two gentlemen who had been apprehended and mine host had a good laugh, shook hands, and off they went.

I spoke with the Acting Minister for Police and Traffic for whom I am full of praise. I asked him whether the police would proceed with the prosecution of these two gentlemen. Next morning the Acting Minister told me that the prosecution would not proceed. I then placed a question on the notice paper in relation to this

matter and the reply was that the two gentlemen would be prosecuted. Had I not seen the incident, the prosecution would not have occurred.

From the time the complaints first began to arise in relation to this establishment up till the present time, only one prosecution has occurred. The police refuse to proceed with prosecutions. Who told the police not to proceed with the prosecution of these offenders? Why do the police not prosecute these offenders? I am aware that people who offend in the vicinity of two other wine saloons are getting the treatment. As many as 10 people are caught each night and charged with offensive behaviour and urinating on the verges or lawns in the vicinity of these establishments.

Mr Bertram: Do you have any idea why they are not prosecuted?

Dr DADOUR: I want to know why they are prosecuted and the offenders outside my establishment are not prosecuted. There is something wrong.

Mr B. T. Burke: You must have a suspicion.

Dr DADOUR: I do not want to go into that. I have a real problem in my electorate and it is made much worse by the attitude of the Chief Secretary. As the Minister for Police and Traffic, he should give me more consideration so that I can ensure the people in my electorate are not disadvantaged as a result of the bad behaviour and abuse of certain people outside the wine saloon.

The residents in this area have lost all the confidence they had in the local Police Force in Subiaco. This is a shocking situation. If this is the case, how can the Chief Secretary in all fairness take no notice and do nothing about the matter? He said specifically that he will not direct the Commissioner of Police. I am not asking him to direct the Commissioner of Police. I am asking for the same treatment afforded people in other electorates. There is something wrong in my electorate and I want it cleaned up in the same manner as I want the law to be enforced when it is broken in other places. I want equal treatment, not preferential treatment. I do not have a vendetta, but I am sick and tired of receiving complaints continually.

These people are disadvantaged and to be told by the police that they are not is a bit too much.

My argument is a good solid one and I do not know how the Chief Secretary will get around it for the simple reason that there is no way out. He must see that justice is done. I am horrified that the situation has come to this point. I have gone through the correct channels from the very beginning. I have even taken the matter to the

party room and I have received no satisfaction. I have come now to the only other forum open to me, which is the forum of Parliament. I want to know what is going on. If there is no ministerial direction, is graft or corruption involved? Is somebody receiving a bribe? Why are these offenders allowed to get away with their behaviour in that location only? Why are they allowed to get away with it there, but not in the vicinity of two other similar establishments with which I am familiar and which are very close to the establishment I am concerned about? Unfortunately the two saloons to which I refer are not in my electorate, but in neighbouring electorates. When I asked the members representing those electorates about the matter, I was told that perhaps I should have a talk to the sergeant on the point or something like that. This is terrible.

I wonder what I am supposed to say when I talk to the sergeant. The situation looks dreadful to me. The Chief Secretary is not doing his job and I ask him now to do his job as I, and I am sure a number of other law-abiding citizens, understand he should do it, which is, to see that justice is done in this part of my electorate.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) (4.22 p.m.): I have some sympathy for the dilemma which has just been related to us so eloquently by the member for Subiaco; but I should like to add that the sort of problem with which his constituents are faced in the particular area he mentioned is not a problem which is confined only to Subiaco. I believe the police do a reasonable job in respect of these establishments in some areas; but in other areas—apparently in Subiaco and elsewhere where the level of supervision and law enforcement is below standard and where efficiency should be improved—the police do not do a good job.

We realise the police are very busy. Furthermore it is understood they do not have sufficient manpower. Therefore, it is rather unfair even to appear to be placing blame upon members of the Police Force in that situation. I am not concerned so much with placing blame—and I am speaking in respect of this particular matter—but what I am concerned with is bringing the matter to public notice, as has the member for Subiaco, in the expectation of a better level of performance being achieved by the people responsible for the situation. I am not referring necessarily to the individual policeman or police sergeant.

One of the risks which a member of the Opposition runs if he has the temerity to speak on matters relating to the police, the Police Force, or policemen is that he shall be attacked immediately, no doubt with a view to silencing him, on

the basis that, "You and your colleagues—" referring to the Opposition "—are anti-police." Generally speaking, that allegation is false. It is used with a view to scoring political points regardless of the adverse consequences, and for the purpose also of shutting up the Opposition.

There is no doubt that the media obliges and by that procedure the Government often scores political points. As far as I am concerned the intention of shutting up the mouths of members and stopping them speaking about questions related to the police by using that allegation will not work in my case. I hope the Minister will not bother about indulging in that particular device in my case.

Mr O'Neil: Give us an example of where I have used that "device" as you call it in the past.

Mr BERTRAM: As I spoke it occurred to me that the Minister's predecessor used that ploy. Of course the Premier and the commissioner use it. It is certainly a ploy one would expect to be used by the Premier, because it is the type of technique he uses. The former Minister for Police and Traffic used it frequently also. Apparently the Premier can bully Liberal members in Caucus and he expects to do so here as well.

When I made that statement I was thinking more of one of the predecessors of the Minister for Police and Traffic. I should like to clear up that point in fairness to the Minister.

I should like to place on record that from time to time some of my constituents have spoken to me in glowing terms about the conduct of certain police and RTA officers. My constituents may have been stopped on the road for committing an alleged breach and it has been drawn to my attention that the police have worked in a proper manner and have been very polite. It is important that I should place that on the record, because most of us know, in general terms, if one is treated decently—even if one is for the time being in a position where one is breaking the law—by the people in authority—whether they be police or RTA officers—one's response will be far more positive and co-operative than if one is not treated decently.

It is pleasing to hear that policemen and RTA officers are behaving in a decent manner. I hope this occurs frequently. I mention it because in recent times it has been drawn to my attention on a number of occasions by people from diverse parts of my electorate that officers have done the right thing. It is important that this should be placed on the record.

On occasions, of course, it has been drawn to my attention that the police officers have not behaved decently; but in more recent times the pluses have been apparent and the minuses have been few. For that reason I mention it, because it is always very easy to be negative and condemnatory. It is not too difficult for people to be a little praiseworthy when there is cause for it.

The Government needs the strongest censure on a number of grounds, but the matter I wish to mention relates to the carnage on the roads. People are being killed in their hundreds and maimed in their thousands. Clearly the Government is powerless to do anything about it. For years the Government has been doing a little window-dressing periodically.

For example, if there is a heavy road toll in one week or over a holiday period we can be dead sure the Government will react and make some sort of Press announcement designed for the purpose of informing the people that the Government is on the move. The announcement is not designed to be worth while or effective in relation to a proposition which is to be put into operation.

The Government claims it is doing something about the matter when, as a matter of fact, if one looks at the statistics—the carnage and the mangling of human bodies on the roads—one will see that nothing is being done. If certain legislation now before us concerning off-road vehicles is passed, the carnage will extend off the roads to the situation where injured people will have no effective redress.

On one such occasion when we were subjected to a whole lot of window-dressing, there was an announcement by the Premier, perhaps, or by the Minister—it matters not particularly—that the Government would do something about the matter by having certain persons dob-in people who drive motor vehicles—pimp on them; inform on them; that is what the Government's present policy is.

Mr O'Neil: Who said that?

Mr BERTRAM: As I said, I am not sure.

Mr O'Neil: You said it was either the Premier or me. Who said it? Be factual. Neither of us said it.

Mr BERTRAM: If it was not the Premier, and it was not the Minister, I withdraw that comment. I am very sad about that.

Mr O'Neil: It was a senior police officer in Victoria.

Mr BERTRAM: It seemed to be the sort of statement one would expect from the Premier in this type of situation.

On the 7th November last I asked question 2271 of the Premier. Part (3) of my question was as follows—

- (3) Is it the Government's policy to have doctors report their patients who drive motor vehicles when they are physically or mentally unfit to do so?

The reply from the Premier was as follows—

- (3) Doctors are occasionally faced with the dilemma that a patient has a physical or mental condition which is likely to render him unfit to drive a motor vehicle and be dangerous to both himself and the public at large. There is conflict between the doctor's duty of confidentiality to the patient and of his duty to the public. Where the doctor decides that his duty to the public is greater, the Government proposes to protect him from any legal liability thereby incurred.

Mr O'Neil: What is wrong with that?

Mr BERTRAM: I stand corrected if it was not the Premier or the Minister who made the statement, but my recollection is that such an announcement was made, and it was the type—because of its nature—one would expect from the Premier.

Mr O'Neil: I think you read a headline in the *Sunday Independent* where I was reported to have said, "Dob in your husband". I did not say that. You would have read the article in some weekend rag.

Mr BERTRAM: The reply given to my question 2271 shows there is to be a form of dobbing-in introduced. Who will dob-in whom? It will not be the publicans who provide liquor for people to consume, and consume in quantities that affect their capacity to drive. They will not be asked to dob-in anybody. The dob-in procedure will come from the medical practitioners in respect of their patients. That is the type of dobbing-in which will be practised and encouraged by this Government. Why should the Government encourage that type of thing?

If it could be said that statistics are available to the Government to show that people who have some mental or physical disability are causing a significant number of accidents on the roads; if there were statistics of that sort one would be more sympathetic towards the dobbing-in procedure. But it seems there are no statistics of that sort.

Part (2) of my question 2271 to the Premier, asked in each of the last three years—

- (2) How many road traffic accidents have occurred wholly or in part as a result of a person driving a motor vehicle whilst physically or mentally unfit to drive but who at the material time was in no way influenced by liquor or drugs?

The answer to that question was, "Figures are not available". So, no figures are available for the Government to justify this dobbing-in procedure by professional men of their patients. On the other hand, let us look at other statistics because these reveal the humbug of this new concept to which I have referred. Part (1) of my question asked, in each of the last three years—

- (1) How many people have been successfully prosecuted under the Criminal Code or the Road Traffic Act for offences of which the fact that they were influenced by liquor or drugs was an element?

I ask members to note these statistics, compared with the statistics in respect of those people who are physically or mentally disabled. The reply to that part of my question was—

- (1) The number of convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol and driving with 0.08 per cent or more alcohol in the blood in the last three years are—

1977-78—6 844

1976-77—7 240

1975-76—6 548

Figures on whether alcohol or drugs influenced other offences are not available.

So, there are statistics of extraordinary significance and dimension. If there is no record, who will be asked to dob-in people? No-one will be asked? That is not the Government policy at all. What the Government will do, as the Premier has confirmed in his answer to my question, is encourage medical practitioners to dob-in their patients. Those practitioners who dob-in their patients will receive a certain immunity from attack by their clients for having breached any confidential situation which otherwise exists these days.

As I have said, what the Government is more concerned about so often, and even more so in respect of the carnage on the road, is not to remedy the carnage but to give out in boatloads window-dressing and verbiage designed to indicate to the people that it is doing a good job when, as a matter of fact, it is not.

I think it was the member for Morley when speaking earlier who said that a number of people were having their cars crashed into from the rear. I think his remarks were timely because when one walks around the streets one sees a sight which we rarely saw in the past. One sees people wearing neck braces because of injuries they have sustained and what in general terms are referred to as "whiplash injuries". Even those injuries which on the surface may appear to be minor, are capable of having a devastating effect on the limbs and organs of the human body.

I think the public should be encouraged to be a little more careful when they approach intersections where most tail-end collisions occur so that these whiplash injuries may be reduced. It seems as though a little more education in that direction would have a far better result than what is occurring at the moment.

At the last election, I think it was, the Premier explained to the people that his policy was one of "firm hands". I do not think anybody knew what he was talking about, and I do not think he bothered to tell them. I think that what he was really saying was that he would clamp down and tighten up on things generally but, above all, he would enforce the law without fear or favour.

The member for Subiaco takes the view that the Premier is not doing that, but that he is playing favourites with the people. I happen to share the same view as the member for Subiaco on this occasion. I remind the Committee once again about a lady of some character in the north-west who published a little pamphlet. She breached the hypertechnicality of neglecting to place on the pamphlet the name of the person who authorised it.

That lady was prosecuted and convicted, and she is now a convicted person. I suppose if she sought to become a Justice of the Peace, she could not be appointed. That is an example of firm hands applied to a woman who, because of her political viewpoint, apparently was sorted out for special treatment.

Another indication of firm hands concerned an officer of the State Housing Commission who allegedly published something which was said to be confidential. Apparently about half the population of Perth had knowledge of the matter, but the man was convicted and he lost his job. I do not particularly condone that type of action, but it seemed to be the thought of the presiding judge that the case was something of the nature of a storm in a teacup.

The present Prime Minister of Australia when Leader of the Opposition had a phone link with a person who was working in the Treasury. Information was leaked from the Treasury from time to time by that person. I think they called that person "Mr Williams". If the man from the State Housing Commission should have been dealt with in the way he was, I wonder in what way the present Prime Minister should have been dealt with.

Mr Young: Have you finished with road traffic matters?

Mr BERTRAM: I would be happy to go back to that subject.

Mr Young: I thought you might have made a suggestion, because for 20 minutes you have criticised the Government and never once mentioned what you would do about the problem.

Mr BERTRAM: I think that is a very interesting thought to come from the Minister. He has been in this Parliament for quite a long time.

Mr Young: I have been here long enough to know that you never say anything.

Mr BERTRAM: The Minister knows how much acceptance is given by this Government to matters which we raise.

Mr Young: Translated into ordinary language, you do not have a policy.

Mr BERTRAM: If the Minister is not aware of what I have said, he is not trying too hard. The other night, about 36 hours ago, there was the first invitation extended to a member of the Opposition to come forward and make a positive suggestion as to how the Premier should improve a Bill. That was a unique experience. A Government member reminded us that we should not be too hopeful about any repetition in the future, and I am not.

Apparently the Minister for Health takes a different view on that matter from the member of the Government who interjected the other night.

Mr Young: You cannot tell use how to solve the road traffic problem.

Mr BERTRAM: I will be quite happy to make submissions to the Road Traffic Authority. As the member knows, I am a competent member for Mt. Hawthorn, and the Government acknowledges this fact at regular intervals. Any ideas I have I transmit directly to the people concerned. I do not bring them into this Parliament because I do not think it is necessary. If I can get action by going to the head of the RTA, then I do it that way. Why should I waste time in this place?

Mr Coyne: A very good question.

Mr BERTRAM: While I am referring to the Road Traffic Authority, I am happy to see this publication which has just been handed to me. The Minister for Health will be pleased to see it, because it is headed, "Dob in Drunk Hubbies—O'Neil".

Mr B. T. Burke: That is Frank O'Neil of Shenton Park.

Mr BERTRAM: I will come back to that. I was talking about the concept of dobbing-in and this article corroborates what I was saying earlier. I would like to come to another matter dealing with health.

Mr Young: You handled the last one brilliantly.

Mr BERTRAM: I am always happy to oblige the Minister for Health. We agree on so many things. The only thing we do not agree on is the fact that the members of his electorate should be discounted by 16/1 when they go to the ballot box. He always likes me to bring that home here, Mr Chairman, and I would not like to displease him.

After that slight departure, I want to speak about search and seizure warrants and the situation in Perth at the moment. Not so long ago a great deal of upheaval and discontent arose because search warrants were executed in respect of solicitors' offices. The legal profession and the public generally were distressed that such a thing should happen. People give their solicitors a great deal of confidential information believing that in doing so they do not lessen their position in the law. It is rather disturbing then to find that on one occasion the police exercised a warrant to enter a solicitor's office and comb through his records.

I understand that something similar happened recently in regard to an organisation, an association, or an incorporated body. A member of this association was under suspicion for having made a threat against another person, whereupon the police officers obtained a warrant and searched all the files of that particular organisation, the membership of which approaches something like 2 000. I am told the police officers paid particular attention to correspondence, memoranda, and letters coming from members of Parliament to the association or to the people concerned. Why should the police be so interested in correspondence and paper work of that kind?

However, my main concern is with what happened recently at Albany where police officers moved in, and under the authority of a warrant,

seized certain papers and documents from the Clerk of the Local Court. On the 15th November, I asked the Minister the following question—

Why was it necessary to provide in this manner, that is by warrant, authority to the Clerk of Courts to release documents to the police?

The Minister replied as follows—

The police considered it necessary to provide the clerk of courts who was the official custodian of the court records with the authority to release the documents.

I am not aware of any precedent for the proposition that if one wants authority to give documents to some person, one should have obtained a warrant to do that. I have never heard of that procedure in my life, but if the Minister can give examples, I will be interested to hear them. It is a dangerous precedent. Is a police officer to be permitted to go along to the bank official holding the key to the safe and say to him, "I have a warrant for some documents and money from your bank, you are to give them to me"? Just where will it all end?

A very dangerous situation is developing when one limb of Government can obtain a warrant to seize documents from another limb of Government. For instance, if the Minister for Health wants a document from the Minister for Agriculture, and if the document is not forthcoming, the Minister for Health can go to the police, grab a warrant, and grab the file from the Department of Agriculture.

Mr O'Neil: Just let us examine that expression "grab a warrant". You said that he could grab a warrant, but you know a warrant is not issued without some authority.

Mr BERTRAM: The terminology was loose.

Mr O'Neil: I'll say.

Mr BERTRAM: However, I am certainly indebted to the Minister for reassuring me, if that is what he is doing, that the warrant issued in respect of the Clerk of Courts of Albany was a legally obtained warrant. I am sorry that I do not have time to develop the theme because the Minister for Health side-tracked me onto another subject.

Obviously the Minister for Police and Traffic has not fully answered the question I asked in this Chamber and I believe he owes us an explanation.

MR WILLIAMS (Clontarf) [4.52 p.m.]: I am sure all members of the Chamber are well aware that next year a great load will be placed on our Police Force in the performance of its duties during our 150th year celebrations. However, I believe that the greatest load will be placed on the mounted police section. As well as general duties, this troop performs search and rescue and ceremonial work. It is asked to perform at the Royal Show, country shows, and it undertakes escort work.

Next year, the troop will be greatly involved in the pageantry connected with our celebrations. It could be that this particular section will be found wanting, not because of any lack of enthusiasm on the part of its members, or of their ability to perform, but rather for two other reasons.

Firstly, the troop is very short of horses. It has 30 horses in all, but of these four mares are for breeding, there are eight youngsters, and 18 horses are in work, including the stallions. Bearing in mind the work they will be expected to undertake next year, is this sufficient stock? Members who know anything about horses will realise that there must be culling to obtain satisfactory quality. Unfortunately, because of the lack of numbers, I do not believe there has been sufficient culling with the police horses.

I would like to give an example to illustrate this. In South Australia, the mounted police section has been breeding its own stock for the last 25 years. It has 98 horses, and the progeny are culled to a great extent so that the horses actually used give a very high standard of performance. I suggest to the Minister that we should commence a similar programme. Certainly the public enjoy the ceremonial and escort work of the troop, but they derive more enjoyment from watching the police horses in competition with the Equestrian Federation of Australia at the agricultural shows. This competition enhances the enthusiasm of the members of the mounted troop, but to be able to compete on an equal footing with members of the federation, they need horses that are capable of competing in the hacking and the jumping events.

This situation should be looked at closely. Although I realise it cannot be done overnight, we should look to upgrading the section over a period of time.

Another related matter I wish to mention is the uniform of the police officers. Both men and women are expected to use the same uniform at all times. A police officer could be on search and rescue work in the bush today and tomorrow he could be performing at a ceremonial event with

the Governor in attendance. However, he is required to wear the same uniform for both occasions. I believe that this troop will have a big part to play in our 150th year celebrations, and it certainly warrants the Minister's attention to try to update the ceremonial uniforms. If the members of the troop knew that consideration was being given to their uniforms, it would give them the necessary morale boost.

Another matter for concern is the size of this troop. At the moment it has one sergeant and 13 constables, including three women. In proper ceremonial and escort work, three women are insufficient.

Mr Tonkin: Escort work?

Mr WILLIAMS: Certainly to give a balanced performance, at least one other woman is needed.

Mr Tonkin: More females for escort work?

Mr WILLIAMS: Certainly this troop should consist of at least 20 members. This would require extra horses, and I appreciate the difficulties involved. However, if something is not done to assist this troop, by the end of 1979, because of the work load thrust on them, the members of the troop may not be carrying out their duties satisfactorily. I trust the Minister will give this matter his consideration.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.58 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to put a special plea to the Minister for Police and Traffic in regard to what I consider to be a very unsavoury development in Western Australia. I have written letters to the Minister for Police and Traffic about my concern that guns are being sold in supermarkets. Licences to handle firearms have been granted to supermarkets, and today it is possible to enter a large supermarket to buy the week's groceries and to come out with an automatic shotgun and a supply of ammunition.

Mr O'Neil: I think you are exaggerating.

Mr BRYCE: I am not exaggerating. Before I wrote to the Minister requesting him to look at this situation, I visited the Big W in Belmont to see for myself what was happening.

Mr O'Neil: And you came out with a pile of eggs under one arm and a rifle under the other!

Mr BRYCE: Perhaps I should indicate that I am a "non gun" person myself. It seems that I am one of the few people in Western Australia who does not own a gun. It is disturbing that such a large number of our citizens do hold licences for firearms, and at a later stage, I will give members the figures which were supplied to me.

I ask the Minister for Police and Traffic to have his officers check out the Big W in Belmont to see whether the standards of security there meet with the minimum standard laid down by the department for supermarkets that are licensed to sell firearms.

I cannot imagine a worse possible trend in our society than that every second home—or, for that matter, every home—has its own licensed firearm. On the front page of today's issue of the *Daily News* there is a report relating to a matter concerning many parents and, presumably, many members of Parliament. Specifically, the report refers to the violent trash on television, to which so many middle-aged people and—more importantly—more easily influenced young people are subjected.

It would be a particularly unsavoury development in our State for this Government, or any Government, to agree to allow chain stores and supermarkets to make a quid out of advertising and selling firearms and ammunition. We should consider the overall effect on any community of a policy which encourages the spread of weapons in that community. It is a great pity that while once we were very much like the United Kingdom, in that the number of criminals in our community who actually had licensed firearms—or, presumably in many cases, unlicensed firearms—

Mr O'Neil: Mostly unlicensed, in their case.

Mr BRYCE: —was very low, the recent trend towards an increase in violent crime marks us as a society which is more like that of the United States than of the United Kingdom. Once, we never expected to see a policeman in Western Australia carrying a weapon. Once, we expected that police in this State would be like the bobbies of London and the United Kingdom, where the carrying of weapons simply was not necessary—unlike the Police Force of the United States. We are accustomed to seeing the police of the United States carrying weapons, not only in television programmes—which, in some instances, represents an absurd extreme—but also in real life. Those of us who have visited the United States and have seen the situation at first-hand would agree it was the rare exception to see a policeman who was not carrying a licensed firearm.

Mr O'Neil: Police in New South Wales carry firearms.

Mr BRYCE: That is the tendency.

Mr O'Neil: It is not a tendency; it is a fact in New South Wales.

Mr BRYCE: I am talking about a tendency in our society which has produced a change; in my view, it is an unsavoury tendency and a particularly bad state of affairs. It is one which I believe this Government should re-examine. I am fully aware that to have any impact on this question on a national basis, it would be necessary for all State Governments to put their heads together to try to reach some consensus on the question of gun control.

Everybody is aware that the gun lobby in the United States and in other countries exercises a powerful influence. However, I am not necessarily sure it is the gun lobby in an organised fashion in this country which is responsible for this trend.

I wish to draw some interesting statistics to the attention of the Committee. In October this year I asked the Minister how many licensed firearms were registered in Western Australia. In the first instance the Minister was unable to provide Parliament with the answer, and I appreciate he took the trouble to reply to my question in writing. The figures are fairly disturbing: There are 162 596 rifles, 62 416 shot guns and 8 315 pistols, making a grand total of 233 327 licensed firearms. If we add to that a conservatively small factor accounting for unlicensed firearms in Western Australia, it would be reasonable to assume there are a quarter of a million firearms in this State.

Western Australia's total population is some 1.2 million. We had an adult population as at June this year of 798 020. One of the key-related statistics is that there are 391 766 private dwellings in Western Australia. In effect, that means that in Western Australia, we have one firearm for every two households. I realise there is not a firearm in every second household because, obviously, some people with gun licences possess more than one gun.

Mr O'Neil: You would probably understand also that there are certain groups of people who, as a group, own more than one firearm each. I am talking about members of the Police Force who, while they do not actually own the firearm, are issued with them, and about members of rifle and sporting clubs. So, you are stretching the bonds of friendship a little by suggesting there could be one firearm for every two households in Western Australia.

Mr BRYCE: Nevertheless, it is perfectly valid to draw the conclusion that if supermarkets are to be given permission to indulge in the business

of advertising and pushing weapons and ammunition in the same way as they sell practically anything else, the number of weapons in the community will increase.

Mr O'Neil: Whether or not they can buy weapons still remains with the police. A person cannot just walk in and buy a rifle.

Mr BRYCE: I am fully aware of that. I have discussed this matter with officers of the firearms branch. The Minister indicated by interjection that a person would need a licence before he could buy a firearm. However, in reality, practically anybody in Western Australia can obtain a licence.

Mr O'Neil: From the number of letters from people who cannot get them, I am surprised to hear that.

Mr BRYCE: I would say they are probably the very persistent and articulate minority, because the officers of the department with whom I discussed this matter indicated that practically anyone can obtain a licence. That is the point I make about the availability of licences. It is one thing to say that a person must obtain a licence before he can buy a firearm; however, that statement becomes meaningless if it is easy to obtain a licence. Presumably, a person would obtain a licence before he went to buy a firearm.

The point I am making is this: I think our society has a vested interest in making firearms relatively scarce and not too easily available to people.

Mr Jamieson: We did it with fireworks, and that has proved successful.

Mr BRYCE: The matter itself was drawn to my attention by an incident which occurred in Bayswater only a couple of months ago. The Morley K-mart had to apply to the Bayswater Shire Council because, presumably, the local authority also has some say in respect of the type of premises from which firearms may be sold. That shire council granted approval and, when the news became public, quite a number of people in the vicinity were very upset.

Even though a great majority of the people in Bayswater have no idea of what has transpired—they have not even heard the news yet—there has been a remarkable and spontaneous reaction from the people who were made aware of the decision of the Bayswater Shire Council to allow the local K-mart to go ahead with its application to the Police Department to secure a licence to sell weapons. A petition was presented to me, to which I drew the Minister's attention when I wrote to him.

I did two fairly straightforward things in that letter. Firstly, I conveyed to the Minister the concern these people felt at the possibility of a local supermarket being allowed to sell firearms and ammunition; secondly, and more importantly, and in all seriousness, I asked the Minister to reconsider precisely how we could amend the regulations and, if necessary, the legislation so that it is not possible for supermarkets to sell these products.

I know a very basic case can be put up by a supermarket which has an interest in selling firearms as simply another product; however, I think any responsible citizen in our community can see we are not going to improve the quality of life in the community if we consciously take steps to encourage the spread of weapons and ammunition.

I draw to the Minister's attention a couple of statements in his letter to me because I believe they warrant further investigation and follow-up by his department. The Minister's letter of the 17th November states as follows—

The minimum safety standard required for the security of firearms and ammunition is a steel cabinet bolted to the floor and able to be padlocked.

That is the minimum standard of security the firearms branch of the Police Department allegedly demands of any supermarket that wants to sell firearms and ammunition.

However, I can tell the Minister, as a result of my visit to the Belmont Big W, that there is no steel cabinet bolted to the floor, able to be padlocked; it simply has not been provided for by that store.

I am not being critical of the Minister; I am simply asking him to follow up this matter. A few sentences later, he made the following statement—

I am informed that the actual areas allocated in these stores for the purpose of trading in firearms will be divorced from all other sections.

I assure the Minister that in the case of the Belmont supermarket, that is not so. The firearms section is stuck right in the middle of the normal trading section of the store. From memory, it may be on the edge of the sports goods section, but it is not in the centre of what is often a roped-off section selling sporting goods. The firearms section is right in the middle of the main aisle of the Belmont Big W.

Mr O'Neil: There is another provision in respect of weapons on display or for sale.

Mr BRYCE: I do not disagree with the rest of the Minister's letter.

Mr O'Neil: What you are saying is that the Big W at Belmont does not comply.

Mr BRYCE: It certainly does not.

Mr O'Neil: I will have a look at it.

Mr BRYCE: It is probable that these supermarkets do not comply because, by the very nature of their interest in selling firearms and ammunition, they are not going to be particularly pleased with the idea of having to shove a lot of this expensive equipment into a back corner, where it is hard to find and relatively unknown. There is a bit of a clash of interests here. However, as I have already informed the Committee, I think this is a particularly bad principle and the Government should actually review the decision which allows the sale and distribution of these weapons through supermarkets.

I have already made brief reference to the article which appears on the front page of today's edition of the *Daily News* reporting the findings of a Senate committee established to inquire into the quality and standards of television in this country. The article is headed "Call to cut TV rough stuff" and states as follows—

Cuts in television violence were urged today.

A Senate committee said the controls should begin immediately.

They should continue till further research showed that televised violence was not harmful to anybody.

The committee went on to outline precisely what it believed—after its very lengthy deliberation into this matter—were the possible deleterious effects on society of so much of this first-class violent trash. It made the point that it was not good enough to allow the matter of censorship to rest with the individual family, but that society as a whole had a responsibility to establish some standards.

Some of the things which really concern me about this matter are that in recent weeks we have seen shoot-out situations between criminals and the police in New South Wales. Only a few days ago, a hostage was shot dead and shortly afterwards, the recently released hardened criminal also was shot dead.

That was after a running gun battle almost type cast in respect of some of the imported American television we see so frequently on all the television stations in this State.

It is fairly obvious there is a trend in the wrong direction and I appeal to the Minister: one small step we could take is to review any decision which would make it easier for firearms and ammunition to be spread throughout the community.

MR HODGE (Melville) [5.16 p.m.]: I have received a number of approaches by constituents recently who are concerned at the apparent inability of the police adequately to protect their homes, property, and cars from theft, vandalism, and damage. There have been a number of occasions in the Melville area where considerable damage has been done to private and public property. The police in the area appear to be almost powerless to prevent this.

From the start, I stress I am not criticising the local police or the Police Force generally. I am directing my remarks to the Government. The Government has fallen down in providing an adequate Police Force.

The officers in charge of the two police stations in my electorate—the Palmyra and Hilton stations—are very competent and efficient men doing the best job they can with the limited staff available. I stress the word "limited" because in my opinion the staff is far too limited for the area they have to control and protect.

Most of the local government authorities in the Fremantle area are worried about the lack of police patrols. A lot of individuals are worried and many have come to see me in recent months complaining about the lack of police patrols and their general infrequency. I do not believe this is the fault of the local police as they do not have enough men adequately to patrol the area with the required frequency.

There has been an attack on the aged persons' village in Willagee when one evening a group caused tremendous alarm and upset to the old people living in the complex. I wrote to the Minister about this some time ago and he caused an investigation to be carried out. I had a senior police officer call and discuss the matter with me. Nevertheless, it still does not seem as though any adequate steps will be taken by the police to protect the old people in the village from what can only be described as a terrorist attack.

Late one evening around midnight a few months ago a group of youths went through the village and smashed every possible light bulb they could find. They broke glass doors, threw beer bottles at walls and windows and threw eggs at the walls. I am told the cost of the damage ran into three figures, and the only suggestion the police could give me was that the area should have some form of floodlighting and that the

scrub and bushland—which the people wanted left in a natural state—should be removed. There was no suggestion there would be more police patrols, or that police would be stationed in the area. The nearest station is at Hilton Park, quite a few miles away.

There have been other attacks less damaging, but by the time the police are phoned and the van gets to the aged persons' village the vandals are well and truly gone. I am not suggesting the entire approach to correct vandalism in our community is to have more and more policemen; that is not the long-term answer.

Mr Nanovich: You have criticised the Government; what is your answer?

Mr HODGE: I believe more frequent police patrols would help. The appointment of social workers in the Willagee area would also assist, and I will have something to say later on about the Federal Government's rejection of a claim by the Melville City Council for funds to employ social workers in the area. It is a very low-income area and there are a lot of deprived persons with social problems. They require advice, assistance, and counselling. I am not suggesting an increase in the number of police is the entire answer, but it would be part of the answer. The aged persons living in the village have a right to expect protection from these acts of terrorism by these gangs.

Another outstanding case of lack of police surveillance and the failure of the police to prevent crime in my electorate involves the local Melville Kindergarten, which is only a few hundred metres from my home. The kindergarten has been broken into five times in the past three weeks. I cannot imagine why people would want to break into it as they could not expect to find money, drugs, or anything of great value there. Surely the police should be able to prevent this sort of crime by watching the building and apprehending the people breaking in.

Mr O'Neil: You started off by saying you would not be critical of the police.

Mr HODGE: I am being critical of the Minister.

Mr Nanovich interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: Don't you understand the difference between policemen and the Government's policy?

Mr HODGE: I am criticising the Government for not providing the funds to employ an adequate number of policemen. The Palmyra and Hilton police are doing the best they can, but simply there are not enough of them.

Mr O'Neil: How many are there at the stations?

Mr HODGE: I do not know.

Mr O'Neil: How do you know there are not enough?

Mr HODGE: The officers in charge have given a lack of staff as the reason for the infrequency of patrols. They would have more patrols if they had more police.

Mr O'Neil: Did they mention other patrols were made in the area?

Mr HODGE: I am not aware of that.

Mr O'Neil: There are.

Mr HODGE: The police station for the Hilton area is located quite a long distance from the Willagee area.

Another constituent complained to me recently. He said he was moving house and building a new home. He had vacated his old home and had erected a sign showing it was for sale, which would indicate to people the house may be empty. He notified the police that the house was empty so they could check on it from time to time. The police said they would be pleased to do so, but they did not have the manpower to make regular patrols and so check on the house. They suggested the man should hire a private security firm.

It is coming to a sorry state when the police have to suggest to citizens that they get their protection from private security firms rather than the police.

I came out of my back door one day a few weeks ago and saw a strange vehicle parked on the nature strip and blocking my driveway. It had a two-way aerial, tinted glass, and a fellow inside with a pair of binoculars. He was not watching me, but he was in my driveway and he looked very suspicious. I asked him who he was, but he in turn asked me who I was. I explained I was the householder, that he was blocking my driveway, and that he should move on. I again asked him who he was, and he eventually reached across and showed me a card—he would not give it to me but let me read it through the glass—indicating he was a member of a security firm. I asked him why he was stationed outside my house and he said he had been hired by someone down the street to watch the other person's house. I pressed him for details but could not get much from him except that he was prepared to sit there 24 hours a day for five days.

I rang the local police station and they sent an officer down very promptly and had the man removed. It appears he had been employed by a certain private security firm and the proprietor

indicated he had been sent there to watch a house which was occupied by members of a religious sect. They had had a world leader of the sect visiting and thought he needed protection.

Whether or not that man had a firearm I do not know, but it made my family feel very uneasy. My neighbours also were uneasy and quite a few complained to me about the vehicle being parked there. The police ordered the man away finally and he parked on the driveway of the person who had hired him. He was not a policeman but a private citizen and I do not know whether he had a firearm. Judging by the statistics given by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition it is on the cards he did have a firearm.

I am against private security firms and private armies. The Police Force is the body responsible to protect the life of citizens and property of citizens. The Police Force is obviously being starved of funds, which means it cannot fulfil its role properly.

I notice the Police Union has publicly expressed its opposition to this rising phenomenon. The union is alarmed at the growth of private security firms and private armies, which is a recent phenomenon. We should take strong action against them. If the Government allocated more money to the Police Force it could be restored to its former position in the community. A few years ago we did not have these private armies and security firms; we saw them only on American films. We should not tolerate them now.

I assured the people in my electorate who had complained to me about the vandalism in the area and the terrorist attacks on the Willagee aged complex that I would raise these matters in Parliament. I do not believe the steps taken by the police are adequate. The suggestion of installing floodlights and removing trees from the grounds of the aged persons village is insufficient. We need another police station or more police in the Melville area.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [5.29 p.m.]: I wish to speak to several matters pertaining to the Deputy Premier's jurisdiction. Firstly, I would like to deal with the Electoral Department because on this occasion we find it has an allocation of \$588 000. For many years I have tried to get this department wiped out. I do not want its staff sacked; they could easily be absorbed into the Public Service in other positions.

At the moment 11 registrars, 16 clerks, an assistant Chief Electoral Officer, a Chief Electoral Officer and a number of temporaries are employed. This involves an expenditure which is not necessary. My information from those who have

investigated the matter is that the New South Wales Electoral Office operates with one electoral officer and a couple of assistants, because that State has a combined roll.

Even if an amount of \$100 000 or \$150 000 were paid to the Commonwealth for its services in compiling and maintaining the rolls, the State would still be saving a considerable sum of money if the Electoral Office was disbanded. Now is the most apt time for this to be done because next year we will be getting near another election—both Federal and State—and problems could arise with a joint enrolment system.

In all States, except perhaps Queensland, the services of the Commonwealth are used to compile the joint rolls and—

The CHAIRMAN: Would members in the aisles please move?

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not seek an interjection as a result of my remark.

Mr Skidmore: Mr Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Welshpool has the floor.

Mr Skidmore: If you tell me to, I will go.

Mr JAMIESON: Now you have sorted out that problem, Sir, I will return to the problem with which I was dealing. During the session I have asked questions about this matter, but no action has been taken. The excuse last time was that because of the considerable amount of activity in the Court of Disputed Returns, nothing had been done. There is always some excuse to spend money which should not be spent. The Premier cries his eyes out about how badly off he is and about the problems he has, and yet this money is being spent when it is not necessary.

Actually, the other day, when I was travelling in my car I heard on my wireless a Federal Minister referring to how well off Western Australia was financially and he was referring to the finance we had. I think it was the Federal Housing Minister suggesting that more housing could be provided by the Western Australian Government than it was providing at present. That may or may not be so. Housing is not under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Premier, but the Electoral Department is.

I would like something tangible done to overcome the problem. In this day and age it is not necessary for two Governments to provide stationery and staff to carry out enrolment procedures when only one lot is necessary.

Mr O'Neil: Do you think the Commonwealth would work for the States for nothing?

Mr JAMIESON: No. A while ago I mentioned a figure of \$150 000 which is probably what we would have to pay to the Commonwealth to have the work done. At the moment we are spending \$558 000 for the work. Of course more work is involved in an election year, but then a bigger allocation is made to the Electoral Department in those circumstances, so we would not lose anything.

In answer to the Deputy Premier, we would not get the work done for nothing and we should not expect it.

When I was interrupted a little while ago I was about to refer to local government elections. In the Eastern States the Commonwealth Government compiles the local government rolls as well at a cost to the local authorities instead of the local authorities having to maintain the staff to do the work. The local authorities supply the boundaries from time to time and it is easy for the Commonwealth to carry out the work because it is well practised in this field.

I suggest it is high time we stopped duplicating this activity. In general practice the State has made efforts to stop duplicating activities of the Commonwealth. There is no way we can cease the operations of the Federal Electoral Department so it is sound common sense to get the Commonwealth office to take over our work. This would not interfere with the operations of the Electoral Act in regard to elections of members to this place or to another place. The situation will be merely that a different department will control the enrolments and keep the rolls up to date.

We would no more consider appointing a State Statistician in competition with the Commonwealth Statistician than we would consider flying to the moon. It would be an added expenditure because the Commonwealth officer provides all the information we require on a State basis. We have available to us all the facts and figures provided in the handbook compiled and provided by the Commonwealth in an efficient manner. When there is no question of political philosophies or anything like that, which can create problems, some procedure should be adopted to save expenditure. Instead of the Deputy Premier, the Premier, and a few others running around attending to all sorts of unimportant matters, they should be taking some action to overcome the problem which has prevailed all these years. They should persuade the Governor and the Governor General, as the Act clearly stipulates, to finalise the proposition and if any amendments are required they

should be made in the autumn session so that once and for all we clarify the situation which has existed for a long time.

I now want to deal with the Governor's establishment because although the Deputy Premier suggested that this part did not deal with the employment of the Governor, without the allocation for this purpose he would be in a poor state of health. The establishment is the one which maintains the Governor.

I am not criticising the system. It is here and is part of our Constitution at present, and therefore we go along with it. But it is more than passing strange that a Government which goes to so much trouble to prop up the system and makes amendments to ensure that it cannot be interfered with except following a referendum, should denigrate the position by giving the responsibility for it to the Deputy Premier instead of the Premier who has always had the responsibility in the past. This is the second year it has been the responsibility of the Deputy Premier.

While I see nothing wrong with changing the responsibility for Government garages and other things from one Minister to another, it is a slight to the establishment for the Government, especially in view of its professed attitudes to the Governor's position, to place the responsibility under the Deputy Premier. If we follow this situation to its logical conclusion, a junior Minister will be in charge of the Governor's establishment before long.

In those circumstances royalists and others will be very critical of the Government for its further downgrading of the office of Governor. The responsibility should stay with the Premier.

I was a little concerned earlier in the afternoon during the debate on traffic control. I heard the Minister for Health ask, "What is your suggestion for a cure?" I have never been critical of the Government in connection with traffic matters because I know how hard the situation is. I was appointed the first Minister for Traffic Safety in 1972 and that was the year when more deaths on the roads occurred than had occurred for a long while previously. I do not agree with those people who try to score off Governments—unless Governments are particularly culpable—in connection with road deaths. I do not mind criticism of incorrect surveillance but a Government should not be blamed for road deaths. Always there is constant carping that something should be done about the matter. I tried to do anything that could be done. We sought advice from the best experts in the world. I even attended international conferences and heard the best traffic safety experts,

but they all made the same statements ultimately. They say, "If you find a way to get over the problem, please tell us."

It is true that we can build roads at an excessive cost and these will provide the maximum safety.

Mr Tonkin: Drivers would only drive faster.

Mr JAMIESON: That is true. We have regulations in regard to speed. The faster a vehicle travels the less chance the driver has to take corrective action when something goes wrong, that is for sure. However, that is an individual responsibility.

It is possible to take certain steps. For instance Belgium has a limited number of highways all with steel rails on the sides and centres so that cars cannot run into one another or off the road. That country of course can boast a fairly good record and say that for so many vehicles registered and so many miles travelled in a year the death toll is very low. An improvement can be made that way, but at what cost? We certainly could not do that in a State like Western Australia where transportation is very important.

It is important to get from one place to another reasonably quickly, but the quicker a driver travels the quicker he wants to travel and so unfortunately more and more people are being killed.

I will return to the point I wanted to make. It is not wise for people to try to score off others by saying that they have a better record for traffic safety because then things go wrong. Last year the road toll was fairly low, but this year it has gone haywire again. It is necessary only for a bus to crash with the loss of 20 or so lives in one hit and the figures become appallingly high again.

Everyone hates the high death toll on the roads and the only way to improve the situation is to persuade individuals to accept their responsibility in this regard. They should be made more aware of their responsibility and until they are the problems will remain with us always.

Mr McIver: What about the high number of resignations? There must be something wrong with the system.

Mr JAMIESON: This could be. We could argue about the system. We have said that traffic control should be the direct responsibility of the police. Until we get back to that situation there will be carping from both sides because the argument will be interminable concerning people who receive promotion as a result of their RTA activities and so on. We cannot sort it out with the activities the Government is indulging in.

In relation to the carnage on the roads, I agree we can criticise the Government about the surveillance of traffic. On the other hand, the Government is not solely to blame. The individual must accept a great deal of responsibility.

In the absence of my leader, who is at Wittenoom trying to sort out problems in much greater heat than we are suffering here today. I want to say it seems to me very unfair that the Government is unable to reach a decision quickly on the future of Wittenoom. If the Government has not already made that decision, it should be subjected to the censure of this Parliament.

When I was at Wittenoom only a few weeks ago I noted that the SEC had installed a brand new power station at goodness knows what cost. It was not a cheap proposition. That power station having been installed, one would think the decision had already been made by the Government that there will be some future for the town of Wittenoom and that it will become a focal centre for tourism in the area. I think that would be justified.

More and more people are visiting the Pilbara region and the Hamersley Range each year, and Wittenoom seems to be the logical centre. In many of the other towns, such as Tom Price and Paraburdoo, tourists are an encumbrance to the mining people. They are certainly not in the business of encouraging tourists because they want to run their towns as tidy undertakings without continually having to cater for more tourists. Some towns and companies will be lucky enough to get away with it but others will not. Tom Price and Paraburdoo are a bit off the main road but Mt. Newman finds it has to provide for an increasing number of tourists because it is right on the major highway.

As far as Wittenoom is concerned, I suggest a decision should be made very quickly to tell the people, "Of course we will keep Wittenoom going. Can't you see we have spent all this money on a new power station? We would not do that without a purpose." If that is not the case, the Government is due for some rather caustic criticism by the people in and around Wittenoom.

It is a delightful centre. Although it is not so attractive at this time of the year, for four or five months of the year it is one of our show places and attracts many tourists. With its gorges it has scenery of dramatic grandeur that one cannot see anywhere else in Australia. Even though it is difficult to get to, people are going there in considerable numbers during the tourist season.

I suggest that doubt be not left in the minds of the people of Wittenoom any longer. We need a statement from the Premier now, not after the next Cabinet meeting or whatever. If the Government has decided not to retain Wittenoom as a tourist centre, it had no right to allow the State Electricity Commission to put in such a big undertaking to supply electricity for nothing.

That is all I want to say about part 3. Just to recap quickly, I think the Electoral Department should get on with the job of preparing unified rolls as quickly as possible. By this time next year we should be seeing some progress in that direction. The Governor's establishment has been degraded, which I think is quite undesirable.

As far as the north-west is concerned, we could talk all day on various matters, but my main concern at the present time is sorting out what is to be done at Wittenoom. It is not a godfather town like those in the north which have swimming pools and other facilities to attract people to live in them. Wittenoom was built in the days when mining activities in the Pilbara were not so grandiose as they are today and the houses were not very spectacular. In the main, they were shutter type, asbestos clad, timber framed houses. Many of them became dilapidated and ugly. All in all, it seems to me we must make a tourist centre there. It would not be a bad idea if the Government undertook some tourist promotion in the town itself to ensure we get a maximum return from it. At the present time we are getting nowhere at all.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [5.52 p.m.]: My remarks relate to the Deputy Premier in his role as the Minister for Police and Traffic. At the outset, I commend him on the efficiency of his officers. The Police Force is doing a very good job in keeping law and order, but members of Parliament continue to attack it.

With a force approaching 2 500 in number, some officers may be over-zealous in carrying out their duties. It ill behoves members of Parliament to start casting aspersions, because if the public had an opportunity to see how members of Parliament face up to their duties, some would come in for denigration. It would assist the Police Force in this State to carry out its duties if members of Parliament set an example instead of denigrating it as they have done so often in the past.

I advise the Minister that some of the utterances he has heard this afternoon may well express the point of view of those who have spoken, but it is not the point of view of the people of this State.

I recommend that members read the 1978 annual report of the Police Department. Indeed, they should read all the reports that come into this Chamber. It is interesting to see in the report the number of matters and additional duties in which the police become involved. We can recall the industrial disputes on the waterfront which would have forced the Police Force to work hundreds of additional man-hours to maintain the peace. I believe the police dealt with those disputes very effectively. They were part of the extra duties of the Police Force.

I would like to quote some sections of the report which I think should be on record in *Hansard*. On page 7 the report states—

Demonstrations also are another area of police concern. They are constant, and are over a variety of social and political issues and philosophies. This year has been no exception to previous years. At many of them the same fanatical and professional demonstrators are to be found. They promote and agitate for breaches of the peace, and then feast on the melee they have created. Many man-hours are taken up in the necessary containment and supervision of these demonstrations.

A little further on the report states—

Terrorism has become the major modern-day curse of man-kind. In certain areas of the world, its ruthlessness is well established, and now permeating to other countries. It knows no frontiers, no bounds, no compassion. Already we have seen in Australia the beginnings of this malady. I do not pretend for a moment that it will not happen to Western Australia; as yet, there is no elixir to prevent it occurring anywhere. Like the career criminal, the terrorist has humble beginnings, too.

The gestation period of such a person is likely to have beginnings in what is best described as extreme ideologies and fanatical causes; beginnings in politico-religious sects, but in any case, beginnings in an environment which is conducive to development. Therefore, an institution like the Police Force, which is always on the grinding edge of society's blade, must be forward-looking and tuned to world trends of the nature of terrorism, so that it can anticipate and meet any threat in its role of protecting the community.

I believe the Police Force is doing a very good job.

Mr Jamieson: Who wrote that?

Mr BLAIKIE: The Commissioner of Police (Mr Leitch).

Mr Jamieson: He would be one of the most political commissioners we have ever had.

Mr BLAIKIE: I believe he has done a very good job in Western Australia.

Mr Jamieson: You would.

Mr BLAIKIE: When we consider the serious crimes with which the Police Force deals—homicide, assault, robbery, rape, breaking and entering, motor vehicle thefts, and fraud—we must come to the conclusion that the police do a very good job. The *per capita* expenditure last year was in the order of \$40, and I believe Western Australians get excellent value for their money.

Members tend to forget some of the events in Western Australia last year. In the demonstration at Albany the Police Force played its part in ensuring the safety of the people involved in the Operation Jonah demonstration. They might recall the extreme pressure placed on the Police Force in this State in connection with cyclone "Alby". John Robert Chester, who blew up a loading terminal at Bunbury, was apprehended, subsequently escaped, was caught again, and put inside. Then we had bombings in Collie, and again the Police Force did a good job.

Police from the Fremantle division dealt with 457 alerts at sea. Members may also recall the aircraft crash at Norseman, where the police were involved in sifting through the wreckage.

I want to record my appreciation of the services given to this State by the Police Force of Western Australia.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [5.59 p.m.]: I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister some matters of which he is already aware: Firstly the removal of the police station from the town of Greenbushes; and secondly, the proposed transfer of an officer from Boyup Brook.

A deputation was made to the Minister earlier this year regarding the removal of the police station at Greenbushes. In the light of the work load, it is to some extent understandable that the office had to be removed. However, it was a good exercise in pointing out the effectiveness of preventive measures in respect of the Police Force. The mobility of our community emphasises the need for an adequate Police Force to be maintained in all country towns. There have not been serious repercussions in the town of Greenbushes so far, although several incidents have been reported to me. Several members of the community there have been endeavouring to keep a log of anything untoward that has occurred. So in the

fullness of time it may be possible to gauge just what the removal of the police officer has meant in that area.

In respect of the intention to transfer one of the officers from the two-man station at Boyup Brook, that seems to me a much more difficult proposition to justify. At a cursory glance it is virtually impossible to justify it.

Mr O'Neil: Some arrangements have been made in respect of that.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I know, and I will refer to that in a moment. I would like to take the opportunity afforded to me by this debate to indicate that a country town police station must serve a considerable area. Sometimes farmers must travel 30 or 40 miles to transact normal business, and if the number of police in the office is effectively reduced by half, the time the force is available to serve people in outlying areas is halved.

The matter of the presence of police officers in a country town is all-important. If it is known—as it does rapidly become known—there are no policemen in a certain area, it is quite often an invitation for an increase in disturbances and crimes of various types. If the Government is not in a position to maintain the police facilities at an adequate level, consideration should be given to additional funding to obviate the difficulties I have outlined.

This is not a criticism of the effectiveness or efficiency of the Police Force; it is a criticism of the Government for its failure to make provision for a sufficient number of policemen in country areas of Western Australia. The presence of a policeman is the best deterrent of all in respect of crime. If it is known a policeman is in the vicinity or that the police officers are on patrol and are available for a considerable portion of the day, that is a most effective deterrent.

I would express appreciation to the Minister for giving his blessing to facilitating a meeting between representatives of the Shire of Boyup Brook and the superintendent in charge of research and planning in his department. That meeting is fixed for the 18th December at 11.00 a.m. in the shire office. This will at least give the shire an opportunity to explain and discuss with the planning superintendent just what is involved. They will be able to express their areas of concern to him. Hopefully some understanding will be reached.

The area covered in this particular police district is not contiguous with the local government areas, and this does have a complicating effect. This is a matter to which further study should be given. Difficulties do occur where police

officers cover great distances which overlap to some extent. In the case in question the settlement at Wilga, being about 12 miles from Boyup Brook, would be far better served from Boyup Brook than from Donnybrook, which is some 30 miles further away. These are the sorts of anomalies which require some closer scrutiny than has been the case in the past.

There are a number of other problems. For instance, the RTA officer in Boyup Brook works under the roster and the jurisdiction of the sergeant at Manjimup, so he is of little value to the police in Boyup Brook.

I thank the Minister for his courtesy and for facilitating the meeting. He will be kept fully informed of what transpires. I hope an amicable understanding can be reached.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Deputy Premier) (6.06 p.m.): I can assure the Committee that I do not propose to stonewall my own departmental estimates at this stage. I think some 10 members have contributed in respect of these estimates. Most contributions have been related to matters which are of current concern or which are of such a nature that they are the subject of current negotiations between myself and the members or, alternatively, the Police Force and the members. However, there are a couple of matters on which I would like to concentrate in order to clear up what appears to be some misunderstanding.

The first is in respect of the question raised by the member for Gosnells concerning the investigation into the operations of tow-truck operators or, alternatively, an investigation into allegations of malpractice in regard to those operations.

I want to make it clear that in respect of the initial matters raised there was some concern that there was a malapportionment of tasks to tow-truck operators by policemen and officers of the Road Traffic Authority attending the scene of road accidents. This matter was initially raised fairly early this year by a constituent of the member for Gosnells. When the matter was investigated it was admitted that officers in that area had not as far as was able to be seen, abided by the standard rules laid down in respect of allocating tasks to tow-truck operators. The instructions those officers were supposed to follow were reiterated to them.

Certainly from that time onwards inquiries were made as to why tow-truck operators had not got jobs, and I discovered that many had not put their names down to indicate their availability in respect of this type of work.

The Road Traffic Authority has always acknowledged that it is left to the officer attending an accident to arrange—in many of the cases—for the removal of the vehicle and the tidying up of the scene. Even prior to these inquiries it was the association—I understand there is an association of tow-truck operators—that suggested perhaps an alternative method could be arranged by it. It was pointed out that a large number of these towing vehicles are equipped with communication radios and, without any difficulty, it would be possible to establish a central reporting point. This would mean that the police officers attending a motor vehicle accident could simply call this point and say, "Will you get a vehicle to this scene as quickly as possible?"

Of course it must be admitted that it will not always be practical to keep a straightout roster system. For instance, if there were a major pile-up in a peak period, the prime responsibility of the police officer is to clear the road as quickly as possible. There have frequently been cases where tow-truck operators have not been called through the VKI system. As I understand the system, the officer who attends the scene of an accident—this could be an RTA officer or a police officer—registers a call over the VKI central police call system because the equipment in the RTA or police vehicles is not capable of contacting the tow-truck operators directly.

It is true, and this was admitted initially after the first approach by the member for Gosnells, that there is a tendency for police officers to call upon tow-truck operators whom they know to be reliable. As in any other business, there must be some very good operators, some mediocre operators, and some who are not much good at all. And frequently, as I have been advised, there has been no answer when a tow-truck operator has been called, and so the man who would normally have got the job in the ordinary sequence of events misses out on it.

That is how the whole matter started, and the malapportionment of jobs was admitted in the particular area referred to by the honourable member. At that time no accusation or allegation of bribery and corruption had been made.

Mr Tonkin: Well where did they come from?

Mr O'NEIL: As I understand it, they did not come from the member for Gosnells. Innuendoes and imputations of bribery and corruption appeared in the Press, and without any reference to me, and without asking my approval—because he certainly does not need to do that—the Commissioner of Police instructed the CIB to carry out a criminal investigation of the matter. In other words, he exercised his prerogative and

he took what I believe to be the correct course. Once an allegation of a criminal practice has been made, an inquiry should be instituted.

A CIB inquiry was held into the allegations of bribery, corruption, and malpractice. It was not a normal departmental inquiry and not an inquiry into the complaints of tow-truck operators as to the malapportionment of tasks.

I have had the opportunity to read the whole transcript of the inquiry. A considerable number of CIB men were involved in it, and as the news release stated, all the known tow-truck operators in the metropolitan area were interviewed.

Allegations were made left, right, and centre. It was found very difficult to nail a few of these allegations down. However, the report to which the honourable member has referred is the report of a CIB inquiry, and it contains information made available to investigating officers on a confidential basis. Quite often, if the CIB could not guarantee confidentiality to some of the people giving information, the efficiency of that department would fall considerably.

I spoke to the acting commissioner and I said to him that because the report is not to be tabled, we will have allegations or intimations that it is a fortnight white-wash. I said to him that I believed he should produce, for release to the Press, a factual statement containing the main elements of the report, and that we should extend to the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to examine the report so that he could be satisfied the inquiry was not a white-wash.

I have read the report very thoroughly, and I can guarantee it was no white-wash. No matter what I say, of course, there will always be these allegations and innuendoes of bribery and corruption. This has always been the case in regard to any force whose task it is to maintain law and order, and it always will be. It is probably this very fact that led to the expression, "The policeman's lot is not a happy one".

That is basically the situation. The Leader of the Opposition can examine the report, and he can be satisfied—as the news media apparently was—that the inquiry was extensive and was not a white-wash. The news media received as much information as it desired, and it was satisfied that the inquiry was not initiated on a political basis, but rather by the commissioner in his own right.

There is always some element of suspicion in some sections of the community about actions taken by the Police Force. For that reason I am extremely grateful that mostly where members have spoken to this part they indicated that they

were not themselves critical of the Police Force, and that the blame for any deficiencies that were exhibited should fall upon the Government. Then, of course, some of them went on to be critical of the Police Force.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr O'NEIL: There is only one other matter on which I wish to comment, and that is the contribution made by the member for Clontarf in respect of the mounted section of the force. I had always been of the opinion that the mounted section was exceptionally well dressed, and that it was certainly well drilled. That section is well appreciated by the public. However, I think the member for Clontarf has a point in respect of ceremonial occasions. There may be a uniform which would be appropriate.

During the tea break the member for Clontarf made a further suggestion to me, and that relates to the possibility of some kind citizens donating an appropriate ceremonial dress as their contribution to the 150th anniversary celebrations. I understand that Sir Thomas Wardle, as Lord Mayor of Perth, made available the Napier tartan which is worn by the Police Pipe Band. That donation was received exceptionally well. I gather the provision of ceremonial uniforms is fairly costly.

It may be that when the need becomes known the member's suggestion may be adopted and a group of citizens or businessmen may be prepared to provide ceremonial uniforms to be used by the mounted police.

Votes: Deputy Premier's Office, \$892 000; Governor's Establishment, \$485 000; Chief Secretary, \$1 480 000; Registry and Friendly Societies, \$557 000; Astronomical Services, \$337 000; Electoral, \$588 000; Licensing, \$361 000; Department of Corrections, \$16 212 000—put and passed.

Vote: Police, \$41 933 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$34 027 000—

Mr TONKIN: I wanted to make a comment in the earlier debate, but I did not. I will make it now.

I do not think the member for Vasse—unfortunately he is not in his seat at the moment—should have said that his side of the Chamber admires the Police Force more than this side, and that we are reprehensible because we make criticisms of incidents involving the Police Force. The Police Force is the most important law enforcement part of our society. For that reason, it is important that it should work well. The fact that people draw attention to the shortcomings of the

Police Force does not mean that they are attacking the majority of the police. They are not disloyal Western Australians for doing so. If matters concerning the people of Western Australia are not raised in this Parliament, where will they be raised?

I defend the right of the Parliament and the members of the Parliament to draw matters to the attention of the people. I agree that the member for Vasse made a couple of important points.

The members of the Police Force have a most difficult job. I certainly would not like to be a member of the Police Force. The work of police officers is onerous and difficult. The vast majority of the members of the Police Force are doing a very good job.

Nothing we have said should be taken as denigrating the Police Force.

Sir Charles Court: You are not saying that seriously? Do you mean your side has never said anything to denigrate the Police Force?

Mr TONKIN: I am talking about what we have said today.

Mr Pearce: No, we never denigrate the Police Force as a whole.

Mr TONKIN: I am speaking about what we have said in this debate.

Sir Charles Court interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The Premier should not interject. If the Premier does not know what was said before, the Premier sits there in that supercilious way—

Mr Sibson: Tut, tut!

Mr Bryce: There is the Premier's No. 1 sycophant on the back bench.

Mr TONKIN: No-one has been denigrating the Police Force. It is the duty of every member of the Parliament to bring to the attention of the Parliament any matter that is of concern. We are not running away from this.

Many police officers have told me that there have been problems. We know that things go on within the Police Force. Those police officers are concerned that the Police Force will receive a bad name if one or two scoundrels are not dealt with for their actions.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member to limit remarks to salaries, wages, and matters pertaining to them rather than having a debate on the general item.

Mr TONKIN: I am quite within my rights. The item deals with the salaries of the Police Force.

The CHAIRMAN: If you relate it to that, that is quite in order.

Mr TONKIN: Of course it is related. All those police officers are paid. We are talking about the job they do in return for the recompense they receive.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite in order—

Mr Pearce interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not wish members to interject when I am making a statement.

Mr Pearce: It is a peculiar statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not expect members to make interjections on the Chairman when he is making a statement. Apparently the member does not realise that that is the long-standing practice of this Chamber.

Mr Pearce: I do not think the Chairman should attack members from the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member for Gosnells to reconsider that remark.

Mr TONKIN: I am sure the member for Gosnells is reconsidering it—

The CHAIRMAN: I did not ask the member for Morley to do that. The member for Morley will resume his seat. I advise the member for Gosnells not to pass comments on remarks I am making from the Chair. It is quite out of order. It is disorderly. I ask him not to do so. The member for Morley.

Mr TONKIN: The point we wish to make is that the Police Force gives good service to the State. Over 95 per cent of police officers are doing a good job. They are doing it in difficult circumstances. Their work is onerous. They are on duty at lonely points around the State. They have to cope with situations such as controlling a mob when they may be 1 000 miles from Perth and 100 miles from any assistance. They have to try to maintain law, order, and decency.

We respect the members of the Police Force. We salute them for the great job they are doing in the service of the State. It must be understood that because a member is concerned about some aspect of the Police Force he is not in fact denigrating all members of the force.

I wish to raise a question in relation to the Police Force. When I was in London last year, I had discussions with the Metropolitan Police in relation to methods of investigating complaints against the police. The police would be in a better position here too if there was a separate body to investigate complaints against the force.

At the moment, they are placed in a difficult position. If there is a complaint against the police, the complaint is investigated by police.

I am not attacking the police. I am saying that, in the nature of things, it is asking too much of someone to expect him to investigate himself. Members of Parliament are not above investigation by others. We have elections, and the people can toss us out every three years. They decide if we are doing our job properly. Almost every person in society is investigated by some other body if complaints are made against him.

If it can be seen that a complaint against the police has been investigated properly, and that there has been no "whitewash", the people would be better off. In London, Sir Robert Mark was the commissioner who introduced the new system in which the police do not investigate complaints against themselves. There has been an absolute transformation in that force.

Every citizen of Western Australia should feel that he can go to the police with impunity. A constituent approached me the other day—and I shall draw this matter to the attention of the Attorney General—who had been advised by his solicitor to go to the police because it was believed that perjury had been committed. That person paid \$400 for a transcript of his trial, and he went to the police with the documents. They later asked him to see them again, and when he went to the station they arrested him for making a complaint which he knew was not reasonable—I forget the exact wording.

That kind of attitude on the part of police officers will not encourage people to come forward when they have complaints. That man had been advised by his legal practitioner to go to the police because it was thought there was evidence of people committing perjury in a court of law.

The police often call for people to give them assistance. The only way the Police Force can work is for people to have confidence in it. It will work if there is a good relationship between the public and the Police Force. That is why I believe the police should be investigated by an outside body.

I am not attacking the Police Force. I am trying to assist the police. The police will have a defence if it can be seen that they do not investigate complaints against themselves. Such a move would increase the esteem in which the Police Force is held in the community.

All members in this place must help to increase the esteem of the force in the eyes of the public. The vast majority of policemen and policewomen agree with me.

I suggest to the Minister and to the Police Union that they consider this matter. It is a matter which will assist the police force. As I said, the force is the only body in our society which investigates itself.

It is very important that we should have faith in the police. I know the vast majority of Western Australians do have faith in the police and we want to see them continue to have that faith.

Dr DADOUR: I was rather astonished that I did not receive a reply to my complaints concerning certain people in my electorate.

Mr Hodge: You are not the only one.

Dr DADOUR: I wonder whether my argument can be answered, because I always thought the function of the police was to deal with these matters. I am speaking under item 1, Sir, if you are worried. I am talking about the salary of policemen. I do not believe we receive as good a return for our money as we might.

There are two matters with which the Police Force has to deal. The first is the prevention of crime. However, we do not prevent crime by walking around with our eyes, ears, and mouths closed. We do not prevent it by doing the "three wise monkeys" act. We have to see what is really happening and the situation must be summed up.

The second duty of the Police Force is to arrest those who offend against the law. When people commit offences surely they should be chastised and punished accordingly so that law-abiding citizens may carry on their particular lifestyles. However, that is not occurring. For some reason policemen in my electorate have turned a blind eye. This is very wrong.

There is no other course of appeal open to me except this one. I am very concerned the Minister is not doing his job. Surely he should find out what is occurring. The matter has been investigated already and the report which came out of that investigation was confounded by myself in two seconds flat. Is it not right that we should have another look at the matter? Bearing this in mind I wrote to the Minister as recently as the 7th September this year. I received his reply on the 3rd October and it read as follows—

I refer to your letter of September 7, 1978, concerning the Vintage Wine Saloon. The present position is that the police have continued to make periodic visits to the premises but no offences have been detected.

I do not know what is happening. I have a summary of what has occurred night after night and I believe it, because I have seen it. When one

reads the summary it is beyond comprehension. The police must go around with their eyes closed or they must spend their time inside the saloon instead of outside, policing the people as they come out to ensure that the residents in the area are not disadvantaged.

It is all very well for the commissioner to say that noise is a local government problem. However, noise is often a big part of the offensive behaviour. If there is offensive behaviour, the police have to act, but apparently if the police are present, they are inside the saloon and not outside.

How much further do I have to go? I am saying the law is not being applied in that area. I have evidence from reliable people that this is the case, although the Minister has written and told me the saloon has been under surveillance and the police have seen nothing. I do not think the police want to see anything.

The Minister is not doing his job. Surely his job is to take up the matter with the police and tell them the member for the area is still squawking about the matter and something should be done. Nothing has been done.

The point I am making is that the police are not doing their job as I understand they should in this particular area. I have no complaints about the police anywhere else. I have only this particular area of complaint. It appears to me that some of the local policemen are not the type who do their jobs properly. The residents are complaining continually about the behaviour of people who come out of the saloon. As a result of the police inaction, the people have lost all respect for and confidence in the police at the local police station. This is a terrible indictment. The people are disadvantaged. It is all very well to say that the man who runs or owns the saloon is running a good house. It does not matter what happens inside the house, it is what the clientele do when they come outside the house. If they wish to urinate here, there, and everywhere, they should be dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN: Could I urge the member to relate the matter more closely to the salaries, wages and allowances?

Dr DADOUR: I believe we are not getting what we are paying for. I am not denigrating all the police. I am denigrating only those policemen who are responsible. However, I do not wish to labour the point any longer. This situation has been continuing for some time now and I seem to be getting nowhere in a hurry. I should like to know what the Chief Secretary intends to do about it. Does he intend not to do anything? If so, he should at least tell me.

Mr JAMIESON: I purposefully do not read the annual report of the Police Department, because it upsets me consistently in that I have taken personal exception to somebody and probably when one does that, one's judgment on that person may not be as free from bias as it should be. However, over a long period of time the commissioner has shown he is particularly biased in his attitude towards certain matters. When reading from the report of the Police Commissioner tonight the member for Vasse indicated this clearly.

The commissioner gets on to the subject of "reds under the bed" and the fact that people who are professional demonstrators attend all demonstrations and marches. I have been associated with a number of demonstrations and I have not noticed these professional agitators to whom the commissioner referred so often.

I do not know the point the commissioner is trying to make, because some of the marchers are violently opposed in ideology, so it is most unlikely the same professionals to whom the commissioner refers attend all demonstrations. I am sure they are not in evidence as much as the commissioner tries to make out.

In his report the commissioner made much of the industrial scene and the strikes and confrontations which today have developed into a more physical character than previously. Of course, this shows he does not understand the history of this State. People have been killed in confrontations with the police. People have been battered in confrontations with the police in industrial disputes in St. George's Terrace. That is not happening at the moment and we do not want it to happen.

If the commissioner continues to make these inflammatory statements he is liable to cause the problem. He has to pull in his head. There is no doubt about that and that is the easiest way to describe what he should do. The Minister should not say, "I do not instruct the Commissioner of Police." He should talk to the commissioner and say, "How about doing the job of the Commissioner of Police and not the job of a person in a comic opera?" That is what the commissioner is trying to do at the present time.

Even many of the senior police officers say that the commissioner is a good one, but he comments too frequently on matters of a political nature. He always has to have a say.

We had one instance of this earlier this year. The commissioner made an outlandish statement and embarrassed the Minister. He said he had investigated a complaint. The commissioner when listening to accusations against somebody always insists on one saying "It is alleged." It might not

necessarily have happened. However the commissioner made a statement in the Press about alleged malpractice in relation to a few postal votes and he said, "The person was virtually guilty but there might be difficulty proving his guilt, because of witnesses." No person is guilty until he is proven to be under the law and if the commissioner does not know the law he should not be in his position. He speaks in this manner too frequently. He would do a great service for the Police Force of this State if he kept quiet on these matters. He should not be drawn into public controversies which do not fall within his ambit. He is paid an exceptionally good salary to run the Police Force, not to run the country or judge whether demonstrators are professionals, amateurs, or whatever. He prints these comments in a glossy report which costs taxpayers money. He should not do this. Other commissioners have not behaved in this manner in the past and the present commissioner cannot show me a precedent for his actions.

It is of no use the commissioner trying to get away with this sort of nonsense time and time again. Unless he is prepared to change his attitude, we will have more frequent confrontations. His ideas are too fixed. He must be more pliable and be prepared to give and take. The commissioner wants to give all the time and does not want to take anything. On behalf of the people who continue to elect me to Parliament I am critical of the commissioner. I am not critical of the whole Police Force. In the main, the lot of policemen is an unhappy one. They have most heinous tasks to perform and we respect them for it. We would not like to undertake some of the tasks allotted to policemen.

By the same token, people who obtain senior positions in the Police Force must realise they are in a position of trust and they must not betray this trust by the words they utter or the releases they make to the Press. If the commissioner does not perform satisfactorily it will be reflected in an attitude of distrust throughout the whole Police Force. He should give a better example than he is giving. In the past he has not given a good example. I shall continue to criticise a person like that if he is not performing in the way he is supposed to perform.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Road Traffic Authority, \$19 530 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$14 611 000—

Mr PEARCE: I wish to make two very brief points. Along with the member for Morley I also reject the suggestion made earlier in the

debate by the Minister for Police and Traffic that to question any aspect of the operations of the Police Force—

The CHAIRMAN: To which item are you referring?

Mr PEARCE: I am referring to Salaries, Wages and Allowances.

Mr H. D. Evans: Did the Minister give a reply to the specific question raised by the member for Subiaco?

Mr PEARCE: It does not seem so. We are now onto the RTA. When I raised the question of tow-truck operators and the operations of the RTA I was not intending to reflect on the whole of the RTA, nor do I believe anybody who raises questions to do with any individuals in the Police Force, the RTA, or any other area is reflecting on the whole body.

My opinion would be that officers in all of these areas, as indeed are members of Parliament or any other group of people in all walks of life, are only too happy to see two or three or half a dozen individuals who may be bending or breaking the rules, disciplined for the good of all. To suggest, as did the Chief Secretary by way of interjection, that to raise any questions about any Government department or the RTA is to reflect upon and to denigrate the whole operation of the organisation, is totally untrue. I certainly reject that and, as I said previously in this debate, I have had a fair amount of support from officers of the RTA in relation to the questions I have raised concerning tow-truck operators.

I should like also to draw the attention of the Committee to the number of positions made available in the road patrol in this current year. We see that in fact the contingent of the RTA is not to be significantly increased during this year. Superintendents and inspectors will remain at 15; sergeants will remain at 99; other ranks will remain at 406; and there is an item of 37 vacant positions.

The most generous interpretation one could put on this item is that there will be an additional 37 RTA officers enrolled during the next financial year. That is a totally inadequate number. The Minister for Police and Traffic drew attention to the work load on the officers, and the increasing road toll despite the best efforts of the Government and the RTA. More officers are required.

Parliament recently passed legislation for the control of off-road vehicles, and that will place a tremendous load on the shires, which will be transferred to the RTA.

Mr Nanovich: You claimed there was nothing wrong with the Bill.

Mr PEARCE: I said it was no good telling the shires to enforce the regulations if they did not have the personnel or the money. There is no argument that off-road vehicles should be controlled. In essence, we said that the problems of enforcing the law would fall back onto the RTA because the shires would not be able to carry out the work. I said it would be better to give the responsibility to the RTA in the first place rather than have the unsatisfactory situation of shires sharing the responsibility with the RTA.

We all know that it is necessary for the RTA to engage additional officers so that they will be able to handle the extra work load which will be placed on them in controlling off-road vehicles. The shires are not likely to engage extra employees.

I note—I do not congratulate the Government—that the extra positions will be filled during the current financial year. However, because of our road toll, and because of the off-road legislation, there will be an even greater demand on the RTA. The Government has made a slight move by increasing the number of officers, but more needs to be done.

Mr WILSON: The information contained in the Estimates with regard to crosswalk attendants indicates to me that there will be 277 for the year ended the 30th June, 1979. From the report of the RTA for the year ended the 30th June, 1978, it appears that the total number of metropolitan crosswalk guards and country crosswalk guards will be 288. The amount set aside for crosswalk attendants is to be increased from \$356 706 in 1977-78 to \$395 400 during the current financial year.

From the two sets of figures provided it is very difficult to gauge any indication of what sort of increase can be expected in the number of additional crosswalk guards to be appointed during the current financial year. I am sure many members share my concern about the process through which parents and citizens' organisations, and local community groups, must go to win a school crossing guard; that is a complicated procedure. It certainly is a battle and when one is successful, one certainly has a win.

School crossing surveys are conducted and a set procedure has to be followed. The procedure provides for a rule of thumb method which does not take into account the traffic pattern—in the case of some primary schools, in particular. It

is possible when one fails to obtain the appointment of a crosswalk attendant, to make a subsequent application. But, in my experience, subsequent applications usually have shared the same fate as initial applications. I accept that school crossing surveys take into account that there is a high percentage of parents driving their children to and from the schools and that they are responsible for a high percentage of the hazardous situations created. But it seems to me that in the case of many surveys it is a matter of sheer luck whether or not a crosswalk attendant is appointed.

There is a good case to relax some of the guidelines which are taken into account. In many cases one should accept the fact that there is a need. If there is a need and we can prevent injury or death for one child, as far as I am concerned that is sufficient and such a facility should be provided. It is time a great deal more attention was given to the need which exists and to the present antiquated system, as I regard it.

There is need for some sort of inquiry into the problem of children and traffic conflicting in the vicinity of schools. Such an inquiry should involve representatives of all bodies concerned in the various aspects of this problem. The inquiry should provide guidelines for the provision of crosswalk attendants in the vicinity of primary schools. The subject needs to be looked at very carefully, and the standards which are used have to be re-examined. There are many situations, in the metropolitan area and particularly in new developing areas, where there is a need for guarded school crossings. In my view, the need should have been accepted a long time ago.

Mr SKIDMORE: I take issue with the Minister on the question of road traffic patrolmen. Since the RTA has become an entity in its own right, the Minister should recognise that the time has come when we have to engage many more police, and have them seconded to the road patrol. There are many dangers inherent in our traffic system, and the Eyre Highway has received some publicity in the past week. Surely it must be apparent to the Minister that there is a need to increase the number of road traffic patrolmen.

Mr O'Neil: I suggest the honourable member look at the approved establishment, and the number of vacancies. You still need trainees to fill the positions.

Mr SKIDMORE: There are 37 vacancies.

Mr O'Neil: If you read the RTA report you will see some of the difficulties which are faced in filling the approved number of vacancies.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know what the difficulties are. It seems to me there could be a better system of selection. I am not unmindful of a person who made an application to the Police Force with preference for the RTA. The stringent demands placed on that person made it virtually impossible for him to get into the force, and yet he would have been quite a good fellow. He was of good character and a good citizen, but apparently he just did not measure up to the criteria with regard to his educational ability.

It seems to me that an officer can be trained in courtesy, trained to be able to recognise the needs of the public, and trained to deal with the public as a prerequisite to becoming a patrolman. He should be able to write, and determine whether or not a person has breached the Traffic Act. However, it does not seem to me that an applicant needs to have a university degree. The person about whom I am talking applied about 12 or 15 months ago, and it would appear he was rejected because of his educational standard. Perhaps the standard is too high.

Mr O'Neil: Is the standard very high?

Mr SKIDMORE: Apparently it was when this fellow was rejected; that was the excuse. That is the reason I question the present system. In order to obtain people of the right calibre, perhaps a more realistic approach should be made.

The Minister must realise the difficulty which faces some officers late at night. An officer can pull up a carload of kids—and surely we have all seen them—and he could have a situation which could get out of hand. A police constable getting out of his car in those circumstances must be able to decide whether or not he should take a hard line. Quite frequently, it is difficult for a patrolman to control a situation.

I believe there is a desperate need for additional men. If there is a problem associated with selection, certainly that problem should be overcome. It is obvious that under item 1 there is to be an increase of \$100 000.

I doubt very much whether this sum of money would cover salaries for those 406 officers, bearing in mind the year ahead. So no margin is allowed for any increase in the Police Force. If the 37 vacancies are filled, that will bring the force to the manpower set out in the Estimates for 1977-78. My proposition is that we need at least another 100 recruits for the Police Force.

The other matter I wish to raise was covered admirably by the member for Dianella. He discussed the way in which a school can achieve the objective of a cross walk attendant. The present criteria are disastrous and need urgent review.

One school in my electorate would certainly not meet the criteria laid down, but it is in such a position that it represents a great hazard. It is so bad that the teachers set up a constant watch. The school requested a crosswalk attendant, but the application was denied.

I have put forward a suggestion to the parents that we must be organised on this matter. If the Minister will inform me when the traffic count is to be taken, some of the parents will get in their cars and drive around and around. That appears to have been what has happened in other cases where the traffic count has been used as a determinant. I have heard it said that an attendant will not be supplied until three deaths have occurred. I do not believe that statement, and I will not use it.

In the case I referred to, although there has been no serious accident yet, there have been many near misses. The staff are feeling the strain and frustration.

In conclusion, I hope the Minister will be able to say that those 37 vacancies will be filled as quickly as possible—preferably in the next three months. I hope the Minister will look at the overall protection of our patrolmen. Certainly a policeman who is on his own must think twice about pulling up a carload of people.

Mr TONKIN: I join the member for Dianella in his comments about guarded crosswalks for school children. I have approached the Government for the provision of a crosswalk attendant at the Weld Square Primary School. Children attending this school must cross Morley Drive, and as members know, this thoroughfare has recently been beautified with lovely shrubs and it is very difficult for motorists to see children standing on the side of the road. Also, motorists drive fairly quickly in this area. As the member for Dianella said, special consideration should be given to areas where there are special hazards.

The Government has decided not to govern, but rather that a formula will govern. On one particular morning a count was taken of the number of vehicles passing the spot in an hour and the number of children crossing the road in the same period. These two figures were then multiplied and the magical figure was not reached, so it was decided that no crosswalk attendant would be supplied for this school. The special problems and hazards were not considered at all.

The parents, knowing that there is no guarded crossing, drive their children to school, so naturally the number of children using the crossing has decreased. If the crosswalk were guarded, more children would walk to school. So the

survey figures are quite misleading. The Government should again look at this warrant, this formula; certainly it should not abdicate its responsibilities in favour of a formula. The children attending this school are in serious danger.

Mr T. H. JONES: I would like to illustrate again my consistency in opposing the establishment of the Road Traffic Authority. When the Bill to establish the RTA was introduced into this place, I opposed it on behalf of the Opposition. We still hold that attitude.

I have made inquiries in various police stations throughout Western Australia, and obviously a division still exists between RTA patrolmen and police officers. There is a cleavage between the two, and I believe it is fair to say that the Police Union of Western Australia has realised the mistake it made in agreeing to the establishment of a separate authority.

Any member who cares to read the *Hansard* debates will see that we pointed out this division would occur. We felt the money would have been more wisely spent if the road traffic duties were combined with general police administration to give us a more effective Police Force.

The road traffic officers regard themselves as different from police officers. Luckily this does not happen in one of the towns in my electorate, but I know it occurs in other centres. I am sure the Minister for Police and Traffic would have cognizance of this fact. On behalf of the Opposition I would like to say we still believe that the RTA should be part of the Police Force and that this would lead to better administration in many areas in this State.

Mr HODGE: On the 9th August of this year I asked question 1041 of the Minister for Police and Traffic about the operation of the Road Traffic Authority weights and measures patrol, with particular reference to the district of Melville. I asked this question because of the great concern in my electorate about traffic noise, and the belief that one of the aggravating factors is that vehicles travelling along the major roads at night are frequently heavily overladen.

In the reply from the Minister I was surprised to learn that the weights and measures controls do not regularly work in the evening in the metropolitan area. This seems to be a major flaw in the operations of the RTA. One reason given by the Minister in his reply was lack of staff, and the other reason was the danger associated with night operations. I suppose that an officer operating alone on an unlit section of road may be in

some danger, but other sections of the RTA operate on a 24-hour-a-day basis, when the same hazards would exist. I am concerned if the main reason is lack of staff.

I asked the Minister how many people had been apprehended for using overladen vehicles in the past 12 months, and the answer was 134. I am not too clear whether this figure related to the Melville district alone. I asked him also how many people had been apprehended between the hours of 6.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. and the answer was six. Again I am not too sure whether that related to my district only, but I think it did.

I believe that the operators of heavy haulage vehicles realise that the weights and measures control does not operate in the evenings, and that this accounts for a portion of the high level of noise in the area. Frequently heavily overladen vehicles travel along Leach Highway and Canning Highway in the early hours of the morning. The drivers of these vehicles change gears and roar their engines to get up the steep hills. The Government should give some thought to this problem and if insufficient staff is the reason that the weights and measures patrol does not operate at night, the situation should be reassessed.

Traffic noise is a severe problem in the area, and the RTA is charged with the responsibility of apprehending the drivers of noisy vehicles. This is the only authority in the State with any enforceable laws in regard to noisy vehicles.

More men should be employed and trained to operate noise metering equipment. I understand that only one employee of the RTA has the technical knowledge to operate this equipment. I may be wrong in that belief, and I hope I am. On my information this man is a civilian employed by the RTA on a part-time basis only. I do not see any specific provision for a salary for such a person in this vote. I would like to see the provision of portable noise monitoring equipment, and more officers trained in its use. The job of controlling traffic noise must be taken more seriously.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Office of Regional Administration and the North West, \$1 440 000—put and passed.

Part 4: Minister for Agriculture—

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of members, in my opinion members wandered a little widely when discussing the item "Salaries, wages and allowances" in part 3. On some occasions it would have been better for them to

address their remarks on the "part", where the general debate takes place, and I ask members to bear this in mind.

Point of Order

Mr TONKIN: I am at a loss to understand your suggestion, and I would like guidance for the benefit of the Committee. When discussing the item "Salaries, wages and allowances", it is obvious that we must talk about the job involved. We are being asked to agree to the allocation of \$X for a function, and surely we should speak about that function. The difference is that when a part is called, we may speak to the whole of the part, but when a division is called, we speak to a particular item. However, we may speak to everything pertaining to that item, and I believe Standing Orders support that view. The actual remuneration is taken out of our hands by the industrial tribunal.

The CHAIRMAN: Some members tied their remarks in with the particular item, but it seemed to me that other members made comments which were more appropriate to the whole part.

Committee Resumed

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [8.30 p.m.]: I preface my remarks with something by way of criticism of the Government and the Ministry. In the first place, it is quite an unsatisfactory situation for the part to be brought forward without an analysis, appraisal and assessment by the Minister. Not so many years ago, this was always the practice. Each Minister would always give a detailed resume of what the part involved, and of the operation of his department.

This practice appears to have been discarded, and it brings with it some unfortunate consequences, not the least of which is the problem which confronts ordinary members of Parliament in having to undertake research—for which they are not fully equipped—and to try to glean information on matters which are not readily available to them. This practice makes for secrecy within Government departments. Perhaps that is the intention of the Government.

My contention is strengthened by the attitude displayed by the Deputy Premier, when the member for Subiaco had raised a very valid point in connection with his electorate, and one which required action. The honourable member was treated with discourtesy by the Deputy Premier.

Sir Charles Court: That question had been answered before in some detail.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yet the situation remains the same. It needs another answer, and what is more, it needs action.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am sure you would agree with me, Mr Deputy Chairman.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would agree more with the member for Warren if he would confine his remarks to Part 4: Minister for Agriculture.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I will certainly do that, Mr Deputy Chairman. I am referring to the attitude of this Government to the presentation of information, and the secrecy it exhibits when the Estimates come forward.

Mr Bryce: Yes, that is quite right.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Warren will resume his seat. The Minister for Agriculture has not had the opportunity to reply to the member for Warren. If the honourable member wishes to continue his remarks he must relate them to part 4.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The secrecy to which I refer is the absence of an explanation and evaluation by the Minister for Agriculture and by his colleagues. That is where the relevance comes in, and it is rather shameful. I am sure you will agree, Mr Deputy Chairman.

Sir Charles Court: Did you always introduce your Estimates?

Mr H. D. EVANS: My word I did; every Minister in the Tonkin Government introduced his Estimates. If the Premier cares to check back through *Hansard* he will find that is correct.

Mr Bertram: That was because Premier Tonkin had confidence in his Ministers.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, and because he did not have the same predilection for secrecy as this Government has.

Mr Bryce: And he was not a one-man-band.

Sir Charles Court: I remember when one of your Ministers tried to introduce his own Estimates.

Mr Jamieson: Edgar Lewis used to do it.

Sir Charles Court: Yes, and what a buffeting he took.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Estimates for the Department of Agriculture are what could be described as a purely housekeeping sort of budget. Its allocation has increased by some 12.5 per cent; however, this merely keeps pace with inflation. Indeed, over the past few years there has been a curtailment of agricultural facilities to the extent where the allocation was falling behind the rate of

inflation. This year's Estimates simply restore the status quo, which not only is desirable but also is highly necessary.

Once again, we find ourselves in an unsatisfactory situation with regard to private members' business. The notice paper contains two items in which I have some interest; namely, the motions I moved relating to the Midland Junction Abattoir and seeking the appointment of a Select Committee to examine the Plant Diseases Act and the operation of the fruit-fly baiting schemes. It is desirable to have a full debate upon these matters but I do not know whether this will be possible in view of the stage of the session. I would appreciate it if the Minister could give me an indication of whether these items will come up for debate, or whether they should be discussed now during debate on part 4.

Sir Charles Court: The intention under the timetable worked out with the Leader of the Opposition was to have a vote on private members' business yesterday. We had that installment last night. We hoped last night we would finish debate on your motion.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Was that the only installment?

Sir Charles Court: We intended by arrangement with the Leader of the Opposition that there would be a block time during which private members' business could be discussed.

Mr Davies: I gave you no guarantee we would get them all through.

Mr Tonkin: Not enough time! You are gagging the Parliament!

Sir Charles Court: We will remind you of how some of the Tonkin Government's sessions finished up if you are not careful.

Mr Tonkin: Are you kidding? We sat for more weeks and for longer hours than any other Parliament in Western Australia's history.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes, it was a much fuller legislative programme in the days of the Tonkin Government. That was the reason there may have been something of a rush towards the end of the session. I hope I have refreshed the memory of the Premier.

Mr Bertram: It certainly needs refreshing.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I wish firstly to refer to a problem you yourself raised, Mr Deputy Chairman; I refer of course to the problem of European foul brood disease. No real solution has been found to this disease; as a matter of fact the position has deteriorated.

This matter was raised during the grievance debate by the member for Vasse, it has been raised in debate since then, and a number of questions have been placed on the notice paper on the subject; in addition, I have a question without notice I wish to direct to the Minister for Agriculture should time permit.

Since this matter was previously discussed in this Chamber I have taken the opportunity to speak with a practising apiarist with 1 000 hives in South Australia, and the information he has given me is alarming, to say the least.

The disease European foul brood has tremendous implications for this State. What is more disturbing is that its causal effects are not fully known. The situation has changed somewhat since the matter was last placed before this Chamber and the Chief Aviculturist in Western Australia (Mr Kessell) reported on the matter. He indicated that in Victoria, the disease spread virtually from the Mallee to Gippsland; in other words, the entire State was infected and was under quarantine. The same situation applies in New South Wales. About the middle of this year, some 20 apiaries were diagnosed as being infected with European foul brood, 18 of them from Victoria, and all lying within the proclaimed buffer strip.

Two apiaries within the quarantine area, near the Victorian border, have been monitored to assess the success or otherwise of control measures being implemented. The disease apparently can be contained by the use of terramycin and sugar. However, its use has some ramifications. It is mixed into a solution, and must be used fairly quickly, otherwise its effectiveness dissipates and, after only a few hours, it is worthless and its application is simply a waste of time and money. The important point is that terramycin will not cure the disease; it will only hold it and contain it to some extent.

The use of this drug represents a cost to the apiaries. The drug itself is not expensive but the time involved in taking the hives apart and applying the drug directly to the brood chamber represents an impost and makes inroads into the beekeepers' returns. However, terramycin is the only drug known even to contain the disease.

In his report, the senior aviculturist indicated that all breeders of queen bees in New South Wales operated hives well away from the quarantine area and that apiary officers are prepared to inspect queen bee-rearing apiaries as required under the Beekeepers Act of Western Australia. That may be true, but it is still a source of great

concern that under the certification system operating in Western Australia, honey can be imported from non-quarantine areas if it is accompanied by a certificate issued by the Department of Agriculture in the State of origin. The only remaining unquarantined areas are northern New South Wales and Queensland. However, the certification system is virtually worthless.

I have already referred to the South Australian apiarist with whom I have discussed this matter. The position in South Australia has deteriorated to the extent where the total State now is under quarantine. Previously, only the south-east corner was quarantined. The disease spread rapidly throughout the State, and the reason for its spread was that apiarists were simply dumping apiaries. This breeder suddenly found another beekeeper had left a load of bees only half a mile from his apiary, and it was only a matter of weeks before his apiary contracted the disease. Previously, this person had operated in the Mallee country, and had gone to the point of keeping well away from other beekeepers. Now, he is treating his hives with terramycin. I will certainly be interested in the results of the experiments he plans to conduct.

So much for the system of certification. Of course, the Department of Agriculture can say that honey was produced in a disease-free area. However, hives can quite easily be taken from a quarantined zone to a disease-free area. In this way, there is a risk of contaminated honey being imported into Western Australia.

The practice of heating honey before it can be imported creates problems in itself. Heated honey is not acceptable in some countries because the dextrose or the sucrose breaks down and the wax particles melt under the 135 degree heat, which certainly is below the pasteurisation level.

I have had a little experience in this field, having kept a few hives, and I can tell members that honey is never clear. It is always cloudy due to the wax particles it contains.

With the heating of these wax particles it is felt they have medicinal qualities as far as being desirable for intrusional considerations and so one gets the clear honey in that way. The essential point is that this is endangering the export industry upon which our honey industry depends. If honey is not exported from this country, there would be a catastrophe amongst the beekeepers. Without that export market the outlook for beekeeping would be nil. When we have extraneous considerations such as honey being heated, problems can arise. I have been told honey which has been exported from Western Australia has

been brought in from the Eastern States and if this was to get abroad there would be swift and effective retribution—understandably so.

The other aspect is that if there is a continued use of terramycin—and bear in mind it is not a cure but only a holding agent—some countries could take exception to the contamination of the product by the terramycin. I do not know how terramycin is viewed medically in countries to which we export honey, but there is that danger which has not been examined up to this time. For that reason it is another risk the honey industry is being forced to take.

The history in Western Australia is one that shows the State has had an odd case each year over the last 15 years of what appeared to be European foul brood, but on investigation it was not. It was probably more akin to a variation called Kashmir bee disease. It is also akin to what in Victoria and New South Wales is called false European foul brood. On each occasion the hives were destroyed, as they would have been had it been the foul brood disease.

The problem was overcome by introducing vigorous young queen bees which seemed to have an effect. It is felt the European foul brood can be modified to some extent by vigorous breeding programmes and there are indications it has minimised in hotter weather because of the activity of the bees themselves. This does not mean to say the propensity to spread the disease subsequently is in any way diminished, and this is what we are concerned about. This will have an implication for Western Australia.

Nowhere can I find a definitive statement of the cause of transmission of European foul brood. It would appear insufficient is known about the disease for any scientist in Australia to make a definite statement one way or the other in connection with the spread of this disease. No-one can say whether it is spread by the honey, by the bees themselves, or whether it is spread by secondhand beekeeping materials. No-one really knows what is involved. The effects are known. It has an effect upon the larvae in the brood chambers. It can completely wipe out colonies of bees and that is the situation we are confronted with. For those reasons I think a closer look has to be given to what is totally involved. If European foul brood becomes established in Western Australia—heaven forbid it does—it means not only the livelihood of beekeepers is endangered, even if they take the prophylactic step of using terramycin and sugar, but also it is not going to cure the problem of the

wild hives. Once it gets into these it does not take much imagination to appreciate what will occur.

Around the metropolitan area itself most of the pollination is done by the bees from wild hives. I would not care to hazard a guess at the number of wild hives in the metropolitan area, but there would be a considerable number, sufficient to carry out the pollination requirements. As the member for Maylands has mentioned, in Western Australia we have a free pollination service.

Mr Skidmore: It is the only thing that is free.

Mr H. D. EVANS: We are pleased to have it when in the United States of America the provision of bees for pollination is a billion dollar industry.

Mr Davies: Do not give the Government ideas.

Mr H. D. EVANS: In Western Australia there are countless bush hives providing this service. There are thousands of hives throughout the length and breadth of our forest and scrub country. The bees from these hives are largely responsible for the pollination of all those species of plants, flowers, and trees requiring this service.

We can picture what could happen in a State without bees. It is not an exaggeration to say that if European foul brood becomes established in Western Australia we could lose the greater portion of the wild bee population, taking with it the free pollination service we now have. That is something members should contemplate.

We are not talking about comparatively small finance with the honey industry; we are talking about the total pollination of all plants and flowers in the State. That is the extent of the problem and this is the major cause for my concern. If European foul brood comes in it will not be long before we have a decline—possibly a total decline—of the native and wild bees throughout the State.

Mr Tonkin: The whole eco-system depends on it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: So does agriculture, except for certain plant species pollinated by the wind and in certain other ways. Those species dependent on bees—and that would be the majority—would certainly have a problem.

In the United States of America there is an industry which provides bees for no other purpose but to ensure the pollination of the various crops, be they fruit or vegetable crops. This is what we are talking about and this is fairly and squarely the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. Whether the sectional interests

within the industry like it or not, the Department of Agriculture has to take issue on this problem. The department has to ensure there is not the remotest chance of the disease crossing the Nullarbor. The measures required may have to be severe and strict, but even if it means dropping the shutters completely, it could be worth it because the stakes are so high.

The thinking of certain commercial interests—and it was reported to me as having been said that honey had to be on the shelves otherwise these interests would lose that corner of the market to spreads and other substitutes—is that continued importation of honey is necessary.

It was unfortunate that cyclone "Alby" had such a devastating effect on the beekeeping industry. It did happen and it is something we have to live with. It means that bee pollination is down and hives are at their weakest for many years.

I have already mentioned that the number of queen bees imported from the Eastern States will increase from 7 000 in a normal year to 13 000 this year in an effort to rebuild the strength of the colonies in the State.

Mr Jamieson: Aren't they going to re-establish the Rottneest queen bee farm?

Mr H. D. EVANS: That would be a good idea. Whether or not that could be done in time, I do not know, but it would be a welcome innovation as we do have strains in Western Australia which are eminently suitable.

The importation of almost double the number of queen bees means there will be not only that number of bees; there will be more as there are five or six attendants with them in the small cage in which they are transported to wait upon the queen bee. So we are going to import a large number of bees in total, and each is a possible carrier of the disease. It might be a remote possibility, but the danger is there. As the stakes are so high, no chances should be taken.

I had a question without notice to ask and I rang the Minister's office and indicated what I proposed, but perhaps it will be possible for the Minister to indicate the position during his reply in case we do not have time for questions without notice. The question reads as follows—

- (1) Has there been any investigation into disease in beehives and apiaries in the south-west in recent weeks by officers of the Department of Agriculture?

I understand there has been some investigation in your area, Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie). There does not seem to have been much publicity accorded to it, and I am wondering what the

nature of the investigation was and whether it involved European foul brood. My question continued as follows—

(2) If "Yes" to (1)—

- (a) in what localities were these investigations carried out?
- (b) what specific diseases were being investigated?
- (c) were there any particular reasons or reports for these investigations being undertaken?
- (d) what have been the results and conclusions of these inquiries?

That is indicative of the concern being expressed in some quarters, and not without justification.

The position in South Australia is that the entire State is now under quarantine. There is a ban precluding the bringing of honey to Western Australia from anywhere in that State. But importations are still possible from parts of New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania. The certification method is very much open to question. It is all very well to accept the word of responsible officers—I am not decrying them—of the departments in the other States who have put their name to a certificate in the best of faith.

There is some query as to the veracity and responsibility of beekeepers who are prepared to move hives from one area to another, disregarding quarantine regulations. I have cited already an instance of this this afternoon. It has happened and it will happen again. If there is to be the slightest risk of European foul brood coming to Western Australia the strongest quarantine measures should be taken whether or not beekeeping associations or commercial interests want them.

It should be the judgment of the Department of Agriculture. It is at this juncture that I ask whether any officers from Western Australia have been sent to the Eastern States to evaluate and ascertain first hand for themselves just what the precise position is? That is another direct query I refer to the Minister for his comment.

It is hoped that time will permit members to examine the motion calling upon the Government to take action in connection with fruit-fly eradication and control in Western Australia. The motion was moved and the reasons for the motion were explained to members, but to this stage there has been no reply by the Government and it is important that we receive one.

In his speech accompanying the Budget the Premier referred to Mediterranean fruit fly and pointed out that it continued to be a major problem for growers of deciduous fruits in this State.

It was pointed out by the Premier that conventional spraying and baiting campaigns are costly and time consuming and that the use of insecticides is being increasingly questioned by health and ecological bodies. He said an attempt is to be made to introduce biological control measures and that a radioactive cobalt source will be used to enable the breeding and release of sterile male fruit fly in sufficient numbers to break the reproduction cycle. Carnarvon is seen as being the site for the first pilot scheme. That is certainly an innovation which would be desirable.

Mr Jamieson: How did it go?

Mr H. D. EVANS: That was my next question. In the interim the position remains unchanged. As a matter of fact it will deteriorate. It looks as though with summer commencing earlier than normal the fruit fly will be encouraged to breed and such things as loquats will be infected even at this juncture. Once breeding starts at this stage of the season the prospect is not very bright for other fruits in months to come.

Fewer baiting schemes are in operation. In the last reply on this subject which I received from the Minister he indicated that of the original 53 schemes, 26 were non-operative. This gives rise to question what is proposed for the control and eradication of fruit fly. It is a big problem; there is no question about that.

I suspect that the commercial growers are no longer concerned to the extent they were previously. The commercial grower can build into his expenses and cost of production any fruit-fly control methods he desires and by spraying alternate rows each week he has a fair control over the situation in the commercial orchard. However, this does not mean that all growers will adopt this scheme and it does not mean that the outlook for the householder and the backyard orchardist will improve one little bit.

It is quite possible that the commercial growers are prepared for the fruit fly to spread. They can control it in their own commercial situation and the expenditure will be passed on to the public. If no backyard fruit is grown the commercial grower will supply that need and this will be in his interests. I am wondering whether the commercial growers are on the side of the fruit fly or against them. It could be that it is in their commercial interests that the schemes go by the board and the backyard growers, by pure frustration, will have to turn to retail shops for their fruit.

I can see a member from the hills with a faint smile on his face which leads me to think I am closer to the mark than most members in the Chamber realise!

It will be interesting to ascertain the result of the experiments with the sterile fruit fly. Whether or not it is possible to depend on biological control of that kind as the panacea or total control methods which are required, only time will tell. In the interim there will be a great deal of frustration and a great deal of fruit ruined as a result of European fruit fly in other areas.

I briefly mention the situation at the Midland abattoir in the light of events which have occurred recently not the least of which is a further increase in the fees. Do members recall what happened when in the year before the Tonkin Government went out of office it increased the fees modestly? Can they recall the attack by the Opposition at that time? It was, to say the least, scurrilous. One of the first actions of the new Government was to waive those charges. It made a big song about them before it went into office and when it assumed office it dropped the charges immediately. Then, about three months later, they were brought back, not at the same level, but at least double the increase imposed by the Tonkin Government; and it was all our fault at the time! I do not think Mr Whitlam was blamed for that episode although he was blamed for most other things; but the Tonkin Government was blamed in that instance.

What do we find now? We find further increases in offal charges imposed by the Meat Industry Authority. In the light of what has been said in endeavouring to run a tighter ship at the abattoir in an effort to reduce the deficit I do not know that the increase in fees will assist in any way at all.

It has been demonstrated in the Eastern States that by reducing the fees a greater throughput was occasioned and the economic position of the service abattoir in South Australia was improved. In Western Australia we are doing the reverse. Up go the fees again. It was a heinous crime for the Tonkin Government to do that, but what has this Government done with regularity? It has increased the fees to their present level and has blamed the increased wages as the sole justification—wages which I might add have not kept pace with the cost of living. They have fallen steadily behind inflation. So to blame the workers and their appeal for increased wages to keep abreast with inflation is not only amoral but illogical.

Mr Bertram: What is worse than that is that the Government increases its taxes while at the same time it does not spend all the taxes it gathers.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That is even more amoral. Not only does the Government increase taxes and charges, but it does not spend what it has. It places the money into the "rainy day" fund which will be used just prior to the election. The taps will be turned on and there will be three choruses of "We are jolly good fellows" and we will go to the polls. That is the strategy. When we also realise the possibilities of the 150th anniversary celebrations we realise it will be a vintage year for the party in Government.

It is the shamelessness with which the Government approaches the matter to which I take offence—the blatancy with which it has gone about the situation. But to come back to the Midland abattoir. I would not like to be sidetracked—the only indication the Minister gave in what is the most innocuous reply I have heard in this place to the motion moved for an investigation into the abattoir and the industry in Western Australia, a motion which has remained on the notice paper for some months now—

Mr Old: The reply was as innocuous as your statement. There was nothing to answer.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister did not answer the queries.

Mr Old: There was nothing to answer.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The first was the reason for issuing Pope Exports with an export licence. There was no answer given to that nor to the fact that on two occasions Pope Exports had applied for a licence and been rejected and an appeal had been sustained by the Minister on behalf of the Meat Industry Authority. Then suddenly this year there was a turnabout.

Mr Bertram: Sounds fishy!

Mr H. D. EVANS: When we consider the five members on the MIA we realise that two would be for it and two would be against it which leaves a Government official in the centre. I can just picture the instruction handed by the Premier to his Minister and the Minister making it known what sort of result he expected.

Mr Old: Get your tongue out of your cheek!

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister jolly well knows it. It would be a case of "Bring out the lash!"

Mr Old: Come on! Get your tongue out of your cheek!

Mr H. D. EVANS: Will the Minister explain the rationale behind what happened?

Mr Old: Sit down and I will.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister did not explain when he had the opportunity to do so. He evaded the issue completely. He had an opportunity to make an explanation when he replied.

Mr Old: You are a real comic.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am getting a bit close to the bone.

Mr Old: Not at all. You are a real comic.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Already there is an oversupply of abattoir space in Western Australia. There has been a rejection of the application on four occasions—two by knock back and two by appeal. Then, all of a sudden, although the conditions have not changed, the licence was granted. Why? There was no need because further premises would be available at Esperance if that project gets off the ground. Despite this an additional licence was granted. The Minister could well be called upon to explain the underlying principle and if it does nothing else it indicates how well entrenched are the meat barons. When we are dealing with an industry worth more than \$100 million we can bet our sweet lives that the reasons and rationale behind the granting of the licence are not very hard to find.

I raised that point because it brings us to the next aspect which is the future of the service abattoir in Western Australia. The Minister did not answer that query either. He evaded the issue. The only undertaking he gave was to the effect that provision would be made for the lambing. No indication of how many lambs was given. I understand from those who have contacted me that lambs have to be sent to Robb Jetty.

This is an inconvenience, to say the least, to producers right throughout the State.

Mr Old: With only 20 000 lambs a week we cannot keep two abattoirs going.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Which brings us back to the future of Midland and whether or not anything is to be done at the Midland Junction Abattoir. There has been a suggestion of a consortium taking over or the pig floor being leased out and some arrangement being made about the beef floor. But the situation is so obscure that it is difficult to penetrate the aura of secrecy surrounding the whole operation.

If it is possible to lease any part of the Midland Junction Abattoir, the figures and the economics have to be explained very clearly, because a certain portion of the servicing side of the abattoir would have to be maintained. Who will pick up the tab for that? Is there to be a subsidy approach? If we lose the pig and beef

floors, can the operation side, the administration, the rendering, and the effluent disposal be sustained? Who will pay the cost of them? Will it be covered in the leasing? If it is and it can be shown to be profitable to a firm or consortium, surely it is a profitable operation for the Meat Commission.

These questions still remain unanswered. The Minister has not answered them up to date. I am not very optimistic of getting clarification but I am ever hopeful.

I do not know whether any consideration has been given to the future use of the saleyards, but one thing is almost certain: if the service abattoir is to be removed or to be wound down to any extent, as is apparent at the moment, the future will have to be considered. It is something about which there has been remarkable silence. Whether the long-term planning proposals for Midland Junction Abattoir involve the removal of the saleyards remains to be explained.

If the saleyard at Midland goes, the farmers of Western Australia will have to look very seriously at their marketing problems. If the livestock selling system we have at present remains, those who produce stock in Western Australia will be disadvantaged, because country sales are usually conducted with reference to and in comparison with Midland prices, and if the saleyard goes there will be not only confusion but also some cause for consternation on the part of the meat producers of Western Australia.

I would like to pass on to several other related matters, but before doing so it might be apposite to refer at this stage to the need for an improved rail service to farmers. One of the major commodities is of course superphosphate. It is bulky but it is also very necessary each year; one just cannot farm without it. Serious consideration should be given to introducing innovations, if not bulk silos in most areas, then palletisation of small lots in the south-west. Unloading bagged superphosphate from railway trucks could be obviated by palletisation and removal with a fork lift, or a carry-all or something of that nature on a tractor. If the Department of Agriculture had the interest of farmers at heart and Westrail were interested in economics—

Mr Old: You are on part 10 now.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Certainly, but the Minister for Agriculture could use his good offices.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I have given the honourable member some latitude and I hope he will not relate these matters again when speaking to part 10.

Mr Pearce: Except for a recapitulation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member for Gosnells will not render assistance to the Chair.

Mr Pearce: I am truly sorry.

Mr H. D. EVANS: When Gough was in Government we could always depend upon one thing: he would always be blamed for everything, including high tides. The party now in Government in Western Australia was responsible for that tactic. The Minister for Agriculture was quite vocal and I made a point of keeping a small file of his utterances in connection with fuel.

The increased fuel costs, including diesel fuel, to the farmers of Western Australia will be very considerable indeed. What has this Government done about it? Members on the other side were responsible for the impact on the farming community, and the increase was espoused by none other than Mr Anthony. A report on page 1 of the *Farmers' Weekly* came from the Minister for Agriculture in this Chamber, who described the Federal Budget as a crushing blow to decentralisation. It was the Budget of a Liberal-National Country Party Federal Government. What has been done about it on behalf of the Western Australian farmers, I am still at a loss to understand. The report in the *Farmers' Weekly* states—

Following the budget, farmers' petrol costs are expected to increase 12.33 per cent to about 21.88c a litre.

The biggest increase is in the price of diesel fuel which goes up 27.75 per cent to 16.11c a litre . . .

Those who represent country electorates will know that the harvest now getting under way will consume diesel fuel at a cost of 16.11c a litre. The quantity of diesel fuel used on the Western Australian crop will be very appreciable.

I cannot understand why there has been no move towards alternative fuels in Western Australia. One of the finest things that could happen would be to see the entire Western Australian harvest taken off with north-west natural gas. Gas tractors are in operation in the United States, and some are in operation in small packing houses around the metropolitan area of Perth. We have vast quantities of natural gas and an opportunity to examine the practicabilities of using it. I understand some models of the American John Deering tractor have attachments for using gas, and it would be worthy of this Chamber to think upon the spectacle of the entire wheat harvest of Western Australia being taken off with natural

gas fuel. It will be interesting to hear what the Minister has to say about those increased prices for fuel.

Mr Shalders: A certain Federal Government took away the subsidy on fuel.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It did not slam up the price. What was the reason for it? To give a handout to the big oil companies at the expense of the farmers of Australia.

I might add things are not very good down on the farm. Even though we have had a Liberal-National Country Party Government for 21 of the last 24 years, it is still not Utopia out there. As a matter of fact, something like 1 000 farmers are on the dole. It occurs to me we probably will not hear the term "dole bludgers" used in this connection as we heard it applied to other people. The dole is indisputably justified for farmers, but at the same time I cannot help taking time off to ponder that the very eloquent term "dole bludgers" which was propagated by those opposite will not be applicable in these circumstances.

While on the subject of the Federal Government and its contribution to the farming community, I have no doubt the Farmers' Union has been in touch with the Government of this State and expressed its concern about the proposal whereby non-farm income above \$5 000 a year will be progressively removed from the averaging provisions, which means many farmers will be unable to receive any averaging benefit from non-farm income. This will hit many people who contract out, take jobs in timber mills, and the like.

By interjection, the member for Murray or another member mentioned that Whitlam had removed the fuel subsidy, which amounted to a decimal of a cent. That was a heinous crime. What has happened now? The increase that has been imposed by Mr Anthony—the Leader of the National Country Party of all things—makes Whitlam look like a plaster saint by comparison. The only substantial legislation for rural areas was introduced by a Labor Government. Why do not members opposite use their good offices and get something done? They consistently told us to do something. It was said to be our fault that Whitlam removed the fuel subsidy. But it is a different story now.

What Fraser and Anthony have done to the farmers in Western Australia, the Germans did to the farmers in Poland. It is almost as bad as that.

I was being reminded by my colleague that the increase in the first payment on wheat—the first for 25 years—was made by the Whitlam Government. This is in contradistinction to the measures

introduced by the Fraser Government—the anti-farmer measures of the Fraser Government and, above all, of Anthony himself.

Mr Tubby: What about probate?

Mr H. D. EVANS: As far as probate is concerned, by the time this Government has finished only farmers who sit in Parliament and lease their properties will have to worry about probate; there will not be that much left in farming. Therefore probate is becoming a diminishing problem for farmers under the present Administration.

To proceed with the matter of taxation: one thing the Whitlam Government did not do is upset tax-averaging which is probably the greatest benefit ever offered to farmers. But now, here it is; anything over \$5 000 makes a farmer ineligible for the averaging provisions. What is this Government doing about that?

Mr MacKinnon: That does not attack the ordinary farmers; it attacks the St. George's Terrace farmers.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Whitlam Government did not do anything like that. It did not even remove the super bounty. It referred the bounty to the IAC, but it did not remove it. It is a Liberal-National Country Party Government which is doing this: the mind boggles!

Mr MacKinnon interjected.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The sum of \$5 000 is quite a sizeable amount for those farmers who are compelled to work on their farms. If the member cares to go to any timber mill in the south-west, as the Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie) well knows, he will find farmers working in the mills and trying to develop a farm at the same time. These are the people who will be hit by this provision of a Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government that has done far worse things to the farmers than the Whitlam Government ever looked like doing.

Mr Shalders: It sounds good here, but it doesn't wash in the bush.

Mr H. D. EVANS: What about provisions for natural disaster? These have been modified against the interests of Western Australia—again by a Liberal-National Country Party Government. Let us consider what has been done. We find provision has had to be made for a substantial increase in the cost to the State of natural disaster relief. Why is that? The reason is that the rules have been changed by the Federal Government. Under the national arrangement which prevailed until last year, the State was required to meet the first \$1.5 million of expenditure on

natural disaster relief, and the Commonwealth met all payments of approved measures in excess of that threshold figure. However, the Commonwealth announced recently a major change in the cost-sharing arrangements.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I draw the member's attention to the fact that the item under discussion is Part 4: Minister for Agriculture. My understanding is that if the member wished to talk about natural disaster relief he should have done so under the appropriate items in the parts relating to the Premier and Deputy Premier. As the member realises, we are now dealing with agriculture. I will be obliged to sit him down and call on the next speaker if he does not relate his remarks substantially to agriculture.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I will do that with pleasure, Sir. I deliberately refrained from raising this matter in the items under the votes of the Premier and Deputy Premier, because it is the direct responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture to ensure adequate provision is made for drought relief. By far the biggest problem in respect of drought relief is the provision of water, fodder, and agistment. This is where the greatest expense lies. We still have drought problems in some areas of the State; therefore, I am bringing the matter to the notice of the Minister for Agriculture. He has done not a thing about the problem. He has complained bitterly to Mr Anthony about the increase in the price of fuel, but what has he done about drought relief? We can thank his colleagues in Canberra for this cut-back.

In deference to you, Sir, I will be brief. The Commonwealth recently announced major changes in the costs for this year. The State will be required to meet the first \$3 million of approved relief measures, and 25 per cent of all expenditure incurred above that figure. The Commonwealth contribution will be limited to 75 per cent of what is incurred in excess of \$3 million.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suggest the member is debating the general principles of natural disaster relief. That is an aspect not specifically related to the Agriculture portfolio. The member will return to agriculture, or I will be obliged to call on the next speaker.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I accept your ruling, Sir, so long as I have made it clear to the Minister for Agriculture that he has a responsibility in this area—one that he appears to have neglected sadly and badly.

The Minister has fouled up the matter. Surely it is discussed at Agricultural Council, and the

Minister has allowed himself to be trampled into the dirt. As a result Western Australia suffers this disability.

I would like to refer to a matter raised in the report of the Auditor General in respect of the Egg Marketing Board. I am at something of a loss to understand why in the Auditor General's report mention is made of a replacement fund which has in it an amount in excess of \$110 000. This is the responsibility of the Minister for Agriculture. Under the terms of the Marketing of Eggs Act the board may retain only 1 per cent of its funds as a carryover from one year to the next. In addition to that amount there is a replacement fund. The replacement fund must be illegal because the maximum amount permitted to be carried over is 1 per cent of the funds, and in addition to that 1 per cent there is an amount of \$110 000 set aside in a fund.

The effect of this is that producers are not receiving that money. If it is necessary to retain an amount greater than 1 per cent, an amendment should be made to the Act to permit it to be done. The board should not act illegally as it is doing in this case. If the board is acting illegally, it is the responsibility of the Minister to ensure that it should not continue to do so.

While on the subject of the Egg Marketing Board, a problem will arise in respect of regional centres such as Bunbury—which is the centre with the fastest growth—being completely dependent upon the metropolitan area for their supplies of eggs. This will be something of an anachronism if it is not already. I appreciate the terms of the Act are explicit in this regard, but perhaps it is time a review of the Act was made to cover the matter of allowing regional centres such as Bunbury to operate a greater number of licences and thereby establish a decentralised industry. This is an industry which lends itself to decentralisation. However, the Government does not seem to regard it in that light.

Comparatively recently an amendment was made to the Marketing of Eggs Act which gave the Minister discretion to allocate licences in the more remote areas of the State. As the Minister explained, the amendment was designed to cater for the problem above the 26th parallel. This is a matter which needs to be examined. It will be necessary in the near future to evaluate the nature of the problem to see what should be done about it.

In conclusion, I would like to say the small measure of improvement in the budget of the Department of Agriculture is somewhat mollifying, especially in the light of the way in which agriculture has been treated in past years. However,

whatever benefit this State Budget bestows upon country residents is more than lost in the increases in charges for water, power, and transport. These costs must necessarily be reflected in every farm input in the rural industries. So those charges which are very much out of proportion have become part and parcel of the taxing machine of this Government. They have eroded any possible benefit country dwellers may obtain from the State Budget.

The other aspects can be fitted in at an appropriate future time.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [9.42 p.m.]: It is regrettable that the Government has indicated private members' business will not be dealt with again during the remainder of this session of Parliament. This causes me to refer to the motion moved by the member for Warren for the appointment of a Select Committee to examine provisions contained in the Plant Diseases Act and the operation of fruit-fly baiting schemes. To refresh the memories of members, the motion moved was as follows—

That a Select Committee be set up to examine the provisions contained in the Plant Diseases Act, the operation and administration of fruit fly baiting schemes currently operating in this State, to determine the reasons for the failure of schemes which have ceased to operate and to make recommendations to improve fruit fly control methods in W.A.

It was my intention to support that motion but for the reason I have mentioned I will not have the opportunity to do so. Therefore, I take the opportunity during this debate to indicate to members my feelings in respect of this very important question.

In the Collie area, which I represent, the matter of the spread of fruit fly is causing grave concern to the shire and the fruit-fly baiting committee. Concern is being expressed right throughout the fruit-growing areas of Western Australia. The Minister will recall that on the 23rd February I introduced to him a deputation from the Collie fruit-fly baiting committee, including members of the local authority. The deputation requested the Government to examine the existing provisions relating to the control of fruit fly, generally, in Western Australia.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I draw the attention of the member for Collie to the notice paper on which Order of the Day No. 10 is the motion relating to the Plant Diseases

Act and fruit-fly baiting. I also draw his attention to the fact that a member must not anticipate debate on a matter set down for future consideration. The member is presuming the Chamber may not debate Order of the Day No. 10. Standing Orders provide that he cannot anticipate that. He is permitted to speak in this regard so long as he does not refer to Order of the Day No. 10 or to the general context of the motion. I ask the member for his co-operation.

Mr T. H. JONES: Having said what I wanted to say, I will now accept your point of order, Sir.

I am concerned with the spread of fruit fly in Western Australia. There is an urgent need for the matter to be examined. The Minister could not deny that the existing scheme is not working satisfactorily in the interests of the fruit-growing areas of Western Australia. There are 25 schemes operating, and another 26 schemes exist in name only. The scheme is breaking down.

The Minister knows that the situation in Collie is that half the town is covered by the compulsory fruit-fly baiting scheme and half the town is not. This problem is exercising the minds of the local people, especially those involved in the fruit-growing industry.

The problem is also worrying the people of the Donnybrook area. I received a letter from the secretary of the Donnybrook Fruit-Growers Association on the 14th March this year. The association asked me to support the local committee in its efforts to have something done in this regard. I have mentioned previously, but it will bear mentioning again, that even in the Minister's own area concern has been expressed. On the 16th March a shire meeting was held in Darkan. The meeting called on the Government to take positive action to review the existing provisions. A report appeared in the *South Western Times* of the 30th March indicating that the matter had been discussed by the Collie Shire, and that concern was being expressed.

It would be fair to the Minister to say that some action was taken following the deputation. I have correspondence that the Minister wrote to the secretary of the fruit-fly baiting committee dated the 12th October, 1978, in which the Minister asked the committee for its views on improving the existing provisions contained in the Act. In a lengthy letter to the Minister on the 23rd October, the secretary set out the points to be considered in relation to its problem.

The Minister has made additional finance available to the committee at Collie in response to one of the main aspects raised. It was claimed that there was a lack of departmental inspectors.

Members will recall that when the scheme was first introduced regular visits were made by agricultural inspectors to see whether people were picking old fruit off the ground. Concern was expressed, and this problem was closely watched by the Department of Agriculture of Western Australia. Of course, the supervision has fallen by the wayside. Anyone could go into a fruit-growing area of this State and see fruit lying on the ground in almost every back-yard orchard.

This is the reason I introduced a deputation to the Minister. We said that the scheme was not working. There are only 25 schemes operating. Fruit growers themselves are calling on the Government to do something about the problem.

The shires are concerned. I do not think the Minister can deny that. There is room for improvement. That is why, by way of deputation, I asked the Minister to review the existing provisions with a view to stiffening the legislation. I hope the Minister will be able to indicate to us tonight action in line with the motion moved by the member for Warren, and in view of my comments that some positive action should be taken in relation to this matter.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [9.50 p.m.]: I thank the members for their contributions to the debate.

I point out to the member for Warren that the increase in expenditure in the Consolidated Revenue Estimates for the Department of Agriculture vote for this year is 14.08 per cent, and not 12 per cent as indicated by him. In a time of budgetary problems, and a time of inflation, this is a reasonable increase.

I have noted the remarks of the member for Warren about the concern expressed in relation to the beekeeping industry, and I know this is also an interest of your, Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie). I would like to say that I share the sentiments of the member. This is an important industry. It is important, not only from an income point of view, but, as the member pointed out, from an ecological point of view also. I have spoken on this matter on many occasions, both in answer to questions and on motions. On each occasion I have pointed out that there is inspection and certification by officers of the Departments of Agriculture in this State and in Queensland and New South Wales.

It is a fact that since the matter was first discussed the situation in South Australia has deteriorated to the point where the whole of South Australia is now a declared area. Therefore, there are no imports from South Australia. Whilst the situation in northern New South Wales

and Queensland is that those areas are certified as being free of the European foul brood disease, there is nothing we can do under section 92 of the Constitution to inhibit the import of honey and queen bees from those States.

As the member for Warren pointed out, the fact that there would be a shortage of honey on the shelves in the stores would be detrimental to the industry.

I do not think the member was indicating any malpractice on the part of departmental officers in other States who are certifying freedom from European foul brood in the areas from which honey and queen bees are imported. I repeat, now that the member has returned to the Chamber, that I share his concern about the industry. I can assure him that every effort is being made to ensure that only clean or sterilised honey and queen bees from foul brood free areas are being brought into this State.

The member mentioned that he had asked a question. It is possible I will not be able to answer that question tonight, so perhaps I should give some indication of the situation in Western Australia. Recently there has been an inspection by officers of the Department of Agriculture in the areas of Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun, Narrogin, Cowaramup, Margaret River, Bussellton, and Glen Eagle. This was a routine inspection to detect brood abnormalities. The inspection was entirely satisfactory, and only one hive infected with American foul brood was discovered. The hive was destroyed. American foul brood has been known in Western Australia for many years. It does not have the ramifications of European foul brood.

I assure the member that officers of the department are conscious of the necessity to maintain close surveillance of the industry. I am pleased that the member knew of that inspection. It was my intention to raise the matter tonight. That indicates the member's interest. It also indicates the intense interest and concern of my department in this regard.

Mr H. D. Evans: Has anybody from the department gone east for a first-hand inspection?

Mr OLD: Yes. Officers were in South Australia prior to the complete close-down over there.

In relation to the matter of Mediterranean fruit fly, this is a matter which is always of some concern. This year there was an amendment to the Act to enable the streamlining of the winding-up of inactive committees. The number of active committees has declined seriously over the last few years. This is due partly to lack of interest

by householders, and in some cases to hostility by householders. It is also due to lack of people willing to serve on the committees.

When the legislation was introduced, it was felt by some that with the promulgation of the legislation there would be further deterioration in the number of committees. The opposite effect has taken place. Since the amendment was promulgated, three more shires have applied for and have formed fruit-fly baiting committees. This is very encouraging. In addition, interest has been shown by some of the committees which have been in recess. There is a possibility of regenerating interest in some areas. In other areas there is a total lack of interest, and some committees will be wound up in the future.

Mr H. D. Evans: What is the number of active schemes?

Mr OLD: Off the top of my head, it would be about 30. That is a guesstimate.

The department and the Government have invested in a radioactive cobalt gun to help in the attack by biological control of Mediterranean fruit fly. That indicates the concern and interest in this very important industry. If the machine did not go into operation today, it will in fact start within the next day or two. The experiments will take place at Carnarvon.

The sterilisation of the fruit fly and the release of the sterilised fruit fly is an interesting concept. In some countries it has been highly successful. I understand that in other countries the success rate has been very low. Obviously the rate of success has to do with local conditions. We hope that the conditions in Western Australia will suit the biological control to be undertaken. If it is effective I anticipate that the problem, whilst not disappearing—that would be a nice thing to hope for—will be brought under control.

As the member for Warren pointed out, the main problem today is with the backyard fruit grower, not the commercial grower. The commercial grower has available to him chemicals which ensure good control of fruit fly in orchards.

There were problems in Donnybrook earlier this year, and the matter was raised by the member for Collie. Upon investigation it was found that most of the problem was due to lack of delivery of equipment. I understand that since then the equipment has been delivered and the activities of the baiting programme have commenced and the problem has decreased. I understand that since the equipment was delivered the situation has become reasonable.

As far as Collie is concerned, it is a fact that the honourable member brought a deputation to see me and we discussed various problems some of which were most serious. It was my opinion that the gentlemen of that committee were very conscientious in endeavouring to instigate good control in the Collie area, but they had the problem of a split area where the Collie township was covered by a fruit-fly baiting scheme, but the neighbouring areas were not.

Since then I have corresponded with the Collie Fruit-fly Baiting Scheme and I have made available some money in an endeavour to get it operating again. I am pleased to report that the last communication I had from that group expressed some enthusiasm and optimism as to future control. I can assure the member for Collie that we will be keeping a close watch on the baiting situation in that area and we will make every endeavour to have inspectors available as and when required. He can count on the closest co-operation in this regard.

Mr T. H. Jones: What about the other areas? What about the problems in Darkan and Bridgetown?

Mr OLD: Darkan has now set up a fruit-fly baiting committee. It has been done only recently. A poll has been conducted there in the last few weeks and funds are being made available now for the first period of operation. It will be in operation soon.

Bridgetown is a bad area. It has been a problem area and no doubt there is a great deal of room for improvement there. We hope we will be able to bring the problem under control.

I can assure the member for Collie that we are very conscious of the problem and of the importance of it to the fruit-growing industry.

The level of charges at Midland Junction Abattoir is a matter on which there has been some comment. It is regrettable that it has been necessary for the WA Meat Commission to increase killing charges. It does seem to be an anachronism that we have only just passed legislation to allow the commission to offer discounts and the killing charges have now gone up. The increase has been reasonably moderate; but nevertheless it is a move in the wrong direction. There is nothing I should like more than to see killing charges come down. With the new operation and the ability of the commission to offer discounts for contracted amounts of stock, it will be able to enter into contracts with wholesalers which will reduce their slaughter fees and it will encourage wholesalers

to look at their own operations and endeavour to enter into a contract and give a guaranteed supply of livestock.

I have stated previously and I shall state again the future of the Midland Junction Abattoir. The Government is not closing it. It is putting the beef and mutton chains under care and maintenance. The beef chain is still working and will continue to work whilst the number of cattle coming into Midland Junction Abattoir enables it to work. Cattle numbers have been reasonably good recently and I understand the beef floor is still operational. The lamb kill has fallen off very suddenly from approximately 84 000 two weeks ago to a figure of around 25 000 this week. This has created problems. It was announced previously to the Chamber that when the lamb kill reduced to the stage that Robb Jetty Abattoir could handle it comfortably, the operation would be concentrated on that abattoir which is able to work more efficiently, and that is what is happening.

I have endeavoured to keep Midland Junction Abattoir afloat by various means. The member for Warren stated correctly that the commission had been investigating the possibility of some type of lease arrangement in an endeavour to keep it operational. Let me say that part of the problem at Midland Junction Abattoir—and it is only part of the problem—is the award by which the workers are covered.

Originally the pig floor was to be closed as well and unfortunately we had lost one of the bigger operators. However, there are very definite, encouraging indications that we may be able to obtain a number of operators which will enable the Midland Junction pig floor to be kept in operation. In fact it is almost a certainty that we will be able to do so. It is my personal desire to keep it going, because it is the only export pig floor in Western Australia. That is not terribly important, because there is not a big export trade; but we do have a moderate export trade to Mauritius and it is, therefore, very handy to have Midland Junction Abattoir to cater for that particular trade.

I can give the honourable member an assurance that the Government is putting the chains under care and maintenance. Originally the WA Meat Commission recommended to the Government that the chains should be mothballed. When I went into the ramifications of mothballing I found that to bring them into operation again could take up to six or eight months, because all the motors are lacquered and everything has to be taken to pieces and started again. Instead of putting it in mothballs, I suggested we should

keep it under care and maintenance, thus employing a certain number of engineers. This will ensure that, as and when the Midland Junction Abattoir is required, it can be opened within a matter of days.

I have given an assurance that there will be an adequate kill for the peak lamb season and I reiterate that assurance tonight. That is the reason the Midland Junction Abattoir will be under care and maintenance.

South Australia is held up to me as a shining example of how one should run a State-owned meatworks. In case the honourable member did not happen to see an article in the paper approximately two days ago, I should like to advise him that SAMCOR, despite the fact that it has downgraded the Gepps Cross works from a local works to an export works, is in trouble. The article speculated, as a result of information received—I do not know whether or not it was from the Government—that the indications were the losses would be a great deal higher this year than they were last year.

This is causing concern to the Government and the article went on to say that investigations are being made into the sale or lease of Gepps Cross. That is a fairly drastic move and it is one which we are not taking in this State despite the rumours circulating that we intend to demolish the Midland Junction Abattoir and sell the land for real estate. This is not so. However, we have to plan ahead, because in the foreseeable future circumstances will dictate that an abattoir is not acceptable in a built-up area such as Midland. The Government acknowledges this and it has spent a great deal of money in an endeavour to keep under control the objectionable odours emitted from the Midland Junction Abattoir. We have succeeded to a large degree in achieving this aim, but the time will come when an industry such as the livestock industry will not be acceptable in the middle of what is becoming a built-up area.

When that situation occurs the Government will have to be ready and it will have to have available a site at least to erect a minimal type of works to cater for the lamb kill which I hope and am sure will be ever-increasing.

Mr McIver: There is plenty of land in Northam.

Mr OLD: I agree with the honourable member. I believe the Northam Council is very interested in looking at the situation itself.

In regard to saleyards, members are probably aware that the Farmers' Union has indicated it would prefer to see the saleyards closed. I do not go along with that suggestion. A working

party has been looking at the subject and it is due to report to me within the next couple of days. I understand the report I shall receive will be inconclusive; in other words, one side will say the saleyards should be closed, and the other side will say they should be kept open.

It is essential that the Midland saleyards be kept open; but in time evolution will dictate that they be phased out and that stock will be sold on the hook by classification. Anybody who is involved in the stock industry will recognise this fact. The stock firm will still have a very major part to play in the sale not only of fat stock, but also of store stock which is a very big industry and many saleyards cater mainly for store stock at this stage.

The member for Warren mentioned a couple of items on which I shall have to comment briefly. One matter related to the natural disaster relief fund. I can only say I am extremely proud of the record of this Government in relation to its handling of natural disasters. For the first time in history low-interest loans have been made available to people who have suffered as the result of a natural disaster. It would be most unfair for a person to indicate that those loans have not been generous both in size and in distribution.

Certainly we are concerned about the formula regarding State contributions and we have taken some action in an endeavour to have it rationalised; but that will not effect the availability of funds for natural disaster relief, because an amount has been budgeted which will allow us to receive the same amount of money. In other words, we have budgeted on the new formula, because we know that we have to be prepared for natural disasters at any time.

Further, I appreciate the concern of the member for Warren, because it is a matter which is of concern to all of us.

With regard to the money held in reserve by the Egg Marketing Board I should like to say I am currently looking into this matter. I cannot give a specific answer tonight; but the Egg Board is conscious of the necessity for a reserve to replace some of its machinery and also to create more storage. Members are well aware that currently an operation is taking place south of the river—members know where it is, although I cannot recall the name of the suburb at this time—and an operation is taking place also at Robb Jetty. It would be of advantage to the Egg Board if it could centralise its operations.

I do not think this would be *ultra vires* the Act; but I am certainly not able to make that statement here tonight. The Auditor General

would be very quick to point out to the Egg Marketing Board that its actions were *ultra vires* if in fact they were. A programme of expenditure by the Egg Marketing Board will be made available soon.

We have liberalised licences in the north. Since the passing of the amendment to the Act a number of licences have been issued north of the 26th parallel. I am issuing them currently as applied for, because I do not feel we are in a position to say, "You can have so many and you cannot." If someone applies for a licence to run 1 000 birds, and if he gives an undertaking to comply with the Act, the licence will be issued to run the 1 000 birds. Obviously there must be a stop, but presently we are issuing enough licences in the north in an endeavour to provide eggs locally to people in the north-west.

There is no way in the world we could adopt the same system in a place such as Bunbury, as much as I would like to, because the honourable member is well aware that hen licences are negotiable and as such they have a value. It is impossible to take away a licence from someone and give it to someone else. If a person in Bunbury wants a licence, he can go onto the market and buy it.

Mr H. D. Evans: What is the position in regard to the prognosis of marketing? New licences will have to be issued eventually.

Mr OLD: At this stage licences are still being cut so we have not reached that happy situation yet. Those are my comments, Sir.

Vote: Agriculture, \$25 356 000—put and passed.

Part 5: Minister for Works and Tourism:—

DR DADOUR (Subiaco) [10.16 p.m.]: My problem concerns Shenton Park. Any person who has recently moved through Shenton Park, Daglish, Jolimont, Subiaco, and Floreat Park will have noticed a most repulsive smell. I refer to the smell which comes from the sewerage works at Shenton Park. As far as I am concerned, this has been a constant indictment of the Government, and it has been going on for a long time. In fact, it has worsened. Earlier this year I wrote to the previous Minister for Works, and I pointed out to him that the stench was becoming worse. Some work was done in an effort to obviate the smell, but two weeks ago it changed its quality. Before the recent treatment, there was some slight doubt that the smell might not have been sewage, but since the new treatment has been instituted there certainly is no doubt. It can be cut with a knife. It is a stinking faecal smell. It reminded me of

the yarn about the man who found a bugle in the sewage; he blew motions out of it. I think that is self-explanatory.

Mr Pearce: Do you know any better jokes?

Dr DADOUR: The letter I wrote to the then Minister for Works was dated the 16th March, 1978, and was as follows—

Dear Mr O'Connor,

I wish to bring to your attention the stench that emanates from the Sewerage works in Shenton Park, and which hovers over parts of my Electorate. I do realise that the stench is not dangerous to life, but My God, it can be unbearable. Now, irrespective of the unusual climatic conditions of this summer, the stench is always there in varying degree. I would like to remind you that we are living in the 20th century and this bloody stench is unacceptable and intolerable.

Past Ministers' answers have been unsatisfactory; either it is due to the stillness of the air or else it is due to the heat, but I will remind you that the smell is still there! Now, for the solution. It has just got to stop, the concept is entirely wrong. We need to have our priorities correctly assessed, so the system must change and it appears to me that a number of Parliamentarians and Public Servants have gone to other countries and studied their waste disposal problems. Why can we not learn from them? I do know it is expensive but then so is building of hospitals and schools and surely a priority would be to get rid of the smell for I can assure you that the capital outlay in health and schools should be of a very very low order.

This Government of ours is as stagnant as the smell in Shenton Park. I await your reply and I hope you get on with it.

Yours sincerely,

The Minister replied to my letter and, after acknowledging it, he told me what was needed: a sum of \$13 million to upgrade the sewerage works. Apparently that was too much to spend, so the department settled for the advice of two Americans. A news release dated the 27th July, 1978, referred to this matter and states—

The Minister for Water Supplies, Mr R. J. O'Connor, said today the Metropolitan Water Board hopes that odour problems at the Shenton Park sewerage treatment plant will be a thing of the past.

About \$250 000 will be spent this financial year on dosing the sewage in the main sewers with sodium hydroxide.

This, says overseas consultants, should combat the organism and the chemical reactions within the mains, which have in the past produced offensive smells.

Last month two American experts, Mr Robert Kachinski and Mr Anton Kalinske, visited Perth to study the problem. They are both vice-presidents of Camp, Dresser and McKee, America's biggest environmental engineering firm.

The consultants also recommend that raw sewage at the treatment plant should not be pre-aerated but that the present chlorination be continued.

With these changes they anticipate the modified activated sludge process can be operated at a higher concentration, thereby improving plant efficiency.

The Board has adopted these recommendations and has already established three chemical dosing points.

More detailed testing is being continued under manual control, pending delivery of automatic control equipment.

The plant will be operated under the changed mode through the coming summer.

The Consultants have also recommended that the MWB continues its investigations of the use of hydrogen peroxide and pure oxygen for improving the treatability of wastewater, and measures will be tried in the other plant systems.

The Consultants are also being asked by the Board to review the treatment plant units and advise whether any of these should be renewed or modified for the future.

I do not know what happened but I can tell members that the stench became worse than ever. The stench has nothing to do with the strike which recently occurred; it was there long before the strike. What I go crook about is that the smell emanates in Floreat Park. I do not know what the local member does about it, but I know that I am trying to do something for my electors. A sum of \$250 000 has been spent and wasted because the smell is still there. It is nauseating. I have received a number of calls about it, and about how much worse it had become.

We will celebrate our 150th birthday next year and the smell will not be a very good advertisement for Western Australia.

Mr Davies: They will be able to can it.

Mr Bryce: Make it a vintage year!

Dr DADOUR: The treatment plant is in Floreat Park where people paid high prices for land, with the smell thrown in. The smell has been there for a long time, and I object to it coming into the Subiaco electorate. It is all right if the smell stays only in Floreat Park, or if it goes to Scarborough, but I do not want it in my electorate. Unfortunately, as a result of some tree felling near the treatment plant, the smell now spreads to Subiaco, Daglish, and Jolimont, which are all in my electorate.

The stench from the treatment plant will remind us that we are 150 years old—judging by the smell. It is obvious that the consultants from America are trying to kill us off as they did Phar Lap.

Mr Bertram: They try to kill off all the champions.

Dr DADOUR: There is a need for some priority with regard to these works. They are overloaded, most certainly, and something has to be done very quickly.

Mr Bertram: There was a lot of publicity a couple of months ago. It was supposed to be all fixed up.

Dr DADOUR: I have just read out the reference. A photograph appeared in the northern supplement of *The West Australian* dated the 5th April, 1978. It shows the Minister for Works at the time (Mr O'Connor), the Minister for Industrial Development, and three people from the department. I was invited to attend on that occasion but I could not make it. However, the smell is there and it has to go. We have to look at the overall picture. A sum of \$13 million is not very much when one thinks about what has been spent already.

Mr Bertram: That is as much money as the interest accrued on short-term investments.

Dr DADOUR: A considerable sum of money is wasted on buildings, and it seems that priorities do not exist in this State. I always thought we had some priorities or some form of guidelines about capital expenditure. It is quite obvious that sewerage takes last place.

A sum of \$12 million, \$13 million, or \$14 million is needed to put things in order. Ample land is available at Shenton Park; it was originally part of the university endowment land about which I spoke the other day. However, that does not make the situation any better or any worse.

We have our 150th anniversary next year, and we do not want that smell to be with us then. If it is still with us, we do not want anyone to know about it.

I notice also under this item that some money will go from the Consolidated Revenue Fund into loans.

Mr Bertram: That is a popular trick now.

Mr DADOUR: The money goes into buildings. I want to make the statement that I will vote against item 27 for the simple reason that if any of that money is going towards the northern block of the Royal Perth Hospital, I do not want anything to do with it. I cannot live with that sort of thing.

We talk about priorities in Western Australia. Well, almost \$100 million will be spent on the north block of the Royal Perth Hospital, which is not needed. The priority does not exist, and how the expenditure came about I will never know. I had been given a firm undertaking that this would not occur, but it did.

Mr Bertram: How much will it cost?

Dr DADOUR: It will cost \$100 million in the long term by the time it is equipped. And it will not provide one bed.

Mr Bertram: How much is coming out of revenue?

Dr DADOUR: I have not been able to ascertain where all the money will come from, but \$9 570 000 will come from Consolidated Revenue under item No. 27.

Mr H. D. Evans: What is the north block for?

Dr DADOUR: To provide better facilities for those working there. We have more teaching beds than we need. I want it known that I will vote against money for the building of the north block. This will be eight storeys of sheer luxury—and we are sweltering here without air-conditioning.

I have already referred to the most important item of sewerage. Members are welcome to visit my electorate and to have a good old sniff. The smell goes up Selby Street, Nash Street, under the Nicholson Road Subway, and takes a sweep up Gloster Street. I do not know why the people in Gloster Street should cop the smell. It does not go to the lake.

Mr Bertram: What about Perry Lakes?

Dr DADOUR: If the member goes running there, he will run out of wind very quickly. When the easterly wind is blowing the smell goes back to Floreat; where it should be. I thank you for your indulgence, Mr Chairman.

MR BRYCE (Ascot—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.32 p.m.]: I would like to refer to two specific items in this part. The member for Subiaco commented very briefly on the lack of

air-conditioning in Parliament House, and I wish to refer to this, and also to the plight of the work force at the State Engineering Works.

I am surprised and somewhat disappointed that there is no reference in the Estimates to the air-conditioning of Parliament House. I realise that the total sum could not be provided in one Budget, but surely some amount could be set aside for some part of the building.

Obviously the Minister for Works will be the Minister responsible for providing this service. No member in the Chamber at the moment could argue against the need for air-conditioning. We frequently have visitors to this building from our own electorates, from interstate, and from overseas, and it is amazing how frequently these visitors express surprise that the State's capital building is not air-conditioned. I hasten to add, for the record, that that statement is not true for the entire building. The bar is air-conditioned, and one wonders whether that is because, in the view of some people, the big decisions are made and the hard work is done there. The dining room is air-conditioned.

Mr Skidmore: You must be joking now.

Mr BRYCE: Presumably that is to impress visitors; both the Cabinet and the general dining room are air-conditioned.

Mr Coyne: It would not be because it is more practical to do those areas, would it?

Mr BRYCE: I will come to the question of practicality. It is mind-boggling to realise that the new wing is not air-conditioned. This would be the only building of any size and substance erected in our capital city in the last 10 years that is not air-conditioned. That is not because of a matter of practicality.

Mr Coyne: Is your home air-conditioned?

Mr BRYCE: No, my home is not air-conditioned.

Mr Coyne: Neither is mine, and I can put up with the 14 days a year it is uncomfortable.

Mr BRYCE: Might I say: bully for the member for Murchison-Eyre! He may one day wake up and realise that his sleepy lack of productivity may be improved if he has the opportunity to work in an air-conditioned building. That is the consensus of the work force generally. I am not referring to my own productivity; if it becomes too miserably uncomfortable here, I work in my constituency office which, I am pleased to say, is air-conditioned.

This is not just a matter of the productivity of members of Parliament; we must consider the people who spend their working lives here. The

library is another section of the building that is air-conditioned, and I presume that is for the benefit of the books!

If one works in the bar or in the library, Parliament House is not too bad a place to work, but I would like to make a plea on behalf of all the secretaries who work in the front section of the building—the only part of the building in which I have been domiciled during my seven years here—where the poor conditions are chronic. It is not just a question of the hot air generated in this Chamber, and every member, including the member for Darling Range, has expressed in one way or another his dissatisfaction with the lack of airconditioning in the Chamber in the last few days.

I am not suggesting that this State should find an enormous amount of money to rival the extravagance of a decision made earlier today in the national capital. Apparently all the Federal members of Parliament have decided that it is quite justifiable to spend between \$150 million and \$250 million on a new national Parliament House. I am not advocating anything like that, but I am advocating that over a period of years we should work towards air-conditioning the building.

I am not being critical of this Government alone; I raised this matter when I was a backbencher in the Tonkin Government and I was advised that no Government would be game enough to raise the money to air-condition Parliament House. I now have the distinct impression that that statement was quite true.

Mr MacKinnon: How much would it cost?

Mr Jamieson: The last estimate was about \$3.5 million.

Mr BRYCE: That is a fairly significant sum. However, I do not shrink from the problem. We cannot put off a decision interminably. A sensible approach would be to allocate a sum of money in each Budget. Another approach would be to extend the air-conditioning in the building into every practical place. I disbelieved it a few years ago when someone suggested that the library would be air-conditioned, but for some unknown reason that did happen. I applaud the decision. We should look at the sections of the buildings which can be air-conditioned most inexpensively.

If one is lucky enough to be the House Controller or his secretary, the Leader of the Opposition or his secretary, then one enjoys air-conditioned working facilities. The people who work in the bar, the library, and the dining room are also lucky. However, if one happens to be

the Speaker, the President, or “just” an ordinary member of Parliament, or a staff member to any of those people, then one dare not raise one's voice in any forum to suggest that one's work place ought to be air-conditioned.

It is time someone suggested a scheme. The extensions to this Parliament cost nearly \$400 000 and looking at them it does make one wonder whether the Joint House Committee alone should grapple with this particular problem. It seems to me that with the amount involved the decision should be made by the Government.

It is staggering that a building as expensive and significant as the extension wing to this Parliament was erected without the inclusion of air-conditioning.

I would like to refer also to the State Engineering Works, as this comes within the responsibilities of the Minister for Works. Members are probably aware that of the approximate 320 to 330 people permanently and full-time employed by the State Engineering Works, approximately 50 face a distinctly uncertain future with the prospect of retrenchment staring them in the face.

During the course of a debate on another subject a short time ago, the Minister for Industrial Development and Mines indicated that the Government was not the slightest bit concerned about the welfare of State-owned enterprises or instrumentalities. He indicated in no uncertain terms that the Government's ideological commitment was to private enterprise, and so it devoted its energies, resources, and time, to that end.

In this year of 1978 we are facing a situation where more people are out of work than at any other time in the State's history since the depression; and yet, at the same time, the Minister for Works indicates that the Government is preparing to quite callously retrench—a nice euphemism for the word “sack”—50 tradesmen, essentially boilermakers and carpenters, at the State Engineering Works. There is a very simple explanation for this, but a number of reasonable alternatives which would save the jobs of these workers are open to the Government. The Government is well aware of these alternatives.

According to the Budget papers, the State Engineering Works should make a profit of \$600 000 in the forthcoming financial year. Contrary to the suggestion made to the Chamber by way of interjection by the member for Gascoyne during an earlier debate on this subject, the State Engineering Works has a very proud history of profitability over a long period of years, unlike so many other “bogeys” such as

Westrail and the MTT. These instrumentalities are blandly disregarded as public enterprise or public utilities, and they have continuously made a loss. Since its inception the State Engineering Works has contributed between \$5 million and \$6 million to the Consolidated Revenue of this State. For the last five or six years, without exception, the State Engineering Works has operated with a surplus.

Mr Bertram: How much per year?

Mr BRYCE: I do not have the annual figures, but the total surplus is somewhere between \$5 million and \$6 million, which goes straight into the Consolidated Revenue.

The reality is that because the Government is allowing its actions to be dominated by the tunnel vision which results from wearing a set of fairly inflexible ideological blinkers, it is prepared to say to the workers at the State Engineering Works, "For ideological reasons we are prepared to sack you and we are making provision for this in this year's Budget." This year's allocation to the salaries and wages at the State Engineering Works has been reduced by \$391 000 from the previous financial year. It is obvious the Government is getting ready to sack these people and is taking the financial considerations in hand at this stage. It is doing its bookwork and its homework, getting ready for the day it will sack these men for ideological reasons.

I wonder how many Ministers of this Government would have the courage to go down to the State Engineering Works, hop up on a stump, and tell those very clever and hard-working tradesmen, "We are going to sack you because of our ideological beliefs. We do not approve of you working for the State Engineering Works and making a profit. We are going to sack you despite the fact you have worked on so many Government projects, and despite the fact the State Engineering Works has been a very profitable enterprise. We will overlook the fact we have budgeted for a profit of \$600 000 this year. Although we can afford to pay your wages, we are going to sack you for ideological reasons."

This Government has in its hand the solution to the problem which confronts the State Engineering Works. Like so many other engineering companies in Western Australia, the State Engineering Works needs contracts. As I understand it, at present there are approximately 15 major Government contracts ranging from work which needs to be done for the State Energy Commission and various Government departments to a whole range of other works, and some of these

contracts should be given to the State Engineering Works. Even if only one or two contracts were given to the works, that would be sufficient to justify the retention of the present level of the work force.

It really is the epitome of duplicity for a Government to say on the hustings that within a short space of time the people of Western Australia would be back at work and then, in various ways over a long period—because four years certainly is a long period—to express its concern about people without jobs and about the rising rate of unemployment and yet at the same time, being prepared to sack 50 people who work at the State Engineering Works.

All the Government needs to do is one of two things: It can decide to use some of the estimated profit of \$600 000 for 1978-79 to pay the salaries of these people to keep them employed, or it can solve the problem on the basis of sensible, economic viability by allocating one or more of these very important Government contracts which need to be fulfilled. Instead the Government is preparing to spend millions of dollars with private enterprise.

Sir Charles Court: Are you fully informed as to the way in which the State Engineering Works obtains its work, and that the Government is embarking on a programme of capital investment at the State Engineering Works?

Mr BRYCE: I am fully informed that the capital investment to which the Premier refers involves the allocation of \$1 million to rebuild the foundry, and that there is a range of other aspects relating to machinery, plant, and equipment.

Sir Charles Court: It defeats your own argument. You are giving the impression that, for ideological reasons, the place is being shut down. It is quite the reverse. The people at the State Engineering Works would be very grateful for the Government's rehabilitation programme.

Mr BRYCE: Is the Premier prepared to tell this Committee now that he is quite happy to put his ideological prejudices to one side and ensure that the State Engineering Works receives a significant contract?

Sir Charles Court: The State Engineering Works has been very happy with its share of the engineering industry of this State over a long period. You are obviously not informed about how it competes for its work, and the type of work it carries out.

Mr BRYCE: I am well informed.

Sir Charles Court: Somebody should inform you more fully. What you are saying is, "To hell with the people who work in private enterprise!"

Mr BRYCE: No, I am not. What I have been trying to do in the last 15 minutes is penetrate the Premier's thick hide in respect of the fact that he is sitting in the box seat; he has the solution in the palm of his hand. He does not need to retrench these 50 people. All he has to do—

Sir Charles Court: Is sack some other men.

Mr BRYCE: I am not suggesting that at all. If the State Engineering Works is allocated a couple of the 15 significant Government contracts about to be let, the Premier will not need to sack these men. Instead, however, he is prepared to make a conscious decision as the Leader of the Government not to lift a finger to help this utility, but to sack 50 men—men with wives and children.

Sir Charles Court: You are talking absolute rot!

Mr BRYCE: The Premier knows very well that if his Government wanted to influence one of these decisions—

Sir Charles Court: I am not going to direct work to the State Engineering Works.

Mr BRYCE: Of course not, because the Premier is ideologically opposed to the principle of a Government works making a profit, and operating successfully in private enterprise. He would much rather sack 50 men from an enterprise which has run profitably for a long time, and give the work to private enterprise. I am sure that if the Premier thought he could make a quid out of it, he would probably sell the works tomorrow.

Sir Charles Court: Other than that, we could sack other people.

Mr BRYCE: No, I am suggesting that as the head of the Government, the Premier has a responsibility to ensure that those 50 men are not sacked, that their families are not faced with the prospect of unemployment.

Sir Charles Court: You are saying the Government should sack others.

Mr BRYCE: No, I am saying the Government should allocate a little more work to the State Engineering Works.

Sir Charles Court: You are the type of person who makes Governments withdraw from carrying out rehabilitation programmes.

Mr Mensaros: You are wrong about this. The State Engineering Works has never competed for major projects. They have a large part of the subcontracting work force.

Mr Jamieson: They are not allowed to compete for those contracts.

Sir Charles Court: It has a very defined role, and you are doing your darndest to upset it.

Mr BRYCE: And for ideological reasons, the Premier is quite happy to do to the State Engineering Works what he did to the State Government Insurance Office. I am sure that if the Premier had a few friends in his constituency who thought they could make a quid out of the State Engineering Works he would sell it to them tomorrow and he would set a very low price, too. The Premier's predecessor even took the foundry equipment out of the works.

Sir Charles Court: We are trying to rehabilitate it.

Mr BRYCE: I am talking about the Brand Government. The Premier should not sit there and suggest he is sympathetically disposed to this industry. We will find out next week; that will be the acid test.

Sir Charles Court: There was only one small part—the forging part—which was taken out of it. The programme at the moment is aimed at rehabilitating the works. Give credit where credit is due. If you want us to sack men in private enterprise, you should say so.

Mr BRYCE: I will not say that, because that is not my intention. However, I am not concerned only about private enterprise. The Premier well knows the ideological difference between members on this side, and those who sit behind him. We believe in providing the people with work.

Sir Charles Court: Get your facts right. You are not telling a fair story. You are doing the State Engineering Works an injustice and a disservice.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier knows that by this time next week the Government will have had to make a very serious decision on this matter. He knows that simply by waxing eloquent in this place and creating more hot air, and aggravating the problems for the rest of us, due to the lack of air-conditioning, he will not solve this problem. His hovercraft theory will not work in this case, because by this time next week, 50 men and their families will be facing unemployment. I understand that all but two or three of these people are skilled tradesmen, such as boilermakers, carpenters, and the like.

Sir Charles Court: Tell us which contracts you want the State Engineering Works to get so that we can establish which tradesmen in private industry will need to be sacked.

Mr BRYCE: Could I remind the Premier that he has the solution to the problem of retrenchments?

Sir Charles Court: There is only so much money.

Mr BRYCE: The allocation for salaries and wages this year is nearly \$400 000 less than last year. That is a net reduction on the amount of money allocated to the State Engineering Works.

Sir Charles Court: Don't you realise that is their budget, and that these people submit a budget just like an ordinary business?

Mr BRYCE: Presumably that indicates the decision has already been made.

Sir Charles Court: That was the budget submitted by the works, as a trading concern. You had better go down there and have a talk to the management.

Mr BRYCE: I will be there tomorrow, again. It will not be the first time I have been down there.

Sir Charles Court: You are not doing the works any credit by your propaganda.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier should have his attention drawn to the fact there are two solutions to this problem. It is not just a question of his Government putting a bit of work through to the State Engineering Works. He could ensure that these men are retained by utilising some of the \$603 000 surplus expected this financial year. Whilst the works have had a liquidity problem in the last few years, that money certainly can be used for salaries and wages this year.

I wish to conclude my remarks by saying it is very fine for the Premier to try to argue that the Labor Party wants to see people in private enterprise put out of work. However, he knows that is palpably untrue. We do not want to see anybody sacked. We want to see at least 98 per cent of the work force of this State—the realistic economic definition of full employment, apart from people who are seasonally out of work—back in employment. The Premier knows that is our position and I for one will not tolerate him attempting to mislead the public in this respect. He knows full well we do not want to see people sacked in any field of employment.

He also knows that if he were genuinely sympathetic to the people working at the State Engineering Works, he could do something from the position where he sits, calling the shots, to ensure those people are not unnecessarily sacked next week.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [10.58 p.m.]: I wish first to deal with the Ord River scheme, the farming projects under way up there, and the

assistance being given to those farmers. At present, experimental work is continuing on the Ord.

Earlier this year, I wrote to the Premier on this matter because I felt that sooner or later we would have to arrive at some sort of base crop. We have been going around in circles and not getting anywhere for too long. The people who, in the first place, claimed the Ord River would be a white elephant are quite happy with the present situation and as each day passes, they receive further justification for adopting that pessimistic outlook. However, I would hate to think we have such an asset in the north of which we are not making full use.

I see the possibility of getting anywhere with the experimentation we are presently indulging in as being very limited. We always have high hopes that sugar can be produced there, but if any more sugar is to be produced in Australia I know one Bjelke-Petersen would be very interested in extending his State's field of production. Having a considerable Commonwealth lobby, Queensland would get the market far quicker than we would.

There is no reason a base crop could not be grown, and my suggestion to the Premier was that experimentation should be undertaken in the production of grain alcohol for fuel purposes. This has been undertaken in a number of places around the world. The Premier's figures seemed quite exorbitant and heavily loaded against such a project. They appeared to be about four times the equivalent of the costs for such production in Brazil. When I get my final figures I will have more to say on this.

We should be looking at the establishment of a pilot plant in this field. We have all the facilities there to create some sort of factory environment in that we have the availability of fuel to provide cheap electricity in the hydro-electricity tail race on the dam which needs only to have the generation equipment attached to it. This would be somewhat costly, but not as costly as other projects we are undertaking.

I notice the agricultural experiments are all listed against the Public Works Department for some reason or other. They should not be; they should be the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. The engineering has been done; the matters being experimented on do not include whether or not one can move water from one area to another, but whether one can grow a viable crop. We still see many items such as the Ord River farmers' assistance, agricultural experi-

ments, and the sugar industry feasibility study being listed against the engineering services of the Public Works Department.

This should not be the case. This work should be charged against the Department of Agriculture, which is where it should rightly apply. There are a number of other matters associated with the operations at the Ord, such as the Kununurra Airport operation to which a grant of \$106 000 has been made. There has been an allocation of \$184 000 for the running of the Kununurra Hostel, and \$42 000 allocated for the Kununurra townsite services, including publicity. Without the possibility of getting this money back, and unless we can find a good base crop that earns money each year so that we do get money back, we will be putting more and more money down the irrigation drains of the Ord River.

We should be setting our target at the specific type of activity of growing grain for fuel. This becomes like a permanent oil well because we have the sunshine, the land, and the necessary water. We will be able to determine the exact amount to be produced. Because of the vast quantities of water available there is no possibility of drought affecting the work in the area. There is certainly no possibility we will not have the sunshine, and I cannot imagine the land will disappear. This illustrates we do have the necessary ingredients.

I had the privilege to talk to one of the Ministers of the Japanese Parliament who seemed to be quite interested in this idea. Anything that represents a source of oil which will not go dry is of interest to the Japanese. I suggested he should be doing some negotiating with the Western Australian Government to try to foster such a scheme, even if it was on the basis of sharing the product from the project. There does not seem to be much hope of this, because we seem to have reached the stage where, unless someone connected with the Liberals suggests something, it is not considered to be a viable or reasonable proposition. I doubt whether any great consideration will be given to this idea, but in the long run I think this will be one of the ways we will be able to get over the problems in the Ord region.

The beef and grain-growing projects do not seem to be producing all that much return and what is needed is a big base crop that will fill the void to allow us some development in the area. I think if the Kimberley can be developed to produce fuel for motor vehicles from plant life either in the form of sugarcane—or a number of other varieties that are used

throughout the world—then the same procedure adopted at the Ord could be repeated in the Fitzroy and other large river basins. There would be almost unlimited supplies of fuel produced from such projects.

This is quite necessary for us to consider because beef has been over-produced. The possibility of the abattoirs in the region remaining open and viable for any long period of time seems to be disappearing. Our chances of getting increased markets for our beef overseas also seems to be very limited.

If we really could get the Japanese interested in the area we might be able to extend our operations into some form of food production suitable for that country. Seeing the way they produce their food, I would not suggest rice should be produced because the Japanese Government has so much rice it is rolling out of its bins and it is wanting people to produce less. They find it hard to keep going with the guaranteed price. There is a possibility of rice being grown there for some other Asian countries.

These items, as I say, are still being listed as engineering services when they are not. They have not been for years, and they should be correctly placed in some other part of the Estimates where they can be dealt with properly in accordance with what they are.

The other matter I want to make some reference to is tourism. In the next year the Government's principal Minister will be the one who fishes in a boat at the back of Rottnest and who is seen on television in this role. He will be directly responsible for the 150th anniversary celebrations. I would like him to be reminded again that in my opinion our money would be better spent in advertising on overseas television rather than our own television.

Everyone in Western Australia is acquainted with the fact that next year will be our 150th birthday. If the Government wants to gather overseas dollars—or whatever currency it might be—it should try to do what I have said. So far as I have been able to ascertain we have not done a great deal of overseas advertising.

There are a number of other items that are covered by part 5 of the Estimates but generally they are mundane items, such as buildings and salaries and the running of the Public Works Department. They are stereotype items which I shall not comment on. I suggest the Minister pays some attention to transferring the matters I mentioned to a more suitable department in future Budget Estimates.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [11.10 p.m.]: I was interested to hear from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when he was commenting on the State Engineering Works that money is about to be spent for new machinery, plant, and equipment, and for the rebuilding of a foundry. I understand some of the money is coming from loan moneys, and the rest is coming from accumulated profits from the State Engineering Works.

I should have thought that accumulated profits of the State Engineering Works would be money which would be regarded as money which belongs not to the Loan Fund, but more properly to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. I would be very pleased if someone who knows the answer would inform the Committee just how much of this money to be used for the purposes mentioned will actually come from accumulated profits of the State Engineering Works, and how many years of accumulation that represents. I would like to know also whether the money is going into Consolidated Revenue before it has been paid out, or whether the money is not going into Consolidated Revenue at all.

My view is very clearly that the profits should be going into Consolidated Revenue first, and then, if it is to be spent on the State Engineering Works, it should be sent back to it as required. I would be most interested to know the actual procedure of accounting. I would like to know where the profits of earlier years, and no longer in the accumulation fund, went. Did they go to Consolidated Revenue or the Loan Fund?

The Premier has informed us he is a great believer in compliance with the doctrine of consistency in accountancy, so I imagine that he for one would be only too pleased to show that what he is doing with the profits of the State Engineering Works is consistent with what has been done in years gone by.

I listened to a news item last night—I mention this because we are speaking under the heading of public works and buildings—and I heard something which I could not believe. I dismissed it as being obviously a false news item. However, when I picked up this morning's paper the news was there again. It was that the Government is in the process of permitting the building of a new structure by the SGIO. I understand from one of my colleagues that it will cost something like \$17 million.

Sir Charles Court: It is \$21.7 million.

MR BERTRAM: It seems to be an extraordinary thing for this Government to be supporting an enterprise which is so obviously non-private

enterprise. That is why I could not believe what I saw and heard on television last night, and I was not prepared to believe it until I saw it in print.

It is worth remembering that the SGIO commenced business roughly in the 1940s at the instance of a Labor Administration, and was obliged to function for about 10 years illegally before it was given lawful existence. Previously it was an illegitimate organisation. Here we are only a few years after that type of resistance and a Government of the same complexion is giving the SGIO a lift to the tune of \$21.7 million. The doctrine of consistency is accounting doctrine, but apparently does not have much validity from political and other standpoints.

So in a short space of time having taken every action to screw the neck of the SGIO and to squeeze it out of existence, this conservative Government is now giving it vitality, extra life, and no doubt greater efficiency, to the tune of \$21.7 million, but at the same time it maintains its limited franchise. Some ordinary, responsible people would think that if we were going to allow an edifice worth that much to be built, the enterprise occupying and using it should be given every opportunity to justify that sort of money and ensure that the return was adequate and that the organisation would not have all sorts of fetters and limitations placed upon its franchise.

The **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Watt): I remind the honourable member that the franchise of the SGIO has nothing to do with the part. I ask him to confine his remarks to the part.

MR BERTRAM: I will certainly do that although I would have thought that the capacity of an organisation to repay \$21.7 million would be extraordinarily relevant to that building. It is directly related to it. This money must be paid back.

Sir Charles Court: It has nothing to do with public works.

MR BERTRAM: Has it not?

Sir Charles Court: No, and for good reason.

MR BERTRAM: I am looking at the item of public works and buildings.

Sir Charles Court: It is not any of those either because it is within the funds of the SGIO which are held on behalf of policy holders anyway.

The **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Watt): That being the case—

Mr BERTRAM: I think the Premier's sentiments are more valid on the point than yours, Mr Deputy Chairman, but I have now covered the point.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I agree with your observation.

Mr BERTRAM: I would like now to deal with the extensions to the Parliament House building and have myself placed on record in the clearest and most unmistakable terms that I do not approve of the extensions. Earlier someone intimated that they would cost \$400 000. If that is the right figure, I would be staggered because work has been in progress for months. My own belief is that the cost will be closer to \$1 million than to \$400 000. Perhaps one of these days the evidence will be available to support that proposition.

It is most important that the public of Western Australia should know one of the main reasons for the extension of the building is that the number of members of Parliament, and as a consequence the staff is increasing. There was absolutely no justification for the membership of this Parliament to be increased.

Mr Pearce: Fair go! We got some good members out of that!

Mr BERTRAM: Yes, but we drew some crabs as well! There was absolutely no justification for the membership to be increased by six—two in the so-called upper House and four down here. I have gone through all this before, but it is highly relevant. It is one thing to tell the people of Western Australia there is no justification for it and it is another to tell them why. The people of Western Australia are entitled to know because they are paying for that venture. They are paying for the Premier's little venture of increasing the numbers for the obvious purpose of giving himself more power. They are paying for it and will pay for it in perpetuity.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order! I appreciate the argument the honourable member is trying to develop, but he must confine himself to public buildings and not develop an argument on electoral matters.

Mr BERTRAM: That almost has the effect of precluding me from developing my argument at all. The fact of the matter is that it is a public building. The Premier has not interjected with the explanation that this building does not come within this part.

Sir Charles Court: I did not refer to this building. This is a public building. I was talking about the SGIO.

Mr BERTRAM: That is so. In other words there is no question on this occasion that I am permitted in the broad to talk about the extensions to this building.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will explain my point of view. I have already indicated I have no objection to your discussing the building or the reason for its existence. I am telling you that you must not develop an argument on electoral matters.

Mr BERTRAM: I will not do that, but it is difficult to know just precisely where the line must be drawn.

The fact of the matter is that because of decisions taken by this Parliament and this Government in respect of which it had no mandate or authority at all there is a need for greater accommodation here and the extension of this building, which I estimate will cost at least \$1 million, is one of those costs, and it is important that the people of Western Australia should know that they are paying for this little venture about which they were not asked for an opinion or authority. They are having to pay for it. In the case of the building they must pay the immediate cost and then they will be asked to pay the interest for I do not know how many years. In addition to that they must pay members' salaries and office staff, and heaven knows what else to the tune of many hundreds of thousands of dollars per annum. That will go on for evermore.

That is sufficient on that subject. It is most important that the record be put straight so that people know why the building is being erected, who is paying for it now, and who will be paying for it in perpetuity.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [11.23 p.m.]: I think I should respond briefly to the debate, in view of the fact that the Minister is not in this Chamber and that the acting Minister in this place is not here because he is at an important Federal conference on labour and industry.

I first of all refer to the State Engineering Works. There must be some misunderstanding about the financing of these works. The fact is that they are being rehabilitated as a result of a policy decision by this Government. The members who have read the Budget speech in respect of the General Loan Fund will know that portion of it states that the State Engineering Works will spend \$1.7 million of which \$1 million has been allocated towards rebuilding the outdated foundry originally completed in 1913 and a further \$696 000 on machinery, plant, and equipment replacement primarily for the new foundry.

The member for Mt. Hawthorn requested information about the SEW and its method of accounting and how it handled its funds. I invite his attention to pages 165 to 167 of the Auditor General's report. The member for Mt. Hawthorn will find that the finances and general accounting of the SEW are set out by the Auditor General progressively for each year, and apart from the fact that the works form part of the Estimates we have before us, he should understand that part of the funding has to come from loan funds which are allocated by the State Government to the SEW and part has to come from internal sources. Portion of that is generated from profit, part from the depreciation allowance and one or two other internal things which are generated within an organisation of this kind.

If the honourable member studies the Auditor General's report plus the SEW accounts he will find there is a logical sequence from year to year. Part of the works funds is provided by the Government, and part from the internal accounting machinery of the works themselves. I would have thought the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be conscious of the fact that the State Government has done something previous Governments should have done; that is, try to rehabilitate the works which have got to the stage where they are not only antiquated but, in some cases, distinctly dangerous.

Mr Davies: The Tonkin Government did quite a lot.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Government has made a decision to rehabilitate the works.

Mr Davies: The Tonkin Government was doing it progressively; it could not do it all at once.

Sir CHARLES COURT: There was a great neglect by successive Governments—

Mr Davies: We could not do the whole lot in three years.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —over a long period of time. A programme has been embarked upon by this Government. We could not do all the works wanted. One day the works will have to be shifted. I just want to remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Government has taken a positive step to improve the working conditions—

Mr Davies: Belatedly.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and improve safety, thereby making the works more competitive and giving them more sustained life.

The member for Welshpool referred to the Ord and asked why so much of the accounting is within the Public Works portfolio. There is good and historic reason and he should know. It is all part of the work of the Sir Norman Young committee to make some recommendations in respect of the future programme of the Ord. The committee is well known because its work has been well publicised and its report should be available within the next few months. The committee will also determine the future administration of the Ord and how best it can be handled whether on research, farming operations, or the straightout commitment in respect of engineering, and so on. I believe that not necessarily by the time we reach the next Budget, but possibly by the time we reach the following Budget, we could see a complete alteration in the method of accounting of the Ord scheme as a result of the outcome of the Sir Norman Young report, although I will not give this as an assurance because there could be reasons against it.

The other point to which I wish to refer was raised by the member for Subiaco and it is a vexed one and has caused every Government for some years a great amount of difficulty. The problem always becomes more troublesome when the summer comes, but I assure the honourable member that the Government is moving as fast and as effectively as it can to get the world's best brains behind the present engineering capacity we have to determine that the best decision is made, the money is spent correctly and the best timetable is followed in connection with the work.

In the light of the present financial situation I could not be precise as to when the major commitment for an improvement in that obnoxious situation can be undertaken.

Vote: Public Works and Buildings, \$45 599 000—put and passed.

Vote: Department of Tourism, \$3 311 000—

Item No. 6: Grants and Advances for Tourist Facilities, \$350 000—

Mr H. D. EVANS: The decrease in the amount from \$392 000 to \$350 000 gives cause for concern. With the sesquicentennial celebrations fast approaching I would have imagined that amount would be increased rather than decreased, and for good reason. Obviously there will be an influx of tourists, and the tourist bureaus of this State, even those in the private field, which wish to provide facilities of many kinds for tourists will be pressed for the finance to do it.

I point out by way of illustration that a booth on the Eyre Highway is manned by voluntary members of the various country tourist bureaus. Instead of being financed as a tourist facility, we find people sitting out in a caravan for several days and being relieved by another couple, which is not a very businesslike approach to tourism. A voluntary booth set up to provide information to tourists coming into Western Australia must appear to be rather homespun in comparison with the much more effective and experienced operations in countries such as New Zealand and certainly those in Europe. It is difficult to understand why there cannot be some assistance for that, and perhaps we could get an explanation.

On the grants and advances side, there is a need for tourist facilities of many kinds. I have made reference, both in this Chamber and by way of letter to the appropriate Ministers, to the prospect of the Donnelly River mill site becoming available for a tourist development of some sort. This is an opportunity which will not occur again. The Shannon River mill which was closed down in 1969 would be an ideal spot for some form of tourist accommodation, and it could be done on various levels with various gradings of accommodation from a relatively cheap family unit to a luxury-type unit which would appeal to another class of tourist.

The Donnelly River mill which will shortly be available comprises a number of State Housing Commission homes which will become redundant from the point of view of Bunnings Limited which holds them under a guaranteed rent agreement arrangement. When this agreement is relinquished and the houses revert to the commission, they will provide a very good basis from which an operation can commence. Whether it is done by a leasehold arrangement with some syndicate, firm, or individual remains to be seen. What is needed at the present time is some urgent planning and a small amount of finance to enable the planning to proceed. This has not eventuated up to this time, and a cutback on this item gives cause for alarm.

The tourist potential of the lower south-west is being developed rather rapidly. It must be remembered in Western Australia we have a number of tourist attractions of world standard, including the mining areas of the Pilbara which, being so far away, can be disregarded in the normal considerations of tourism. We have extensive beaches and the caves in the Naturaliste Ridge area which would certainly equal anything in the world. We also have the forests, embracing

the wildflowers for which the State has justly developed a fine reputation. The new wine industry also has quite a potential.

The matter of preparations needed for 1979 cannot be underestimated, and hopefully some additional facilities will be provided in these regions. The timber country right through to Leeuwin has been developed by the country bureaus from Albany to Augusta with a view to the Eastern States tourist traffic coming into or leaving the State through Albany.

The concept of the Leeuwin Way is excellent, but every year there is a shortage of caravan and other accommodation. Every holiday period there are overcrowded caravan parks. The laws are all right but they cannot be enforced. The caravan parks simply have to take the additional caravans that pull in; otherwise they are left out on the road, which is an even worse situation.

The need for such things as caravan parks, whether the assistance is provided by advances and grants or loans specifically for this purpose, has been neglected and must be considered further. At the present time assistance is provided through the auspices of the Department of Industrial Development, usually by way of a guarantee for a loan. It has some advantages and it allows for certain risk situations to be financed, but it does not cover the full range of problems which have become rapidly apparent in recent times.

At the conference of the country tourist bureaus held in Manjimup last month it was pointed out that the \$10 per head departure tax should be a source of income, in whole or in part, for tourism, not only in Western Australia but also in other States. It was estimated that between \$13 million and \$14 million would be gained from this tax, and it seems the State Government has been remarkably remiss in not having made an approach for a portion of this funding. It would be perfectly justified. It is a legitimate claim for a necessary purpose.

I point out, too, that I have made approaches in relation to another innovation involving a scenic railway from Manjimup to Northcliffe. On the Pemberton-Northcliffe section of that line there are five bridges, the highest of which is in excess of 100 feet. There is forest virtually all the way and the railway would provide a classic tourist attraction in the lower south-west. Tourist buses could be involved to the extent of dropping passengers at Pemberton and picking them up at Northcliffe, the passengers having travelled between those towns on the scenic railway.

It would have to be a sure-fire success, but it requires some organising and perhaps even a diesel railcar, which would also improve the

service to the residents in the Northcliffe area. It would possibly need some funding to get it established, so it is most regrettable to see the amount for grants and advances for tourist facilities cut by something like \$42 000. I do not see the reason for it. It is an item which should have been increased rather than decreased.

The items I have referred to in my own area certainly would not be the full list of projects in the State which could do with financial backing. However, those I have mentioned are certainly practicable, and they are at the stage where they urgently need support.

I would be interested in a comment on the decrease in that amount and whether there is a prospect of some of the revenue from the \$10 departure tax being available for tourism. I would also like to know whether the two tourist projects I have suggested would stand any consideration by the Government in time for the increased numbers of tourists who can reasonably be expected in 1979.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the honourable member looks at the votes for the Tourist Department in successive years, he will find the Government has been active in stepping up the amount of money available for promotion purposes. We cannot take one area in isolation. When framing a Budget we have to look at the total commitments of the Government and not one particular department. Every Minister has his pet project, but on the other hand we have to cut our suit according to the cloth.

The Government has been very vigorous in its programme of tourist promotion. We now have more active tourist promotion in the capital cities of the other States where we have made great progress in the generation of the interstate tourists.

Mr H. D. Evans: It is not much good if we have not got the facilities when they get here.

Sir CHARLES COURT: This State has many attractions and many things are being developed. We cannot do it all overnight. The fact is the things that need to be developed are being developed in a very sensible way, partly by the department itself and partly by local initiative; and the best of all is the local initiative.

The honourable member would know better than anyone in this place that there was a lot of community involvement by Bunnings in the Donnelly River mill. Bunnings is a very good old firm which has a great love for the place and which I believe has a very close connection with the community. It had a function in connection with the closure of that place. I am not the

Minister for Forests but my understanding of the situation, just as a citizen, is that there is a lot of consultation between the Forests Department and Bunnings over the future of the Donnelly River mill.

Mr H. D. Evans: I have written to the relevant Ministers and nothing has transpired.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am saying there is very close communication on this matter between the Forests Department and the company concerned.

Mr H. D. Evans: There is not. I have written to the Ministers asking that there be some.

Sir CHARLES COURT: My information—which the honourable member categorically dismisses, although I am trying to answer his question—is that there is consultation between the Forests Department and the company.

Mrs Craig: If I recall, it was indicated to you by letter that consultation had taken place and was taking place between the Forests Department and the company.

Mr H. D. Evans: No consultative committee has been set up to do some planning. That is what I am chasing.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Not everything has to be done by the Tourist Department. Some of these things are best done by the departments involved such as forests, because they have a very good reason for being involved and they have expertise. These things have traditionally been available to the tourists, and in many cases because of the Forests Department itself.

I think the honourable member is simply begging the question. He knows the background of this mill; he knows the background of the company; and he knows the background of the company's community involvement. I think in his heart he knows the involvement of the Forests Department in connection with the project.

The other matter he raised was in connection with the departure tax. He knows that is a Federal tax, and he knows the Federal Government raised it. I cannot see at the moment how we could expect to get very much of it ourselves; but naturally as the Commonwealth gains some form of income from this tax, then we are able to put pressure on it to provide more facilities. For instance, we have a major programme in connection with the Perth Airport, and we want to see that stepped up now because if we have not got the facilities we will not get the people here from overseas, interstate or, for that matter, intra-state.

The present Minister for Tourism, who is also the Minister in charge of the 150th celebrations, is a vigorous one. He has made very strong representations in connection with his budget. He has been able to step up the amount of money available for tourist promotion in what I believe is a commendable fashion.

When one has to justify a choice between giving the Tourist Department everything it wants and taking money away from schools and hospitals, one has to make a balanced judgment. I think with regard to our 150th anniversary commitment and our commitment to things such as the Art Gallery and Her Majesty's Theatre, we have done a good job in striking a balance.

Vote put and passed.

Part 6: Minister for Labour and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Immigration, Fisheries and Wildlife and Conservation and the Environment—

MR TONKIN (Morley) [11.48 p.m.]: I noticed recently when I was dragged into a shop by my wife who said she needed new frocks, that a sign was displayed which said, "We gladly exchange goods, but no refunds granted." That immediately caused me concern because it means that if a person buys an article at that shop—and, of course, pays for it with good money—and finds the article is faulty, then according to the shop the only thing that person could get back is some other article, even though the person concerned may not want another article, and the only article he or she wanted was the one he or she bought in good faith.

Of course, I could not accept that. It is interesting, of course, to remember that until the term of the Tonkin Labor Government quite recently we did not have any consumer protection legislation in this State. Before that time we were compelled by law to hand over first-class money—one went to gaol if one handed over second-class money—but the owner was not required to hand over first-class goods. The owner could hand over rubbish, and the purchaser had no redress at law. However, now we have consumer protection as a result of the activity of the Tonkin Government.

I can understand the shop saying that if the goods were not faulty and the person wanted a refund simply because when he or she got home it was found the colour was not suitable or it was decided he or she could not afford the article. I can understand the shop not giving back money in that case. However, if the article was faulty and the person concerned did not want any other article, the person should be able to get his or her money back.

I made further inquiries and satisfied myself that the notice in the shop was inaccurate and misleading because under the Trade Practices Act an article must be fit for the purpose for which it was sold. If a person buys a defective article, he can obtain a refund. Under the Sale of Goods Act, which is a State Act, a similar situation applies. A storekeeper may sell only goods which are useful for the purpose for which they are sold. Therefore, it is possible to obtain a cash refund under the Trade Practices Act if it is a corporation, or under the Sale of Goods Act if it is not a corporation.

Members might ask why it is so important to raise the matter because it is quite clear that a shop which displays a notice cannot make law. I think it is important to raise the matter because many people are intimidated by such a notice. People have reason—I suppose not very good reason—to believe that if a shop displays a notice it is quoting the legal situation. Instead, of course, a shop can put up a notice which in fact tells customers something which is untrue, something which is not the legal position.

I must say it seems rather strange to be debating this matter when the Minister for Consumer Affairs is not even in his place. I suppose the Premier is standing in for him.

Sir Charles Court: I am making a note of it.

Mr TONKIN: I see.

Sir Charles Court: The Minister is at the national conference of Ministers for Labour and Industry.

Mr TONKIN: I was not reflecting on the Minister; I was merely wondering how we would manage.

Therefore, it is quite clear the shop displayed a misleading advertisement. I believe the Consumer Affairs Bureau should look at the notice in the shop concerned, which is Irene Whyte. I checked another Irene Whyte store, and found it displayed the same notice.

If such stores are misleading customers, action should be taken against them by the Consumer Affairs Bureau under the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act, or under the Trade Practices Act.

Mr Davies: You mentioned that store, but there are many others. It is unfair to single out one.

Mr TONKIN: I do not think it is unfair, because I raised this matter with the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs and I was told that if the bureau knows of something it will check it. I am telling the Committee, and the Premier who

is acting on behalf of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, that this matter should be checked because apparently the bureau does not have people going around checking on these things.

That is a serious omission. Inspectors of the Department of Labour and Industry do not go around checking, nor do inspectors of the Consumer Affairs Bureau. They have to have things brought to their attention before they can act and ensure that justice is meted out. That is not the case in respect of the police and the Road Traffic Authority; they do not act only on complaints. I do not think that should happen in the case of the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the Department of Labour and Industry. However, as that seems to be the situation I am bringing that matter to the attention of the commissioner.

Mr Davies: I think the Department of Labour and Industry has even withdrawn inspectors to check on working conditions. I think it did that a long time ago. Why don't we withdraw the Department of Labour and Industry?

Mr TONKIN: That is a very good question. This is a shocking situation which I believe the commissioner should investigate because it is a matter of misleading advertising.

Such a notice would not concern most of us because we would fight for our rights. However, I worry about little old ladies and other people who see a sign and think what it says must be the law. I suppose most people would say the sign would not be there if it was not the law. I believe people are intimidated. They should not be intimidated, and misleading advertising should be checked.

Mr Davies: It could happen in men's stores, and little old men could be intimidated too.

Mr TONKIN: Yes. I would like to refer to a practice which seems to be widespread in relation to the Department of Labour and Industry. I refer to a married couple who worked for a firm which I cannot name. I cannot name the couple. I cannot even give any hints, for reasons which I will explain in a moment. These people have been working 12 hours a day seven days a week on a commission basis. They have received on average \$110 a week each, or \$220 between them. That is what they receive for a typical week. On the award rate, given that the male is acting in a managerial capacity, I worked out they should have been paid \$481.88. Therefore they receive less than half of what they are entitled to.

As the member for Melville has said before, that is theft just as much as if someone broke into a shop and stole money from the till. These

people have a right to the money which is being taken from them. Why do they not go to the Department of Labour and Industry? The answer is they are afraid of losing their jobs because under the Fraser and Court Governments to be unemployed is to be guilty of a crime. People are afraid of being unemployed. These people have asked me not to indicate their name, the name of the firm, or even the industry in which they work, because they do not want to be unemployed.

Where is the Department of Labour and Industry in this situation? It is sitting back and waiting for complaints upon which to act. That is not good enough; the department should be checking to see that the law is not broken, just as policemen go around checking to see the law is not broken. The police are not required to wait until a complaint is lodged in order to uphold the law, and nor should the Department of Labour and Industry.

We have this theft from employees, which is occurring all the time. An amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act has made such theft easier because now one can obtain exemption from trade union membership without having to satisfy the registrar that one has any conscientious belief. It is an automatic exemption. On the face of it that may seem to be reasonable enough, but whereas previously the registrar had to satisfy himself that there was a conscientious objection and had to know the employee really did want to opt out of the union, now he does not have to satisfy himself in that way. Employers demand that employees sign a form if they want a job. The employees sign an exemption form and the forms are then submitted *en masse*. So we have the situation where there is not a single union member in a whole shop.

This is happening in the clothing trade in particular. Very often people engaged in this trade are foreigners who do not speak English. Often they are young girls of 17 and 18 years of age who are being exploited and robbed because there is no-one who will get the Department of Labour and Industry to look at their working conditions.

There is a case of a girl who suffered a permanent injury to her spine after falling on an unguarded button machine. Had the Department of Labour and Industry known about that machine, no doubt action would have been taken because it was unsafe. But the department did not know about it; and as its officers do not go out and check it never will know. The people concerned in the industry will not make complaints, firstly because they are scared of losing

their jobs, secondly because they do not speak English, and thirdly because they do not know they can belong to a trade union.

That is the situation: a young girl has been injured for life and she is only 18 years of age. She did not even know anything about workers' compensation. So we have whole establishments which are union free but not in the way intended by the Act which was to enable people who object to unionism to opt out of it; they are union free because employers force people not to belong to unions under threat of losing their jobs.

I know that practice is illegal, but members should try proving the case. A situation has been created in which it is easy for employers to force people out of trade unions. If the union does not know about the establishment and therefore does not inform the Department of Labour and Industry, and the people do not know their rights, this sort of practice continues. These are Australian citizens who are being robbed and injured without receiving the kind of protection they should be able to expect in the 20th century.

I heard of a remarkable case recently which related to the Tuart Hill swimming pool company which is building a pool for a person living in my electorate. The company refused to do any more work even though the contract had not been completed. It wanted the customer to make the last payment. The contract indicated that certain things had to be done, and when they were done the last payment—around \$400—had to be paid. However, the company was not going to keep to its contract. It was a poor contract from the consumer's point of view, as I will mention later.

The amount of work remaining to be done was worth about \$800, so it was to the advantage of the company not to complete the contract. My constituent complained to the Swimming Pool Industry Association. That association claims it exists to look after the consumer and to ensure ethical practices in the industry. The association told my constituent to pay the \$400 to it, and it said that when it was satisfied it would pay the money to the company.

I spoke to Mr McKechnie of the Swimming Pool Industry Association. He said, "We are only trying to do the fair and reasonable thing. We want everybody to be satisfied." The fair and reasonable thing the association was suggesting was that the consumer make the last payment before the completion of the contract. How is that a fair and reasonable thing? I told Mr McKechnie I considered that the only fair and

reasonable thing was that the contract should be complied with and that the consumer should not make the last payment until the contract said he should. The suggestion by the association is unconscionable.

The association should have said to the Tuart Hill company, "You have to act ethically in this. You have to complete the contract, or that part of the contract you have to complete before the money is paid over." The association would not do even that.

The contract itself is a bad one. Even if it had been complied with, it would still have been unsatisfactory. A former Chief Justice of this State said that the courts should have the right to have a look at a contract to see if it is harsh and unconscionable. The contract laid down that certain things were to be done and that payments were to be made at certain stages. It indicated when the final payment was to be made and when the final work was to be done. The final payment was to be made when filtration had been completed. The final payment was to be made before the surrounds and the retaining wall were installed, even though they were part of the contract. The customer would have to pay the final sum while some work which was part of the contract still remained to be done.

As I said, the Tuart Hill company did not want to comply even with that contract. The company wanted the \$400 even before the contract said the payment should be made. This is the kind of contract members of the Swimming Pool Industry Association are writing. The association is not caring for the consumer at all. It is purely doing a cosmetic job, trying to suggest that the swimming pool industry is respectable.

I suggest that all consumers insist on writing their own contracts to make sure that they have some kind of a hold over a pool company. After all, a person who puts a pool into his backyard is not running away. He can be sued if he does not pay. The contracts are very one sided.

Mr Bertram: He will not be able to get anyone to build his pool if he writes his own contract.

Mr TONKIN: That is not so. In fact, companies are competing for business. If more consumers stick up for themselves and insist on reasonable contracts, the companies would sort themselves out. Indeed, that is the only way to ensure that a contract is not harsh and unconscionable.

I believe swimming pool builders should be licensed by the Builders' Registration Board. That procedure is followed in New South Wales. When

I suggested a plan 13 months ago, the former Minister for Labour and Industry said that that was exactly the same as the Government's plan. He said, "It is in hand. We will do it." Nothing has happened. The former Minister was a great one for saying, "It is all in hand. We will do it next week."

Mr Grayden: You are talking through the back of your head, and you know it.

Mr TONKIN: Saying that does not make it so.

Mr Grayden: Talk sense or sit down.

Mr TONKIN: Thirteen months ago the Minister said that his plan was the same as my plan for cleaning up the swimming pool industry. In those 13 months, has he implemented the plan?

Mr Grayden: Lots of things have happened since then.

Mr TONKIN: The Government was going to licence swimming pool contractors. Are they now licensed?

Mr Grayden: I do not know what has happened in the meantime, because I am not the Minister.

Mr TONKIN: Do not say such foolish things.

Mr Grayden: I do not know what has happened since you raised the matter. We were working on a plan for many months before you mentioned it.

Mr TONKIN: The former Minister said he was going to do exactly as I suggested. The swimming pool companies are still not licensed.

Any member of this Chamber could enter into a contract to build a swimming pool, and he could start building a swimming pool without any experience, without any financial backing, without any ethics. The former Minister says a tremendous amount has been done. Nothing has been done.

Mr Grayden interjected.

Mr TONKIN: The Minister said he was going to do the same as I suggested, and he has not done it. That is misleading the public. Making such statements in the Chamber will not change that.

Mr Grayden: It was not as simple as that.

Mr TONKIN: A moment ago, when I said the former Minister had not done anything, he said that the matter was in hand. The position is that the people having swimming pools built today have as little protection as their counterparts had 13 months ago. Our plan to licence swimming pool builders has not been put into effect. The people

having swimming pools built today are being forced into unconscionable contracts. There are lots of companies like the one I have instanced.

Mr Grayden: Why do you not name some of the companies responsible?

Mr TONKIN: I have just named one. If the member had been here, he would have heard.

Mr Grayden: Take it up with the Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

Mr TONKIN: In New South Wales there is a thorough investigation into the technical expertise of the people who apply for licences. There is an inquiry into their financial backing. Licence holders can be fined, or their licences can be taken from them. There is a whole range of actions that may be taken.

I will say that the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs is doing a great job. I give high praise for the co-operation I have received and other members have received from Mr Fletcher and his officers. However, they are not law makers. They cannot equip themselves with the powers they need. They are doing the best they can with an Act which is not good enough.

Mr Grayden: They have tremendous power. They have so much, it would surprise you.

Mr TONKIN: They have very little power in this matter.

Mr Grayden: They can name them in the annual report, for a start. That is widely publicised. They can make a Press statement, if necessary.

Mr TONKIN: For the payment of \$2 a company can change its name. The report is presented after a year, and in the meantime 100 people have been taken down. The bureau is doing the best it can with the rotten legislation that has been given to it.

I would like to touch on the matter of a person who advertised in *The Sunday Times*, calling himself a landscape gardener. He built a barbecue that did not barbecue, and he shifted a Hills hoist and put it in such a position that it does not work and is falling over. The constituent who raised the problem with me received satisfaction from the Small Claims Tribunal. However, no-one could find the contractor. Apparently he flits about the place.

There should be far more checking of the advertisements placed in newspapers. Members know how much it costs to place an advertisement in *The Sunday Times*. I believe that newspapers have an ethical responsibility in relation to accepting advertising from people who are not

reputable. Any one of us could advertise in *The Sunday Times* that we will do the most impossible and ridiculous things under the sun. Such advertisements can be placed quite easily. We can take money from the public and then disappear.

The landscape gardener I mentioned has not been found. His address is a post office box number. It is not possible to discover where he is. He took the money and left behind a scene of devastation.

Far more stringent controls are needed over advertising in the business community. People are easily ripped off. I am not talking about bona fide businessmen, or even businessmen who genuinely make a mistake. I am speaking of firms which have no good intentions and no ability to do a reasonable job. They change their names from week to week. They change their addresses from week to week.

On the question of environmental protection, I draw the attention of the Minister to the Avon Valley National Park and note it is very difficult to obtain access to it. Access may be attained via Quarry Road which has an extremely steep descent and one needs a four-wheel drive vehicle. As the population increases and there is increasing pressure on other national parks, I believe alternative access should be provided, especially down to the best part of the park which is near the river. This matter should be investigated.

Finally, I asked a question of the Minister for Immigration in relation to some advertisements which had been placed in the *Saturday Evening Post*. I did not say in the question that the Government was advertising in that newspaper, but the Minister seemed to think I said that, because he said that advertisements of this nature were not being placed by the Western Australian Government. However, I was asking him whether his attention had been drawn to the advertisement that says that 50 000 jobs were available in Western Australia.

Mr Bertram: The Government promised 100 000 new jobs.

Mr TONKIN: It said also that free transportation was available. I understand the advertisement has appeared in many American newspapers, but in particular in the *Saturday Evening Post*. I was wondering whether through the Commonwealth Government's diplomatic channels there was some way in which the American Government could take action by means of its laws in relation to misleading advertisements so that this does not continue. In our present

state of unemployment, it is misleading to suggest to the people of the United States that 50 000 jobs are available here.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [12.18 a.m.]: I feel it is opportune at this time to draw the attention of the Committee to a problem I have dealt with over a period of time in relation to the confiscation of two birds from a woman in Armadale. The matter is important to me, although other members seem to treat it with some hilarity.

I am concerned about the principle that people who own a bird in accordance with an Act of Parliament are entitled to keep it at all times and that the people who confiscate birds seem to think they have an inherent right—in fact a God-given right—to confiscate birds which are subsequently found not to be in conflict with the Act.

Mr Blaikie: Do you have a vested interest in the subject?

Mr SKIDMORE: Oh shut up! The hilarity with which this matter is dealt is quite obvious. However, I shall prove to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment, and Fisheries and Wildlife that this has occurred and maybe then members opposite will sit up and take notice.

Two birds were involved when the officers went out to investigate the complaint. They were a long-billed corella and a sulphur-crested cockatoo. When I raised a question in relation to the number of birds confiscated from the woman and why they had been confiscated it was suggested that it occurred because the birds were living in cages which did not have unspillable food and water containers. That was the complaint of the officer concerned. He entered the house, saw the cages containing the birds—there was nothing wrong with the size of the cages—and indicated to the people there was a problem with the food and water containers. The containers were able to be tipped over. Without further ado the officer confiscated the two cages and the two birds.

Surely that is not a good way of overcoming such a problem. That was only the beginning of the whole sad story. The department issued a summons approximately five months later for the owner of the birds to appear in court on the 26th July, 1978, to answer the charge that she kept the birds in the cages for a period of longer than 48 hours without having unspillable containers for food and water fitted. This claim was denied by Mrs Murray and she engaged a lawyer. The lawyer represented her in court. That is all the evidence the department had to

prove its case. The department asked for an adjournment on the 26th July, because it had not been able to investigate the complaint thoroughly. The court case did not proceed and it was adjourned until the 20th September.

During the intervening period the solicitor for the lady concerned consulted with representatives of the Avicultural and Wildlife Association. They suggested the solicitor go to court and ask for the birds and cages to be produced to show that the unspillable containers were actually in the cages. The most remarkable thing happened then. When it was shown that the department could not produce the cages or the birds, it decided that it had better not proceed with the case. Arrangements were made and the charges against the woman were withdrawn.

The dismissal of the case was arranged between the lawyer representing the department and the lawyer representing the woman, because the department was unable to produce one of the cages. The case was dismissed. Mrs Murray was informed that one of the cages would be returned to her and a new cage would be supplied to replace the lost one. Her legal fees, she was advised, would be paid by the Legal Aid Commission.

Here was a classic example of a woman who had been challenged that her cages did not conform with the law and she proved conclusively that they did. However, her cages and birds have never been returned.

When I asked questions about the matter some rather remarkable facts emerged. When I asked what happened to the two cages and birds I was given answers. I suppose some members find it hilarious, but I do not. The question I asked was as follows—

If no advice was given to the owner concerned, is it a fact that on the 15th December an officer of the Wildlife Department confiscated two cages and two birds in the absence of the owner and that no reason was given for the confiscation?

The answer was—

Two cages and four birds were confiscated from these premises and the reason for the confiscation given to the occupants of the house.

In fact, no-one was in the house when the birds were confiscated. We find we have accumulated two more birds. A responsible officer of the department told the Minister that four birds were

confiscated from the woman where originally only two birds were confiscated—two of the birds did not even exist.

The next question I asked reads—

Was a demand made upon the department that the birds and the cages be produced in court as evidence and if so, was the department able to produce the birds or cages?

The answer was, "No". In actual fact two lawyers sat around the table and made a deal that, because the cages could not be produced the case would not be proceeded with.

I wanted to ensure this would not happen again so I asked some further questions. My first question was—

Where were the four birds that were confiscated housed?

I was prepared to accept the fact that there were four birds, because the Minister told me that in one of his answers. The answer to that question was—

Zoological Gardens, South Perth.

I asked whether the birds were kept in isolation from other birds of the same species so that they could be readily identified bearing in mind that the birds confiscated in accordance with the Act are not held illegally until such time as the law says they are. The birds are the property of the owner until such time as a court of law determines otherwise. The birds have every right to be retained by the person who owns them. When I asked that question the answer given was, "For a period, yes."

The birds were kept in isolation and could be identified for a short time. I do not know how they got four birds. I do not know where they got three long-billed corellas and a sulphur-crested cockatoo when in fact they had only two birds to start with. I then asked a further question as follows—

If the answer to (2) is "No" how is the department going to identify the birds so that they can be returned to their rightful owner?

The answer to that was, "No". The department did not know where they were. They could find only one cage and they would return it as soon as possible. The answer I received was—

Property in fauna is vested in the Crown until such time as it has been lawfully taken and held under licence. The sulphur-crested cockatoo was held illegally under the Agriculture Related Resources Act.

There is then a shift of ground. All of a sudden it is not a question of unspillable containers; it is a question that the sulphur-crested cockatoo

was not held in line with the Agriculture Related Resources Act. I looked at the Act and found that a rather strange set of circumstances existed.

This query was sent to me by the Secretary of the Avicultural and Wildlife Association on the 19th October and I felt I should at least reply, which I did on the 13th November. I indicated I had refrained from replying to her letter of the 19th October until I had some concrete evidence to present as to what had occurred. The rest of my letter reads as follows—

As you requested, I have followed up this matter in the House and believe you me it is incredible the verbal gymnastics that the Minister has gone through in an effort to justify the officers' actions. I believe that the Questions that I have asked are self-explanatory and in my candid opinion the following now prevails:

1. That in view of the fact that the prosecution against Mrs. Murray was not sustained in a court of law, she should have her birds and cages returned to her, notwithstanding the statement contained in one of the Answers given to me (ref. Question 2332) that all fauna is vested in the Crown until such time as it has been lawfully taken and held under licence. I now find that we have another Act under which the sulphur-crested cockatoo was supposedly being held illegally by Mrs. Murray and I refer, of course, to the Agriculture Related Resources Act.
2. The Answers given by the Minister, obviously on the advice of his Departmental officers, have been evasive and at times border on being untrue.

I intend to pursue this question in the House...

I then asked some further questions of the Minister and the one to which I wish to refer reads as follows—

Would his department advise:

- (a) what sections of the Act, i.e., the Agriculture Related Resources Act, resulted in the holding illegally of the sulphur-crested cockatoo; and
- (b) was the owner at the time of the bird's confiscation notified of this fact?

The answer given to that question reads as follows—

- (a) Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act, 1976, Section 81.

- (b) The person in question was asked by the Wildlife Officer if she had a permit to keep the sulphur-crested cockatoo under the Act referred to. She first replied that she had one, then later said that she did not need one.

It is true that the person did not have a permit to keep the birds, and she was in breach of the regulations. However, that is not the reason the birds were confiscated. It was an excuse given by the department which could not find her property to return to her in accordance with the arrangement at the time.

I asked the Minister whether he would answer my question as to how the department would identify birds so that they could be returned to their rightful owners when the owners had not breached the regulations. I asked that question in an effort to find out whether there was some way the department was responsible for the fauna it had confiscated.

I deal exclusively with Custom Credit for my credit when I purchase a motorcar, and if that company was to come to me and claim that I had not paid last month's instalment, and it repossessed my car, it is still not able to sell my car until it can show that I am in default. If I am able to go to the company and produce a receipt and tell the company that its computer has gone wrong, I get my car back again. However, that does not happen in the case of fauna.

The birds were brought up in captivity. Probably, they were born in captivity and they would never come under the regulations made under the Act. Therefore, they could not be considered to be the property of the Crown because the Act does not give the Crown that right. So, the confiscation was carried out against the provisions of the Act which the officers were supposed to be working under. That condemns them out of hand.

When I was referred to another Act I wondered what to do, so I got in touch with the Agriculture Protection Board today. I spoke to a senior officer—I will not mention his name although I will make it available to the Premier if he wants to know—and I asked him what was going on. I was told that under section 81 of the Act the board was able to confiscate. I looked up section 81 which refers to certain categories, and I could not understand what the department was getting at.

Section 81 reads—

81. A person shall not keep, in any part of the State, an animal that is a declared animal of category A6 in respect of that part

of the State unless that animal is kept subject to and in accordance with the conditions and restrictions prescribed in relation to the keeping of animals of that class.

Section 36 (4) (f) covers category A6, and reads—

(f) category A6 in respect of an area if the keeping of those animals in that area should, in the opinion of the Protection Board, be subject to prescribed conditions and restrictions;

I wondered what were the prescribed conditions and restrictions. I want to point out how absolutely impossible it is for the average person to understand what the law demands of him. I went to the regulations, and I found that they were the regulations which applied to an old Act, and were transferred when the present Act was introduced. The officer concerned admitted there seemed to be some trouble, and he asked for time to research the matter.

After carrying out his research, the officer told me that the matter was covered under section 36(4) (f), and he suggested I look at section 114 of the old Agriculture and Related Resources Act. He said that regulations under that Act would tell me precisely the reason the birds were confiscated. I am prepared to accept that what he said was right, and that the birds were illegally held. I thought that if the Agriculture Protection Board wanted to do something it would be aware of the incident. However, the board knew nothing about it and suggested to me the officer concerned had not bothered to tell the board that he was charging the woman with a breach of the regulations.

So, here we have a remarkable situation. When I questioned the Minister on this issue he skirted around it. The Minister tried to draw a red herring across the track and referred to another Act. At least the officer of the board was honest enough to say he did not know anything about the matter, and he did not know about the arbitrary way the officer acted when the birds were confiscated.

In an attempt to get the Minister to agree to ensure the safety of the birds, on the 15th November I asked the Minister the following question—

If the confiscated fauna is subsequently found to be the rightful property of the person from whom it was confiscated, would he be able to give an assurance to this House that the confiscated fauna is identifiable and could be returned to its rightful owner?

The reply was—

Sections 20 and 20A of the Wildlife Conservation Act specify procedures that may be followed by a wildlife officer where fauna has been seized.

I was not asking anything about that matter at all. I know all about those sections. I specifically asked whether the Minister would ensure that fauna which had been confiscated would be kept safe and easily identifiable so that it could be returned to the people concerned. I asked a question without notice, to which the following part answer was given—

A Wildlife Officer is authorised where he has seized fauna which he believes on reasonable grounds to be involved in the commission of an offence to dispose of such fauna in such a way as appears to him to be reasonably necessary.

Surely it is not reasonable for an officer to dispose of birds owned by somebody if they have unspillable trays in their cages. That does not seem reasonable to me. The reply to the question continues—

At some inconvenience the Zoological Gardens Board offers to care for seized birds but without any commitment as to future identification.

The Minister has admitted that the officer concerned put the birds in the Zoological Gardens without identifying them. All that would be necessary would be to put leg tags on the birds. I asked a further question as follows—

Do the Wildlife Conservation regulations bestow upon the Wildlife Officer such powers, notwithstanding the innocence of the accused, that the property or fauna seized will never be returned?

The answer was that I should look at section 22 of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Birds which were confiscated were placed in cages and were not identifiable. My question was completely ignored with regard to how the birds were to be returned to the woman who was not in breach of the regulations. That was subsequently proved by action taken by the Crown Law Department's solicitors and the defendant's solicitors. I have found out that the birds are not available, and that should not happen. I then asked the Minister whether a bird which had been born and bred in captivity came under the provisions of the Act. I am still waiting for an answer to that question. In another question without notice I asked the Minister whether he

would give me an answer to a previous question because the previous answer had been meaningless. On this occasion the answer was—

The Department has no facilities for keeping seized fauna. Circumstances may be such that it is not possible to return fauna that has been seized.

That is a shocking condemnation of the Minister. The department has no right to keep birds even though they may have been confiscated legally. Even though the woman concerned is entitled to have her birds returned to her as she is the rightful owner, because of the attitude of the Minister it is not possible to return fauna that has been seized. That is not good enough.

I have taken this opportunity to highlight these matters because I may not get another chance during this session. I am very disturbed indeed, and I am reminded of a letter I received dated the 18th September from the Secretary of the Avicultural and Wildlife Association. I will quote sections of the letter as follows—

That these inroads should be made at all is bad enough, but when they are made on the false premise that in some strange way they contribute in a meaningful manner to the Conservation of Wildlife in Western Australia, it becomes more than we can tolerate without strong protest.

The whole Regulations seem to presume that we are, in some unfathomable way, holding on "loan" as it were, State or Crown property! The facts are, however, that something like 999 birds out of a thousand that are kept in captivity in Western Australia are not, and never have been, Crown property. They are now, and always have been, Private Property, and even the few that were at one time Crown property have been legally obtained, and thus have become private property.

Other matters are explained. To continue—

If these Regulations are permitted to prevail we may not sell our private avian property, nor may we buy private avian property except by the kind permission of the Conservator of Wildlife.

Furthermore, we are expected to inform him when our birds mate, when they lay eggs, when the young hatch out, and how many there are, etc. etc. When the birds are old enough we may not sell them unless he gives the O.K., and even then only to those that he nominates. We would submit that this is an intolerable position and alien to the private enterprise system under which we live.

We have been through this latest batch of Amendments to the Amendments, etc. to discover just what they mean in practical terms. This has meant long hours of back-tracking through the Amendments and involved cross-references, until we have discovered exactly what they mean. We would suggest that only those who have been very familiar with the history of events would have much chance of making any sense of it.

However, we do know what they mean, and the history of it can be summed up as follows:— An ever-increasing invasion of the rights of the individual Bird Keeper, his privacy, his house, his home, yard, income, hobby and hours of relaxation. They mean the appropriation of private avian fauna which we are then allowed to keep as on "loan" from the State, if the Conservator of Wildlife condescends to grant a licence.

If a bird is found to be of that type of fauna, it is taken away, and can be given back to the person who had it on loan from the Government. They may hold that bird on the conditions granted if the Conservator of Wildlife condescends to grant a licence.

I believe the whole sordid business concerning this particular woman highlights the impossible position people find themselves in. Certainly the veracity of the Minister has been placed in doubt because only two birds were involved. When I started to ask questions, there turned out to be four birds. However, when I checked out the position of the number of birds caged at the zoo I was informed there were only two birds involved.

I am beginning to wonder who is telling the truth. Birds or fauna of any type can be confiscated on reasonable grounds. People would not quarrel with this if the grounds were reasonable. This case did not get to a court of law as it could not be proved. The birds and cages should have been returned to the woman and then they could have been confiscated on the ground that she did not have a licence. Neither I nor anyone else could quarrel with that. I hope that I have the opportunity during this session of Parliament to talk about this matter on my motion to disallow the regulations. However, I thought it was quite pertinent to raise it now.

I am amazed at the replies I have received from the Minister concerned. It is a great pity that he is not here. When speaking last night he indicated that he had for me some answers I probably would not like. He said he would give me these answers in reply to my motion.

Having raised the matter here I will leave it at that. Unfortunately, I am running out of time. It was my intention to talk about the Industrial Commission and its activities. However, I will probably be able to debate that matter when dealing with the item concerned.

MR HODGE (Melville) [12.47 a.m.]: I wish to comment on a few matters relating to the Bureau of Consumer Affairs and the Department of Labour and Industry. Dealing firstly with the Bureau of Consumer Affairs, I would like to pay tribute to the work of the commissioner (Mr Dick Fletcher) and his staff. Since my election to Parliament I have contacted Mr Fletcher on quite a few occasions. I have been very impressed with the way in which he and his department have handled my queries. I have had very courteous and efficient service from him, and so have quite a number of my constituents.

Mr Davies: His deputy (Mr Ed Russell) is very good too.

MR HODGE: I have never dealt with Mr Russell, but I am sure the whole staff is competent. Mr Fletcher gets very good results, and the only impediment to his work is the weak law and insufficient staff. It is a pity we do not have price control legislation and tougher consumer protection laws.

Mr McIver: The upper House would not allow it when we introduced the Bill.

MR HODGE: That is a great pity. Frequently we hear Ministers of this Government saying that the bureau keeps an eye on prices, but we all know that is simply window dressing because there is no authority to do anything about prices. It is a great pity we cannot do something about price control.

I wish to draw attention to a case involving elderly constituents of mine. On the 20th September this year, this elderly couple went to the Hilton Park branch of Paul's Outdoor Leisure Centre and entered into a contract for a large patio to be built at their home. This was a substantial construction, costing a total price of \$1 551. The company insisted on a deposit of \$500—a fairly large sum. Members are aware that the usual deposit requested is 10 per cent.

The contract was signed and the deposit paid. Unfortunately a few weeks later the husband passed away suddenly, and the elderly widow was not in a position to proceed with the contract. I think on the same day that the husband passed away, a friend of the family contacted Paul's Outdoor Leisure Centre on her behalf to ask whether the contract could be cancelled.

The company agreed reluctantly to cancel the contract, but it was stated that the deposit would not be refunded. This seemed most unreasonable to the widow and she contacted me; it also seemed most unreasonable to me. I contacted the Melville City Council to find out whether the company had submitted plans. Although plans had not been submitted at that stage, they were received by the council a few days after the gentleman passed away. Apparently the company had submitted the plans even though it had been notified that the contract would be terminated.

I contacted the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. He volunteered to take the matter up although he was not sure that he could legally compel the company to refund all or portion of the deposit. Nevertheless, as a result of his intervention, the proprietor, Mr Paul Nichols, wrote a letter to my constituent and in a fairly grudging way refunded \$280. He claimed he was out of pocket because the metal had been cut, he had paid the sales commission, and he had had other administrative expenses to meet.

My constituent was still most unhappy, and although Mr Fletcher did not think it was fair and reasonable, he could do no more. I contacted Mr Nichols myself. I explained that my constituent was an elderly lady, recently widowed, in poor health, and not in a position to go on with the building. I told him he was being most unreasonable and I asked him whether he had lost money by cutting the metal. I was told by one of the employees that the metal was cut on the actual site. I asked Mr Nichols whether the cut metal would be thrown away or would be used again. I did not find him very co-operative; he would not give a direct answer to my questions, and he refused point blank to refund any more.

I believe this lady was shabbily treated, and the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs should have power to take stronger action in such cases. I notice that this company spends thousands of dollars every weekend on three or four-page spreads in *The Sunday Times*. It seems that the company is trying to impress on people that it is reputable and that it does a good job. However, for the sake of a measly \$200, it has done itself a great disservice.

I know of several people who are aware of the facts of this case and who have said they will not patronise the company. This widow is now \$220 out of pocket in addition to suffering the unfortunate sudden loss of her husband.

I now wish to comment on the operation of the Department of Labour and Industry, and in particular its industrial inspectors. These inspectors do not appear to be listed on page 78 of the

Estimates. I can see references to construction inspectors, factories and shops inspectors, machinery inspectors, weights and measures inspectors, but not to industrial inspectors. I was told recently by the Minister that we have four industrial inspectors but they must be listed somewhere else. I must point out that a staff of this size is grossly inadequate to do the job required. Over 600 industrial awards or agreements are lodged with the Industrial Commission in this State, and we have four inspectors employed by the State Government to police those awards and agreements.

Apparently the industrial inspectors are inundated with phone calls, letters, and personal inquiries. I asked a question about this matter some time ago, and I found out that they receive an astronomical number of phone calls—some 19 000 in 12 months. I do not know how they cope with these; they must hold a phone in each hand and take approximately 500 calls a day. However, the number of inquiries indicates the number of award breaches that are occurring in Western Australia.

I am told that in the last four years the industrial inspectors have made only one prosecution in the industrial magistrate's court. I could find no record of that case in the report of the Chief Industrial Commissioner, but the Minister for Labour and Industry told me there had been one prosecution. So since 1974 when this Government came to office, only one employer in this State has been prosecuted for award breaches.

I have been told by a former inspector of the Department of Labour and Industry that a few years ago every inspector employed by that department was empowered to be an industrial inspector. This means that every safety inspector, machinery inspector, or factories and shops inspector has the powers of an industrial inspector. Places of employment were visited by these inspectors and time and wages books, rosters, staff rooms, first-aid kits, etc., were all inspected regularly. In the past 12 months, only 44 places in the metropolitan area were visited by an industrial inspector, and outside the metropolitan area, not a single place was inspected.

This has created a situation in which the employers believe there is no chance they will be inspected by Government representatives, and they do not have to worry about doing the right thing. This has encouraged the award breaches which are occurring in this State. I mentioned in the Chamber recently that the liquor trades union with which I was associated, and with which I am still associated, has recovered an amount of \$130 000 in underpaid wages since 1974. That is

only one union in this State, but it gives an idea of the extent of the underpayment that is occurring. The Department of Labour and Industry has taken virtually no action—one prosecution in about four years.

I checked recently with the Federal Industrial Relations Bureau to see how it enforces the Federal awards. It also has only four or five inspectors, but they are on the road all the time. They are given office back-up to take care of the phone calls, letters, etc. I suggest to the Treasurer that he should institute a similar system here. If we cannot employ more inspectors, at least we should employ additional office staff to undertake the clerical work so that the inspectors can do the job they are supposed to be doing.

It seems ridiculous that this Parliament can pass a law—the Industrial Arbitration Act—authorise the establishment of a court and have that court hand down industrial decisions, and then not provide any sort of police force to enforce those laws.

When I raised this matter once before in this Chamber the Minister for Labour and Industry accused me of showing my hatred of employers because I suggested a Government agency should authorise its officers to go around and enforce the law. However, I have a copy of the latest Road Traffic Authority report in front of me, and it shows a photograph of RTA inspectors going around to used-car yards and inspecting used motor vehicles, to make sure those vehicles and the dealers were complying with the law. How is that any different from what I am suggesting?

A force of industrial inspectors employed by the Government should go around to places of employment and inspect them to ensure the employers are complying with the law. I believe this is common sense. I do not see anything unusual or out of the ordinary about that sort of suggestion. A regular visit by a Department of Labour and Industry inspector would have a positive effect on employers. It would act as a deterrent to their being tempted to breach the law in respect of time and wages records.

One of the most frequent offences before the Magistrates Court is that relating to employers failing to keep proper time and wages records. I have personally been involved in dozens of cases where, as a union official, I tried to calculate by how much workers had been underpaid, and I found the task almost impossible when I came across employers who did not keep proper time and wages records. In other words, they did not keep the daily working hours of their employees.

I suggest to the Government that it considers going back to the old system, where every inspector employed by the Department of Labour

and Industry was authorised to be an industrial inspector so that if an inspector goes on to a site to check a piece of machinery or to check the safety of some scaffolding he is also empowered to check the time and wages book, the roster, or anything else he thinks may need checking. That would not cost the Government any more money or require any more staff. It would simply be a matter of widening the powers of the existing inspectors and vesting in them the same powers as an industrial inspector.

I hope the Government will give consideration to the points I have raised, particularly in regard to employing more clerical staff to take over some of the office work currently being undertaken by industrial inspectors who are getting bogged down in this work, so that they may get out in the field and do the job they are supposed to be doing.

DR TROY (Fremantle) [1.03 a.m.]: I wish to raise two matters tonight. The first concerns workers' compensation. A young fellow was involved in an accident in 1971 in which he had the heel of his left foot torn off. He subsequently spent 1½ years in hospital in one stretch. He had repeated operations which resulted in his spending another year in hospital. Since 1971, he has not had any permanent period of employment.

If that is not tragedy enough, the way this person has been treated under the Workers' Compensation Act is a double tragedy. In that entire period, this person has received in actual money in his pocket only \$500 to support him.

In January this year he was encouraged to accept a final settlement, and was offered \$800. Subsequently, this was increased to \$4 120. He rather reluctantly accepted the second offer, but then a very mysterious thing happened. His file was lost from the State Government Insurance Office. It was lost, I might say, until after the amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act were passed earlier this year.

Mr T. J. Burke: There are plenty of those.

Dr TROY: He then found that because the Act had been changed and despite the fact he had already reluctantly accepted a settlement offer of \$4 120, his offer was reduced to \$1 000.

This is absolutely scandalous. If it happened to only one person, it would be scandalous. This person now is aged 27. He suffers a great disability and has been doubly penalised and not adequately catered for. I believe the appropriate Minister should take up this case to ensure that justice is done.

I realise the hour is late, but I have waited six weeks for the opportunity to raise this matter in Parliament. I understand there are a number

of such cases. In fact, I know of another case on record where a fellow who had suffered a head injury accepted an offer of \$20 000. Again, the file was lost and the Act was amended. This person then found his offer was reduced to \$5 000.

The second matter to which I wish to refer did not begin in 1971. It began on the 11th August, 1977, when the business name, "Assistance and Security Corps" was registered at the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs office in Perth. However, we were told in response to certain questions asked in this place that in November, 1977, and again in March, 1978, the State Government made out cheques to the "Assistance and Security Corporation". That fact is on record in answer to question 1783 on the 3rd October.

So, the Government made out two cheques, one in November and one in March, both to the Assistance and Security Corporation.

Despite repeated questions on this matter, the Government has not stated to which particular individuals the cheques were made out or, for that matter, whether one or both of the cheques were cashed. When we examine the Estimates for the Department of Labour and Industry we find we cannot identify the particular elements which relate to these transactions.

However, when we start to penetrate this series of events, we find some rather curious coincidences. The first is that when the Government made out cheques to the Assistance and Security Corporation, no such name was registered. The other interesting point is that the business name "Assistance and Security Corps" which was registered on the 11th August, 1977, reveals the two principals of the company. They are identified on the company register as R. Cannon and Co., 6 Sherwood Court, Perth, and J. Piantoni, 2a Florence St., West Perth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Perhaps the honourable member should be raising this matter during discussion on part 7, dealing with the Corporate Affairs Office. Otherwise, I must ask him to relate his remarks more directly to industrial relations or the Department of Labour and Industry.

Dr TROY: Thank you for your advice, Mr Chairman. The point I make is that these cheques were made out for services rendered for trucks used to bust a strike involving flour millers last November. This is where it relates to the Department of Labour and Industry.

Another interesting coincidence in relation to these names is that the registered business name was withdrawn on the 20th July, 1978. Members should remember the names of the two principals,

R. Cannon and J. Piantoni. On the 21st July, 1978, R. Cannon acted in a Civil Court action when one W. Grayden, the Minister for Labour and Industry during the period of the dispute, appeared and was convicted on an assault charge.

I charge this Government with being guilty at least of an attempt to create very serious public mischief or, alternatively, of a conspiracy against the trade union movement, and in particular a strike involving the Flour Millers' Union. These are serious matters and they are not referred to in the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Industry. The Government should answer these questions when the appropriate Minister replies to the debate.

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [1.11 a.m.]: I commence with the matters raised by the member for Morley. I have noted the points he made, and they will be referred to the relevant Ministers. The honourable member raised the matter of a notice advising that goods may be exchanged, but no refunds given; that has been noted, and the Minister will be advised. I must admit that in the years I have seen such notices I have always assumed they meant what they said. However, the honourable member has made out an argument against them, and the Minister will be advised.

The second point he raised about people working seven days a week and not being able to obtain proper compensation was difficult to follow. Unless somebody tells the department what is going on, the department will never find out for itself. However, perhaps when the Minister studies the text of the member for Morley's remarks he will be able to follow the point he was making and establish whether some redress is available.

On the question of the swimming pool company, I thought that as a result of action taken by the former Minister, the member for South Perth, most of our problems were behind us. However, the points raised by the member for Morley will be followed through. I must say that in relation to advertisements placed in *The Sunday Times*, it would be almost impossible to expect such a publication to be responsible for the bona fides of everyone who placed an advertisement in the Readers' Mart or other columns; they are quite extensive and used by a wide cross-section of the community and I believe they provide a useful service. However, from time to time I suppose they are used by people of ill repute and I cannot suggest how we could cope with that situation.

5)

Likewise, the question of access to the Avon Valley National Park will be raised with the appropriate Minister.

I thought the Minister had already dealt with the other point raised by the honourable member; namely, the advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Mr Tonkin: No, the Minister misunderstood me. He said it was not a WA Government advertisement, but I did not say it was.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have a note here which emphasises that the member for Morley did not allege it was a Western Australian Government advertisement, and that he wanted to know who placed the advertisement.

We have heard the story of the two birds so often from the member for Swan that we almost feel friendly towards them.

Mr Skidmore: No, you have not heard this one before.

Sir CHARLES COURT: As a matter of fact, it reminded me of the interjection by my colleague, the Deputy Premier, about the "double-breasted mattress thrasher" during a similar debate on another occasion. The honourable member's comments will be raised with the appropriate Minister; in fact, he will now have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Minister next Tuesday.

Mr Skidmore: What a waste of time! I may as well talk to a brick wall.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is unfair.

Mr Skidmore: No it is not; I have asked him 14 questions and he will not give me the answer.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The allegations made by the member for Swan about the Minister were quite unfair; the Minister would have answered the question according to the information available to him.

The member for Melville referred to a particular leisure centre, and also to the question of industrial inspectors. I gather the main burden of his argument about industrial inspectors was that he felt they should be allowed to have more universal duties within their departmental role, rather than having specialised duties.

I would not be able to comment on it, but the point will be raised. My understanding was that there was a reorganisation which would achieve greater effectiveness and under the Minister of the time, the member for South Perth, industry felt there had been a very great improvement in the effectiveness of the inspectors. How-

ever, the matter will be sent on to the appropriate office. This will happen also with the two matters raised by the member for Fremantle.

Vote: Labour and Industry, \$3 584 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$2 826 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: A question in respect of this item was raised by the member for Melville in relation to the funding for inspectors. He made a good case to have more inspectors on the staff and mentioned that the paucity of inspectors was making it impossible to secure any redress if an employee was underpaid. I would have thought that after the number of times I have spoken on this very subject there would have been an increased allocation this year for inspectors; that there would be more inspectors on the staff. We can see that these inspectors who are needed to look after workers not covered by awards, people who are award-free under the Factories and Shops Act, have received no increase in numbers. These men are needed to ensure that workers receive their minimum requirements, their working conditions are adhered to, and that employers are at least paying the minimum award rates and granting the necessary annual leave to ensure the workers are not being disadvantaged.

The fact is the Estimates show that the allocation for 1977-78 was \$230 683, yet the allocation for 1978-79 is \$225 300, a reduction of \$5 300. I am now wondering whether the inspectorate is to be reduced from 19 to 18 or 17.

Mr Hodge: They might be underpaying them.

Mr SKIDMORE: When the previous Minister for Labour and Industry has risen in answer to my queries he has always mentioned the diverse responsibilities of the inspectors and how they have to cover a great range of industries. The situation is not good enough. I would suggest members look at the number of prosecutions which have taken place and are listed in the Chief Conciliation Commissioner's report. They could see there the amount of money recovered by the unions when they have sought redress from the employers. It would be the tip of the iceberg. It is not good enough.

It is about time these inspectors got out and did their job. We should not have an inspector on perhaps \$12 000 or \$13 000 sitting in an office answering telephones when there are many young people in the community who could be employed as junior clerks on \$4 000 or \$5 000 who could handle this sort of telephone work. Without doubt more inspectors are needed.

Vote put and passed.

Votes: Industrial Commission, \$512 000; Public Service Arbitration, \$78 000; State Insurance Office, \$10—put and passed.

Vote: Consumer Affairs Bureau, \$460 990—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$388 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: The Consumer Affairs Bureau does a remarkably good job and has given me a great deal of assistance, especially in relation to hire purchase and matters involving motorcars. I had a problem I checked with them recently about my own son who was involved in a rather shonky deal with a car firm in Bassendean called J. K. Autos on Old Perth Road.

There seems to be a bottleneck in the bureau in that there is only one legal officer employed. In 1977-78 he must have been employed on a part-time basis because he received only \$2 751. I can only assume from answers I have received on occasions when I have been seeking legal advice and been told that there was nobody available, that his employment was on a part-time basis. I have suggested to the commissioner that I hoped the bureau would get a full-time officer.

It would appear that this is about to happen as this year's allocation is for \$18 600. One legal officer would be the minimum required; two would be more appropriate.

I am concerned also that the bureau has to engage outside assistance when it requires technical advice. On one occasion, when I needed confirmation that certain work to a Ford F100 utility's front assembly had not been done, the bureau sent someone around as requested. I asked that person whether the work had been done and when the dealer asked what qualification the man had he had to admit he was not a mechanic. On that basis the dealer was able to challenge the man's ability to make a qualified judgment.

The man had to admit he was engaged only as an investigatory officer. I later checked with the bureau and found this was the case in many instances. It seems there should be a certified mechanical engineer on the pay-roll whose services could be availed of when someone wishes to challenge the veracity of mechanical repairs, etc. It must be shown that the officer does have the qualifications to make a judgment.

I am not reflecting on the officer who came out on the occasion I mentioned. He and I were finally able to come to a satisfactory arrangement with the dealer. The amount involved was \$85

for the part, but there was more money involved—\$100—for the labour to take it out, repair it, and replace it. It was fortunate that I had some knowledge of mechanical matters. This is a matter that surely should be looked at. Without such an officer in the department there can be quite a delay before the bureau can find someone to carry out an investigation. In the case of spray painting it would not take long to cover up something and it would be too late to make a judgment by the time the person arrived on the scene.

Sir Charles Court: There are other law costs provided for under the contingency items in addition to the legal officer.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Immigration, \$925 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$141 000—

Mr T. J. BURKE: The State migration officer appears to be the only person in this document who is to receive a reduced salary. His allocation in 1977-78 was \$17 462, while this year it has been reduced to \$17 100. My concern is that I have for some time felt that the State Immigration Department hardly justifies the expenditure we allocate to it. The department seems to deal only with migrants from the United Kingdom. It seems that if advice is asked of the State Migration Officer the reply comes not from him but from the Under Secretary for Labour and Industry indicating the query has been referred to Canberra, and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration. They then reply to the State Migration Officer indicating a case has or has not been allowed to be processed by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration.

I am not reflecting upon the employees of the State Department. However, it seems to be a complete waste of time. This roundabout way of doing things has been evident for the last couple of years in processing applications from the United Kingdom. Perhaps with the introduction of the ethnic affairs officer his role could be expanded to include those duties now carried out by the State Department of Immigration. With the demise of the Good Neighbour Council which has over the years built up a wide and useful network of volunteers, perhaps the State department could be given a more useful role and the money spent on it could be put to a more useful purpose.

I am genuinely concerned that it is a waste of time and money to take such a circuitous route to introduce migrants from the United Kingdom

and we do not need to do this. If we are to retain the department there are several other roles it can fulfil.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Referring to the State Migration Officer and the amount shown against his name, we should not take that as the final arbiter of exactly what he will be paid compared with what he was paid last year. There are times when such things as accumulated leave and other special items must be considered, but the honourable member can be assured that he will be paid his full entitlement.

As far as the role of the department is concerned, I do not regard the department as redundant. On the contrary the reports I have received indicate that it is doing good work. The fact that we have an ethnic affairs officer indicates that when the former Minister was in charge—the member for South Perth—he had stepped up considerably this side of the activities of the department.

Concerning the Commonwealth decision to embrace the Galbally report, we do not go along with that in its entirety because there are some aspects they will regret. However, one of the results will be the demise of the Good Neighbour Council and the Commonwealth has made it very clear it will not take up the chit for that organisation. The amount which would be involved would be beyond our competence in the present budgetary situation. I have made it clear to the organisation that we could not fill the gap the Commonwealth has made.

I remind the honourable member that his party, particularly at the Federal level, appears to welcome the Galbally report which has brought a new approach to the subject, but I have my doubts whether it will work as well as people think it will.

Mr Davies: What parts don't you like?

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Fisheries and Wildlife, \$4 047 000—

Point of Order

Mr SKIDMORE: On a point of order, I seek your guidance Mr Chairman. I wish to speak to items 1, 5, and 8. My impression is that I may speak for 20 minutes on each item.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is what I wanted to do previously when we were discussing division 35. I wanted to discuss item 8 but then found it was too late to do so. I hope you will give me more time to deal with the items under this division.

The CHAIRMAN: I certainly will if you indicate which item you wish to discuss.

Committee Resumed

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$2 586 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: I want to refer to some of the stirring work done by the South Coast Fisheries Study. It is sad to me that apparently sufficient finance is not being made available for the implementation of the recommendations of the study.

In 1977-78 the lobster industry provided a gross income to Western Australia of \$44 141 300 and more would have been involved in associated services. It seems to me that an industry which is so valuable to the State should receive more funds.

I also point out that despite the shorter season, the actual tonnage in 1977-78 was 9 297 compared with the 1975-76 catch which was 8 757 tonnes. The prawn tonnage dropped by almost 1 400 tonnes in the same year, but was still worth \$12 333 500.

Sir Charles Court: To which item are you speaking?

Mr SKIDMORE: Item No. 1.

Sir Charles Court: You could have fooled me!

Mr SKIDMORE: I want to indicate the value of the fishery and the amount of work done by the South Coast Fisheries Study and compare it with the paucity of funds provided for research.

Sir Charles Court: Item No. 1 deals with salaries, wages and allowances.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is right.

Sir Charles Court: What items are you querying? Who is under or overpaid?

Mr SKIDMORE: There was also an increase in the value of the wet fish sales but the fishermen involved were in financial difficulties.

Sir Charles Court: Which officers are you querying?

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the member to relate his remarks to item No. 1.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am doing that and I thank you for your guidance.

Sir Charles Court: I am trying to work out which officers you are querying.

Mr SKIDMORE: If the Premier would be patient and stop chattering he will be told. He seems to think he knows everything and he does not want anyone to develop an argument.

Sir Charles Court: I want to know what officers you are worried about.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am worried about the amount of income which is generated by these fishermen and the amount of money provided for research. I have already given the income. Surely it would not be unreasonable to expect that the amount set aside for research officers would be increased considerably. However, what do we find?

Notwithstanding the increased income the State receives, there are only 38 research officers. Last year the budget was \$481 524 and this year the amount will be increased to only \$507 200, or approximately \$26 000 which I imagine would take care of increases in salaries in normal circumstances. Surely the industry is deserving of more than 38 research officers if it is to do its work properly. There are 49 inspectors who last year were paid \$588 083 and for the coming year they will be paid \$600 000 which is an increase of only \$12 000.

There are 43 wildlife research and conservation officers. We know there is a sad lack of officers in this department because of the lack of research that went into the Wagerup refinery project. When the department was preparing its submission on the ERMP, it had to rely on documents produced by people outside the department in respect of fauna on the Darling Scarp. It was so outdated it was not funny. In this respect there is to be an increase of only \$23 000. This makes me wonder whether the Government is really conscious of the value of the industry because it is asking so few officers to take care of it.

Item No. 5: Fisheries—Inspection and Research, \$404 000.

Mr SKIDMORE: I want to draw attention to some of the recommendations made by the South Coast Fisheries Study which require research. For instance it recommended that there be a restriction on set nets by amateurs at specified beaches. This aspect alone would require a reasonable allocation of funds. On this item in 1977-78 the vote was \$368 000 and the actual expenditure was \$425 444. An extra amount of approximately \$60 000 was spent in that particular department. In view of the additional loan we would expect the department to have as a result of the recommendations of the study we would expect the vote to be increased, but it is to be decreased.

Another aspect of the study's recommendations which will require finance for research involves the estuarine fisheries to ascertain whether or not they are in jeopardy by amateur or professional netting, or whether there should be amalgamation of the two aspects. Also it must be decided whether the estuaries should be open at certain times of the year and whether the bar should be kept open to replenish the stock. I would have thought this would involve an increased expenditure, but there is to be a reduction of nearly \$20 000. Obviously any research required will not be carried out this year.

Surely the Premier should indicate how the vote can possibly be reduced because it should be increased by at least \$2 000 or \$3 000.

Item No. 8: Fisheries and Wildlife—Special Projects, \$10 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: The allocation for this item last year was \$24 000 of which only \$19 727 was spent. The estimate for next year is \$10 000. Many of the recommendations of the South Coast Fisheries Study could have been covered under this item but it, too, is to be reduced.

For instance the squid catch is a lucrative field which is being considered off the south coast and this could have been included in the special projects. This is an item which should receive \$100 000 to \$150 000 as more money was not provided under item No. 5.

I hope that if the Premier cannot answer my comments tonight, they will be noted and I will be advised later of the position.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The point the honourable member raised under item 8 must be related back to such items as Nos. 1, 5, and 6. I remind him that a department like this does not receive an allocation of an extra \$100 000 or \$200 000 for research work which it spends on the spot. It may, of course, use other organisations to undertake projects. The honourable member will find there is a research organisation established which has been built up over a period of years. It attracts unto itself people with specialised skills who undertake the work on a general basis. Then from time to time it brings in people with extra skills and specialisation.

I believe the department has been very well funded and I would say, having regard for the budgetary situation, this division was very well treated.

Mr Skidmore: Perhaps you will explain to me the reduction under item No. 5 of the funding.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is part of the programme. The department puts in a budget and it is evaluated.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Conservation and Environment, \$1 734 000—put and passed.

Part 7: Attorney General—

Votes: Crown Law, \$10 990 000; Corporate Affairs Office, \$1 189 000; Office of Titles, \$3 064 000; Public Trust Office, \$1 586 000—put and passed.

Part 8: Minister for Education—

Vote: Education, \$332 213 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$262 082 000—

Mr PEARCE: The Government consistently underspends the amount it allocates to education funding. This item illustrates it better than any other. I made the complaint last year that the Government underspent its allocation for teachers' salaries and the salaries of departmental officers and the like by \$7 million, at a time when many teachers were unemployed. This year exactly the same thing occurred. In last year's Budget the Government voted \$230 964 000 for education and spent only \$226 031 408.

Mr H. D. Evans: There will be greater underspending this year with the strike. How many millions would that have saved?

Mr PEARCE: Someone has pointed out to me that the figures for the amount saved by the strike against the number of teachers alleged to have taken part in the strike mean teachers have been docked as though they were earning \$17 000 or \$18 000 per annum each. Very few teachers earn that much.

The point I am making is that just under \$5 million has been underspent on the vote for teachers' salaries. There is plenty of money for teachers' salaries, which makes it so surprising that teachers are unemployed. This year, 1978, has shown record unemployment among teachers in this State. Something like 1 400 teachers may well have been unemployed at the beginning of the year. It is difficult to be precise, but of those, some 700 graduates coming out of the teachers' training colleges were not appointed at the start of the year, and if we take people coming from overseas and interstate, married teachers on the temporary staff, not re-employed and 200 or 300 college graduates left over from the year before who could not get employment, the situation for teachers is grim.

I saw in the gallery today a social studies teacher I knew several years ago and he told me—I do not know whether it is true—that there are no positions at all for graduates in social studies teaching this year. In that case I cannot understand how the Government consistently underspends its allocation—by \$7 million last year and \$5 million this year.

I think one of the reasons is the Government always inflates its education vote in a general sense and then underspends it. If that is done consistently it is possible to exaggerate the percentage increase each year. In round terms, if the Government votes itself \$100 000 one year and \$110 000 the next year, it can claim a 10 per cent increase; but if it underspends the \$110 000 by \$10 000, so that it actually spends the same amount as in the year before, and in the next year votes itself \$110 000 again, it can claim another 10 per cent increase without spending more money.

I am not suggesting the Government does not spend more money each year but it is certainly the case that the percentage increase in funds each year does not match when several years are put together.

I might give the Government a slight pat on the back in that the carve-up of the money is reasonable. I was particularly pleased to see the Education Department was prepared to continue with the system of having specialist teachers in the primary division. I thought the allocations there were good. Growth towards specialisation in that area is fine, and in all those areas the department has done a reasonable job with the money available.

In the general teaching area, though, an insufficient effort has gone in this year again to provide enough jobs for teachers, to seek out the unemployed and bring class sizes down significantly. There may be some decrease in the class sizes in the forthcoming year, and my guess is it will be because of a slightly shrinking school population rather than an increase in the number of teachers.

I am pleased to know I have had an impact on the Budget speech itself. Last year when the Treasurer read out the section on education he gave specific numbers of teachers to be employed in certain years, and the grant in terms of teachers, and I was able to use those numbers to indicate there would be an increase in class sizes. This year the Treasurer removed those figures to make the calculation impossible. So the Treasurer or the Treasury took cognisance of my remarks last year and resolved not to make the same mistake again.

Mr BRYCE: There is an aspect of this very specific item which concerns me greatly as a result of a question which was one of a series of questions I put to the Government on the matter of the computer revolution. I asked the Minister for Education a question which was related to 17 others on that broad subject.

I asked the Minister whether the Education Department had identified those areas of the State's education system which were likely to be affected by computer-based technological change. The Minister came back with an answer in three parts which was rather disturbing. The first part of the answer was, "Yes. We have come to the conclusion that the age of computers will not replace school teachers." I have no doubt it will be appreciated many people sighed with relief when the Minister made that pronouncement for the benefit of all and sundry in Western Australia. It was the second part of his answer which concerned me greatly. He said, "We have switched the payment of teachers' salaries and the salaries of staff across to the computer." The third part of the answer was that a computer centre had been set up at Mirrabooka High School.

What concerns me greatly about that is that the Western Australian Education Department appears to have failed to grasp the very real significance of the changes which are about to occur in Western Australia, but more particularly it seems the education system itself is at the present time being run by a set of decision-makers who have failed to grasp the significance of the challenges to our education system.

I suggest it is not sufficient to outline the preparation the State Education Department has made for the tremendous changes which will occur by saying, on one hand, "Yes, we have agreed teachers will not be replaced", and on the other hand, "We have switched the method of paying their salaries across to the computer." What I want to stress at this point is it is a great pity that the Education Department thinks the beginning and the end of the challenges to the education system in Western Australia are related to the supply and the payment of school teachers.

In fact, the challenges which will be thrown up to the education system include retraining schemes for an enormous number of adult workers, people who will be displaced in industry and will have to be taken back into the education system, the technical system, and the professional system and be retrained for a whole range of new job opportunities. The Minister did not indicate in answer to that question that the Education Department was thinking about this, let alone planning for it.

I see from other parts of the Estimates that there is no indication anywhere in the Minister's Budget that the Government understands the magnitude of the problem facing us. There is no indication in the Minister's answer to that question that the Government can appreciate what it means to the youngsters who are still at school and who are being trained for jobs which will not exist when they are ready to join the work force, and the education system will be largely responsible for it. I think it is a great pity there is not the farsightedness at the level of the principal decision-makers in the Education Department to indicate that these people can recognise the problem in both its breadth and its depth.

I conclude by emphasising that the Minister was not permitted to give the answer to that question for one month. It took us a month to get the answer to the question, "What is the Education Department doing to identify the challenges to the system as a result of computer-based technological change?" and when the answer came back it revealed that the thinking of the principal decision-makers in education was totally barren in this area.

If the Education Department had a set of ideas, a scheme, or a plan to handle this problem, surely that was the opportunity for the Minister to indicate it to us. As I conclude I repeat again that all the Minister could say to us in respect of one of the biggest and most significant changes to the system was firstly that the teachers were not going to be replaced by computers; secondly, the method of paying schoolteachers and staff members of the Education Department had been switched to the computer, and, thirdly, the centre for school computer studies had been set up at one particular high school in Perth.

Mr P. V. JONES: I wish to comment regarding the remarks of the member for Gosnells. He has not grasped the fact that there is no underspending of salaries at all. He produced this argument last year, and he quoted the same figure tonight. He has not read his papers properly. The allocation for salaries will be spent. If he looks at the last figure in item No. 1, he will see provision of \$9.5 million is made for salary and wage adjustments. That is an estimate of the amount needed to be set aside for the salary and wage adjustments which will occur throughout the year.

Any underspending occurs within that figure. To try to relate that to the general figure for salaries by saying that we did not spend the

allocation for salaries, and the surplus could have been used for additional employment, is not to understand the matter.

In a situation like this where we are dealing with some 21 700 people, an allowance must be made for salary and wage adjustments. Where that amount is not totally expended, as was the case in the last two years—and the member referred to this matter in the debate last year—it does not mean there is underspending. The amount may well be fully utilised this year. Indeed, having regard for the way the financial year is proceeding so far I anticipate the amount will be totally expended.

In respect of the member's suggestion that it be used for additional employment, I repeat that the Education Department is not an employment agency. We will not use additional funds simply to employ teachers who happen to be available.

Notwithstanding that, the situation is that the item reflects additional employment over and above what I require to cope with increased enrolments. It provides for an additional 429 teachers; 46 more specialists such as library staff and persons in categories such as would be required in high school science faculties; and 120 aides in primary schools. All those staff are before we start talking of registrars, cleaners, gardeners, Public Service staff, etc. That is the amount by which the teaching force has been increased in this Budget over and above the number of teachers required to maintain normal staffing after allowing for additional enrolments.

Mr PEARCE: I will not delay the Chamber. However, the Minister is only compounding his own errors by drawing the attention of the Committee to the provision of salary and wage adjustments. When he says that the adjustments occur in the sum of \$9.5 million that is provided, he fails to draw attention to the amount of money the Government is allocating for education services over and above the \$262.082 million. He is providing an additional amount of \$9.5 million for that purpose. I pointed out last year that the Government underspent by \$5 million. I do not have last year's Budget in front of me to ascertain what provision was made for salary adjustments, but obviously the Government underspent salaries by \$5 million, and on top of that it had the provision for salary and wage adjustments.

Over and above the amount of \$262.082 million a further \$9.5 million is allocated, which means the Government can overrun on teachers' salaries by \$9.5 million before it gets into trouble. In the last two years not only has there been

no overrun of \$9.5 million, but there has been no overrun at all. Instead there has been an underrun of \$7 million and \$5 million. So if there is an underrun next year of \$6 million, and that amount is added to the provision of salary and wage adjustments, the Government will have a surplus of \$15 million of money for teachers' salaries.

I agree with the Minister that there is a need for variation, but it is still not completely accurate to count all these sums in the percentage increase on education. The Minister is saying, "Look how much more we are spending in percentage terms." Yet much of the increase is illusory because it is a provision for salary and wage adjustments which has not been spent in the past two years. This makes the education vote seem much greater than it really is.

I am tired of the Minister saying the Education Department is not an employment agency. It is. That is the first thing, because it does employ a lot of teachers, and it has a significant social responsibility. We are not suggesting that the teacher intake ought to be geared solely to the number of teachers available; but we are pointing out that the Government has claimed a commitment to decreasing class sizes. There is a great degree of evidence which suggests that class sizes smaller than those in Western Australia have an advantageous educational effect; therefore we feel the Government has a responsibility to bring down class sizes as quickly as possible.

Along with that educational responsibility the Government is in the very happy circumstance of having surplus teachers available to bring down class sizes, and also it has a surplus of money with which to pay them. This is the only Government which has had that happy combination; no other Government has had it. Yet on both occasions in the last two years the Government has chosen to ignore those happy factors working in its favour.

Item No. 6: Assistance to Private Schools, \$11 031 000—

Mr DAVIES: In April of this year I received an invitation to attend the opening of the Brother Edmund Rice Hall at St. Mark's College. This is a beautiful hall which was built mostly by voluntary labour. It is a multi-purpose hall, and over 252 parents and members of the staff worked on it. It was estimated the hall would cost something like \$200 000, but the actual cost was in the region of \$60 000.

I attended the opening together with the Premier, Bishop Healy, and local and Federal Government dignitaries. The hall was packed with something like 1 500 people, and even the standing room was taken up. When introducing guests and dealing with opening preliminaries, the master of ceremonies (Brother Tom Pickett) said that a great deal of work had been done voluntarily, and they were hoping to get some assistance.

When the principal (Brother Negus) spoke he gave some broad hints to both the Government and the Opposition that it was hoped a donation would be made towards the magnificent hall. He reminded us that it cost about \$60 000. The Premier got up to speak and he was in his most expansive mood. He said, "This is a magnificent hall. You people can be proud of what you have done. This is the initiative that we look for; this is the initiative that we applaud." We all got the feeling the Government would donate some money. As I said, the Premier was in his most expansive mood and everyone was smiling, thinking they would get some money all right.

The Premier said that only at lunch time just before leaving his home he had spoken to the Under Treasurer and said to him, "Something must be done to help these people. You know, things might be bad, but there is always something at the bottom of the barrel. I am certain of that." Everyone was smiling and saying, "We are right now."

The Premier was so carried away with himself he kept going on and on. He indicated the brothers would receive an answer within a week. When he replied, Brother Negus said, "We will watch every post for that brown envelope; it is not a matter of whether or not it comes, but a matter of how much it will contain." There was a great deal of clapping and smiling.

I thought the school really deserved some assistance because the hall is absolutely magnificent, and it was built mostly by voluntary labour. Not only that, but all private funds were used.

That was on the 30th July. Subsequently I wrote to Brother Negus and enclosed a small personal donation. On the 5th September I asked the Treasurer what had happened in respect of that assistance, and he replied as follows—

(1) to (4) I am in the process of advising the college the result of the special study made by the Treasury and myself of their particular case.

I would prefer to allow the college the courtesy of receiving my reply before making any public comment on the matter.

I will let the Leader of the Opposition have a copy of my letter to the college as soon as the college has received it later this week.

On the 3rd October I again asked the Treasurer what had happened, and his reply was that a letter had been posted to St. Mark's College on Friday, the 29th September, and a copy had been sent to me. I find on my file that copy arrived in my office on the 3rd October, the day I asked the question. This happens fairly regularly, not only to me, but to other members also. One asks a question and a letter is sent out or action is taken, and a Press release is made which pre-empt the answer which is given in the House. So often when we ask a question of a Minister a Press release is issued before Parliament sits, which gives the answer which will be given in the Parliament later on. This is obviously deliberate.

On the 29th September the Premier gave me a full page reply saying that it had been a pretty hard thing, looking at this problem, and he gave it a lot of consideration. A couple of months' consideration?

Mr T. J. Burke: Did he give them any money?

Mr DAVIES: Let me come to the punch line in my own way. The Premier wrote a three-page letter to Brother Negus, and he finished up by saying—

... we are not able to find a way of recognising this in a more tangible form through a special cash payment.

Kindest regards, and every good wish—

Mr Pearce: He got more out of you than he did out of the Government.

Mr DAVIES: In his most expansive mood earlier, the Premier said, "It does not matter how bad things look. There is always something in the bottom of the barrel." That was not so when the cheque was going to be sent.

I understand that Brother Negus quoted the Premier's letter in a newsletter distributed to some 600 parents. I also understand that it was distributed at about the time the Premier opened the Mirrabooka shopping centre. At that stage, someone told the Premier they did not think he was very kind, having led the people to believe some donation would be made, and then two months later sending along his good wishes.

I understand that there was a running around once again—"Let us have another look at it. We have to see what can be done." However, not one cent has yet been paid to St. Marks. That is disgraceful. Surely to goodness the Premier must have had some idea what would be available before he stood up before a bishop, dignitaries, and 1 500 people and led them to believe that their work was to be recognised. The Premier should have kept his mouth shut. He should not have given those people the hope that they would receive something. He should have had a look at the position before the Sunday lunch time—before he sat down to his roast dinner.

I received the invitation in a letter on the 18th April. It was not just a formal invitation; it was a full page letter, as members can see. The letter detailed the costs involved, and the voluntary effort that had been put into it. I congratulate those people on what they did. What the Premier said is absolutely true; it was a magnificent effort. It certainly deserved reward. It certainly deserved a better reward than the Premier gave them on that occasion.

I am making a plea even at this late stage that if the Premier can find some of that money in the bottom of the barrel—even if it is only a miserable \$500, or something like that—it should be given to those people to show that the Premier really meant what he said.

The opportunity offered to the Premier was just too good to miss. It was just too good a chance to put on a good show in front of a lot of people, hoping that they would forget his promises in the end. It was a disgraceful episode. I hope it is not too late for the people at St. Marks to receive some money.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you suggesting that they did not even get the interest deposit?

Mr DAVIES: I am suggesting they received nothing at all.

Vote put and passed.

Part 9: Minister for Industrial Development and Mines—

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [2.19 a.m.]: I have received information recently that an approach has been made to the Minister regarding a floating dock at Fremantle. There have been many suggestions over the years that a floating dock should be established at Fremantle.

The Indian Ocean is a very wide one. In the northern extremities of it, there are docking facilities in India, in Surabaya, and in Singapore.

There are docking facilities on the South African coast. However, there are none on the Australian coast.

With the development of the North-West Shelf project, we can expect an increase in shipping. Indeed, there has been greater movement of shipping needing repairs in this State recently. One ship may still be in port. That ship had problems, and it had to be towed into the harbour. I suggest there is a need for a ship repair facility at Fremantle.

Unfortunately, we have not had answers to questions. We do not look like receiving them tonight. Therefore, I cannot predict the Minister's answer to my question. However, I understand that a Mr Charles Hughes, who is an engineer of some standing, has been asked to report on the feasibility of a floating dock being positioned in the Fremantle Harbour. It is my understanding that Mr Hughes is enthusiastic about that possibility. He inspected the slipway facilities that are available. He suggested that if there were dredging inside the harbour, alongside the south mole, there would be sufficient room to place this facility.

Mr Davies: Inside the main harbour?

Mr JAMIESON: Yes, inside the main harbour. That would accommodate a vessel up to 25 000 tonnes, which is a fairly large ship.

Provision should be made for the repair of vessels of that size. The nearest floating dock at present is in Melbourne. There are others outside Australia, but I understand that one incurs penalties from the Commonwealth unless a case is made out for exclusion from the penalty provisions.

When one considers the naval build-up in Western Australia, the requirement of ships to service the North-West Shelf project, and the increase in normal shipping, there is a great need for a docking facility. The Government should take up its options and do something about it.

One of the problems at Fremantle recently has been the question of unemployment. I understand Mr Hughes was very impressed with the availability of labour. He was also impressed with the standard of efficiency in ship repairing. He made mention of the fact that the costs were a little higher than others; but that increased cost was offset by the distance from other docking facilities.

There are arguments going on about the retrenchment of workers from the Public Works Department's slipway at Fremantle because of the lack of work opportunities. Unless some move is made to go into the larger field of a floating

dock, which could possibly be used by foreign ships, we will miss out on the opportunity available to us. It would be an industrial development project. It would need funds.

I suggested in my question that the Minister should request the Premier to make overtures to Canberra. I see by this morning's paper that overtures are being made to train efficient workmen. There is no use having efficient workmen unless one has efficient facilities for them to work in.

If the information made available to me regarding the Hughes report is reasonably correct, the Government should be proceeding forthwith with moves on this project. It should not wait any longer.

There have been discussions about docks at Careening Bay at Garden Island, in conjunction with the Navy. Projects in relation to Cockburn Sound have been mooted from time to time. However, this project must be feasible. It is one that could be put into operation fairly quickly, if such a floating dock is made available to Western Australia.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat—Minister for Industrial Development) [2.26 a.m.]: In connection with this report, the member for Welshpool will know that that came about because of the complaint made by P & O when that company said it was thinking of having all its ships serviced somewhere else. The company contended that the slipway at Fremantle was not well enough equipped to service its ships. The company claimed that the electrical equipment was entirely unserviceable after a service on the Fremantle slipway, due to the jerking.

A conference was held with the unions involved. Some other people were involved in that conference. As a result of the conference, I asked Mr Hughes, who appeared to be an independent observer who had expertise, to look into the situation. His report was received only recently. It is still under consideration, and it will be considered in connection with other lines of thought and expert input. I hope it will overcome the accusation against the slipway, and that it will show it was the fault of the ships and not the slipway that the electrical equipment became unserviceable.

Mr Jamieson: He discounted that claim.

MR MENSAROS: The Hughes report was not a formal inquiry, and therefore there were no strict terms of reference. The further suggestion by Mr Hughes about the floating dock is a welcome suggestion. It will be considered very seriously.

It will be considered in relation to costs and potential uses.

There are floating docks in Australia. My information is that they are under-utilised. Members would know the fate of larger shipbuilding facilities and ship repair facilities in Australia.

In relation to the North-West Shelf project, there is the possibility of supplying as much as we can in Western Australia. There is a high priority to prepare facilities in Cockburn Sound plus a breakwater, to enable the final assembly of modules and other items built in Western Australia.

I indicate to the member that the report is being considered. Other experts will be asked for comments. No doubt the suggestion regarding a floating dock will be taken into consideration.

Vote: Industrial Development, \$5 156 000—

Item No. 2: Administration Expenses, \$253 000—

Mr T. J. BURKE: I am interested in the question of travel and motor vehicle expenses. It has come to my notice that the Minister may have made use of a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce when he last visited London. Did the Minister in fact make use of this vehicle? Was the cost of that debited to his department? If so, why was it necessary to hire a Rolls Royce? Why not a more ordinary car?

Mr MENSAROS: The member's information is not correct.

Vote put and passed.

Vote: Mines, \$11 046 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$7 685 000—

Mr JAMIESON: The policy of the Liberal Party in regard to mining has a very important part to play in the development of Western Australia. Of course that policy is imposed on the people in the Mines Department. We have had a great deal of debate on mining matters; but one aspect occurred to me which is that with the present policy on mining and the fact that the Liberal Party backed off recently from interfering with the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of overseas arrangements and financing of contracts for the supply of various minerals in Australia, I felt the way it developed was rather interesting. I could not make out why the situation had settled down and the Prime Minister had backed off finally.

I researched a number of areas and I came up with the platform of the Federal Liberal Party of Australia which made the situation very clear. The provisions for future contracts was the subject of the statement made by Mr Anthony and it dealt mainly with coal, because contracts are to be written. It did not deal so much with iron ore at that time because most iron ore contracts are of long term. Looking at coal, I have realised why the Prime Minister has backed off. On page 57 of the Federal Liberal Party platform the following statement appears—

The export of surplus energy resources only under terms (including price) and in circumstances which benefit national and regional development.

That policy is very clear. It is no good anyone trying to run away from it. Liberal Party members probably forgot that statement appeared in their platform until somebody reminded them and the Prime Minister backed off. That statement is in accord with the desires of Mr Anthony.

Undoubtedly that has a great deal to do with the current position. Of course the Premier and the Minister are crying their eyes out, but it will not do them much good. This statement appears in black and white and it is part of the Liberal Party policy and it is not a bad policy.

Mr Davies: Their policy never means much.

Mr JAMIESON: When this was discovered and no doubt Mr Anthony reminded members of it, the Prime Minister was prepared to say, "That is fair enough. That is our policy." The Prime Minister backed off. However, the two local incumbents do not seem to have opened the Federal policy booklet for a while. Perhaps they have been put off by the explosive cover which looks as if an atom bomb has blown up unexpectedly. However, a bomb would certainly have gone off when the Prime Minister realised the situation. I wish members of the Liberal Party would make sure where they are going before they make statements and complain about problems created by their own actions.

Mr MENSAROS: I believe you, Sir, were very tolerant in listening to this matter in connection with salaries, wages and allowances of the department; but as you have done so, I hope you will allow me to reply briefly.

The so-called guidelines are against national and regional interests—if one wants to refer to the States as being a region of the Commonwealth. The guidelines are very much against our best interests and they are based on a lack of business understanding of the matter in Canberra.

I wonder whether the member for Welshpool has read all the guidelines. I mention two matters only amongst many others. Loss of tonnage of iron ore from Western Australia could be a result of such a policy. It is a buyers' market today. A great deal of iron ore is available all over the world and it could easily happen that as a result of these guidelines, purchasing would not be covered by long-term agreements and as less tonnages would be covered by old agreements we would lose tonnages as a result. I ask members opposite what is in the national and regional interest, and, therefore, in the best interests of the Western Australian Government?

Should we increase the price by a few cents or should we maintain our tonnages and provide employment?

The second disadvantage both to the nation and to the State is that if financiers and developers hear about these guidelines, it will obviously as it already has, reduce the credit rating of Australia and, therefore, of Western Australia.

Mr Jamieson: You ought to have done something about the Federal Liberal Party platform.

Mr MENSAROS: It has nothing to do with the platform.

Mr Jamieson: It has plenty to do with the platform.

Mr MENSAROS: It has absolutely nothing to do with the platform, because the guidelines are against the interests of the nation and the region and neither are they in conformity with the platform. That is what I am arguing and what I am trying to explain to the honourable member.

Mr Davies: The policy was circulated in 1976 and matters have got worse since then.

Mr MENSAROS: The guidelines are against the best interests of the nation and the region.

Mr Jamieson: You ought to tell the Federal conference.

Mr MENSAROS: We have told the Federal Government this. The guidelines reduce the credibility of Australia which makes it more difficult to develop projects particularly as far as the State of Western Australia is concerned. Our credit rating was one of the best in the world.

Vote put and passed.

Part 10: Minister for Transport—

Vote: Harbour and Light, \$5 816 000—put and passed.

Part 11: Minister for Housing—

Vote: State Housing Commission, \$10—put and passed.

Part 12: Minister for Lands and Forests—

Votes: Lands and Surveys, \$11 374 000; Bush Fires Board, \$728 990; Forests, \$13 983 000—put and passed.

Part 13: Minister for Local Government and Town Planning—

MR TONKIN (Morley) [2.40 a.m.]: I wish to refer to a matter in relation to the Shire of Bayswater. I did not intend to deal with it, but there has been an attack on me personally by five councillors of the Shire of Bayswater. I therefore believe I should indicate what has happened.

First of all I should like to indicate I congratulate the Government on its action in dismissing the council; but I am critical that the first report has not been released, because that would indicate the differences between some of the councillors. It is unfair that some councillors are treated as being guilty when in fact they are not. Five councillors wrote a letter to the Minister for Labour and Industry, because he refused to answer a question on behalf of the Minister for Local Government. Part of this letter was quoted in *The West Australian*. It is said in this letter that I played an underhand role in the destruction of the Shire of Bayswater. The five councillors said also that I lacked the courage to confront any of them publicly and I carried on a campaign of character assassination.

The five councillors are: A. Hinds, C. R. Affleck, R. Thompson, W. T. Naylor, and G. L. Gobbar. Why did they make these malicious comments about me? They made them because I asked questions in Parliament.

In the first place I want to make it clear that I was not making assertions about them, but I wanted to know the answers to questions which the Minister for Local Government had refused to give. Do these people not understand it is my duty as a member of Parliament to ask questions? It is my duty to protect the interests of the ordinary people in the area who have been ripped off by the council in a most shameful fashion. I do not believe it is the function of shire councils to have their hands in the pockets of ratepayers.

If those comments are made about me because I do my duty by asking questions, I will not now shirk from exposing the councillors fully, even though, as I have said, I previously was happy to let the matter drop and not to go any further in

exposing them. But now I have to answer the charges against me which were made in *The West Australian*.

First of all, I did not have an underhand role in the destruction of the councillors and the Shire of Bayswater. They were destroyed by their own greed and dishonesty. They were destroyed also by the fact that three former councillors were honest enough to take action and they showed a great deal of courage. Those three former councillors are P. O'Hara, A. Johnston, and T. Reynolds. They have suffered a great deal of personal abuse from the other five councillors, because they would not betray their principles.

I reject the comment that I have lacked the courage to act publicly, because all my work on this matter has been public. I am prepared to debate the issues publicly.

I know the chief spokesman for the five councillors, Mr Hinds, refused to appear on "TDT" when he was given the chance to defend himself. In contrast to Mr Hinds I have never refused to appear on "TDT" or on any other television programme.

We have to understand what has happened here. There are three classes of councillors involved. Firstly there are the councillors who have enriched themselves from the ratepayers' pockets. That is one category. Secondly, there are the councillors who are guilty also, not because they have enriched themselves, but because they have allowed others to do so. They may have done this through weakness, because they did not want to stand up against their friends or against people with whom they worked. They turned a blind eye or refused to expose the dishonesty. But I believe they are guilty, because they were part of it and they were aiding and abetting it.

The third category includes those who would not be part of the corruption. I refer to P. O'Hara, A. Johnston, and T. Reynolds.

In the letter published in *The West Australian* lies were told. For example, I asked whether Mr Gobba had applied for a drain, on land adjoining his land, to be filled in. Notice the word "adjoining". The article mentioned that word. I asked whether he had applied for the drain on the land adjoining his land to be filled in. They say I implied that he applied to have the drain on his land filled in. I actually stated the drain on the land adjoining his. To say I implied it was on his land is untrue; it is a twisting of the truth.

I would like to point out what happened with respect to this land. Mr Gobba applied for the drain on the land adjoining his to be filled in because he wanted to purchase it and use it for

parking. The council refused. In 1976 Mr Gobba applied again for the drain to be filled in and this time council agreed. It set aside \$11 300, and got Mr Gobba to contribute \$2 500. The drain was then filled in. The council then made a recommendation in January, 1977, to the Lands Department that the land upon which the drain was situated should be sold to Mr Gobba for a nominal sum. It was then sold to Mr Gobba for \$100 and amalgamated with the land on lot 13. So, the situation is that the ratepayers paid something like \$11 000, Mr Gobba paid \$2 500, and another \$100 to purchase the land. That man received a gift from the ratepayers of \$9 000. That is a scandalous act on the part of the council, and all those who had a hand in it should be condemned.

Much of the defence of Mr Hinds has been that he did not really know what was going on. He said he was in the hands of bureaucrats. I think a couple of minutes passed by the council show that Mr Hinds was in control. First of all, he was found guilty of acting illegally with regard to absentee votes. He was found guilty by a magistrate. I did not say he was guilty of that. A magistrate did.

The worst feature is that Slab House has had a monopoly to supply kerbing and slabs to the council. I believe the Local Government Act should be amended to make that illegal because it is not illegal at the present time. Councillor O'Hara was concerned about this and he put a motion to the council to investigate the question of the supply of slabs to the council. He was threatened with legal action by the shire manager. Why? For doing the job given to him as a councillor under the provisions of the Local Government Act. The Act enjoins all elected councillors to look after the money of the ratepayers, and to make sure contracts are properly kept. He was threatened with legal action by the shire manager. The situation was that he saw something was wrong and he wanted to bring it to the attention of the council. However, he was placed under the threat of a writ from the shire manager, and he was forced to humiliate himself at the following meeting by apologising. He moved a motion as follows—

That Council view with concern the lack of control on slabs and kerbs supplied to Council by Slabhouse under the present contract, namely—

1. That only one test has been carried out on slabs and kerbs during the duration of the present contract.

2. That the clause in the previous contract requiring a special area for stockpiling slabs and kerbs to be supplied to Council has been deleted from the present contract.
3. To remove both the supplier and the company employees from the invidious position, either party may be placed in under the present system, an independent body should be selected to test slabs taken from any area within the Council boundaries.

As a consequence of Councillor O'Hara's attempt to put a stop to what was taking place, he received a letter dated the 16th June, 1977, from Robinson Cox & Co., acting for the shire manager (Mr Wells). Mr O'Hara did not have the money to fight a court case and so he withdrew the motion and apologised at the next council meeting. He apologised for doing his job; what a humiliation!

The shire engineer took it upon himself to have some slabs tested. They were so green that they were falling to pieces in the hands of the workers. They were found to be faulty, but the report was ignored and the practice continued. That shire engineer later left because he could not work under such conditions; he was too ethical.

Council decided that extruded kerbing, which costs something like one-third the price of that supplied by Slab House, was not to be used without the express permission of council. Of course, council never gave permission to the shire engineer to buy the cheaper extruded kerbing. It continued to insist that all kerbing be purchased from Slab House.

Much more recently than the other tests I mentioned, kerbing was tested and found to be faulty. The contract required that if any one slab or piece of kerbing was found to be inadequate, the whole batch should be discarded. However, the whole batch was not discarded and the terms of the contract were not enforced. A fraud was perpetrated upon the ratepayers of the Shire of Bayswater because all these substandard slabs and kerbings were being forced upon them.

If the residents want to know why their rates are so high here is one of the reasons. Mr Hinds was lining his pockets and being supported by the others of the five.

It has been stated that Mr Hinds did not know what was going on. However, Mr Hinds had absolute and dictatorial control over the shire employees. On the 12th March, 1975, a motion was passed giving Mr Hinds complete control

over the staff, so that he could, and did, order staff not to test his slabs or kerbs. That was a minute passed on the 12th March.

Mr Hinds went even further. On the 16th July, 1975, a motion was passed setting out that in future staff were not to raise matters at council meetings already resolved by council without the prior express permission of the shire president. So, when council employees found that certain illegal actions were occurring—and Mr Hinds said he did not know what was going on—they were prohibited from drawing those occurrences to the attention of the council without first getting permission from the president.

I state here unequivocally that shire councils were not established as playthings for the benefit of unscrupulous people. We will not support anyone who does this sort of thing; not for any reason. I do not care whose friends they are, which political party they support, or what club they belong to.

All members of this Parliament received a letter from the five councillors who referred to various things that were happening. The letter purported to answer some of the things set out in the second report which the Minister for Local Government released to Parliament. I will indicate the kind of answers supplied to the questions. For example, one is headed, "Unusual Haste" and it concerns lots 473 and 474, together with two other lots. The four lots were amalgamated with undue haste. On a Saturday they were passed in from an auction. Instead of going to a town planning committee meeting, on the Wednesday—four days later—without consulting Margaret Feilman, who was the consultant the shire retained for the purposes of town planning, they were amalgamated.

The amalgamated blocks were to be used for group housing. Those amalgamated lots were more valuable than the separate lots and they should have been offered to the public once their status had been altered to make sure that the highest price was obtained. They were not; they were sold by private treaty. The four separate lots were passed in, amalgamated without going to the consultant on town planning, and then sold by private treaty. Who were they offered to? Robert John Marshall, the son of the auctioneer, for \$50 000. No valuation was obtained. Mr Hinds witnessed the signature of Marshall on the offer and acceptance form.

In August, 1977, Anderson Constructions offered \$85 000 for the block. The facts were disclosed to the CIB, and the contract was rescinded and did not go through. That answers the comments made by the five who stated that

it was nonsense to talk about unusual haste having occurred. That gives some idea of the kind of by-passing which occurred. The idea of an auction is to make sure that the highest price is obtained in the interests of the landowner. That system was short-circuited.

The appointment of Mr Theo Symonds as town planner was recommended by Councillors Bob Thompson and W. J. Naylor. Comments about Mr Symonds included—

Has independent means and will not be swayed by outside interests.

Is a brilliant organiser and town planner.

In actual fact, this person had no qualifications whatsoever with regard to town planning. When he was appointed as town planner he was actually in dispute with the council over some land he owned. What a lovely type of person to have on the shire; a landowner in dispute with the council. He was appointed as town planner so that he could fix things up.

Lot 431 was offered for sale and an offer of \$40 000 was refused because the council considered it was worth \$80 000. It was offered to oil companies for a service station site, but no offers were received. The classification was altered to "Shopping". It was not offered to the general public so it was not known whether it would be worth more or less. Once again, it should have been offered to the public once its classification had been changed so that the landowners got the best price. The Governor's approval was not obtained for a sale, which is a requirement of the scheme. The block was sold to Crimea Pty. Ltd. for \$30 000. Remember, a sum of \$40 000 was knocked back because the council considered it was worth \$80 000. It was sold by private treaty for \$30 000.

Council was never asked for its opinion by Mr Hinds who organised this sale to Crimea Pty. Ltd.

Finally, there is the question of not calling tenders. Under the Local Government Act, a council must call tenders for anything in excess of \$4 000. So to avoid calling tenders, at one stage the council broke up its jobs so that each one was for less than \$4 000 and the jobs were then given to Goldfields Contractors without going through the process of tendering. On another occasion, several people submitted tenders. Council said all the tenders were satisfactory, and then gave to Mr Hinds the power to get anyone to do the job, subject to plant being available. Members know already whose plant was always available—the favoured tenderer: Goldfields Contractors. This company was given all the jobs under \$4 000.

Fancy a shire accepting all tenders, even though they varied in price, and saying that all were satisfactory.

I have risen on this matter firstly because of my duty to the electors of my area and to the ratepayers of the Shire of Bayswater. As I said, all the councillors have been dismissed, and it is the right of the ratepayers to know which councillors were involved. I have had people say to me, "They are all as bad as one another." I say, "That is unfair. You have to work out who has had his hand in your pocket, who has been going along with it, and who has been fighting like fury to try to end it."

I was not prepared to have the matter dropped. The member for Maylands and I both asked questions that were not answered by the Minister. I thought that was the end of it, but when five councillors wrote a letter saying that I had some underhand part in destroying the council—which is nonsense—and saying I am not game to front them publicly, that was too much. They sought to besmirch my name merely because I have asked questions about what is going on. It is my duty as a member of Parliament to ask questions. I could not be silent any longer. I will see that the people of the area know the facts for themselves, and I will say quite clearly that I am prepared to debate this matter with the five councillors, or with anyone else for that matter.

Shire councils are not set up purely to provide an extra source of income for certain unscrupulous people. I agree with the comment that similar things are going on all over the place. It is unfortunate that town planning schemes lend themselves to such actions. Amongst the councillors we find a large number of businessmen, developers, people dealing in land, and owners of land. The temptation must be very strong to see that one is not disadvantaged under a town planning scheme. I know that many candidates will stand for the Bayswater Shire Council elections on the 24th February, and many of these people are saying publicly, "I own my house, but that is all I have. I am an ordinary person on a wage or a salary. I have no axe to grind and in no way would any decision of this council benefit me."

I am not sure whether it is the official ALP policy at the moment, but certainly most of our members believe that councillors should be paid. The argument is that if people are being paid for the enormous amount of time they put in on council work, to some degree the kind of temptation I am referring to would be removed.

Above all, the Local Government Act should be amended so that it is illegal for a shire councillor to be the sole supplier of goods to his own council. This went on for years in the Shire of Bayswater. Some people have known about it, but it has been brought to light now because some courageous councillors were determined that it would cease.

I believe the Government acted correctly. If the Government, having this kind of evidence, did not dismiss a council, we could say that it was an accomplice. The Minister took a courageous action, because any Minister would be very loath to dismiss a council. However, I criticise the Minister for not going one step further and saying, "The people have a right to know the basis on which I dismissed the council." The first report should have been released for that purpose. The Minister's comment was that some innocent people would be harmed by the release of the report, but surely certain sections could have been deleted. There is a lot more to this matter. I have checked and double checked my story, and I have left out a great deal of it where there just may be a doubt. I have mentioned only those matters about which there is no doubt.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [3.06 a.m.]: I rise also to speak about the manner in which some shire councils carry out their duties. I endorse the remarks made by the member for Morley. I want to refer specifically to allegations made under a statutory declaration by the Deputy President of the Swan Shire Council. It is fairly obvious in the documentation made available to me that somebody's hands have been going into the pockets of the ratepayers.

A standard contract was let, setting out certain rates of cartage per cubic metre of sand, and different rates were set for different distances. One tender was lower than those submitted by three other firms. The successful tenderer was from a company under the control of Councillor Marshall, the shire president. The Minister stated in a reply to my question that she felt it was wrong and improper to examine this issue as the statutory declaration was being investigated.

I feel I must exhibit my concern tonight as did the member for Morley. I have looked at some of these work dockets, and I have calculated the distance from the sand pit—which is owned by Carl Georgeff, who is also the Deputy President of the Swan Shire Council—to the place where the sand was to be deposited. It became quite obvious that many of the deliveries must have gone by a most circuitous route. This resulted in

the council paying a higher rate for the cartage of the sand. In other words, although this tender was the lowest, the rate was being jacked up.

I am led to believe, although possibly this matter could be challenged, that some of the sand sold to the shire was actually owned by the shire and not by the holder of the pit—Carl Georgeff. On some occasions sand has been removed from outside the boundaries of the pit from the verges of the road. This could even undermine the road in certain places. So the Swan Shire Council is paying for sand from an area which it owns and also it will have to pay to make good the damage caused by taking the sand.

The previous investigation led very quickly to the demise of the Bayswater Shire Council. I certainly hope that the inquiry on the matter I have raised is rapidly moving to finality. As the member for the district, I believe that my electors have the right to know about these matters. I make no allegation against any of the members concerned.

Mrs Craig: What have you been doing for the last 10 minutes?

Mr SKIDMORE: That is exactly what I would expect from a biased Liberal Party Government. Councillor Cooper is making the allegations, not I. I have looked at these documents, and if they have not been made available to the investigating officer, I would be only too happy to pass them to him. I checked out some of the distances shown on these work dockets and they certainly are not correct. I am not making accusations but I am just saying that an investigation should be held and as quickly as possible so that the councillors themselves know what is happening. If Councillors Marshall and Georgeff are exonerated by the inquiry, that will clear them, but if the investigation reveals the contrary, the people of the district have the right to know.

On the notice paper I have a question relating to a \$1 million deal but that question still has to be answered. Like the member for Morley, as a member of Parliament I must try to discover the facts. If members of the council have the hide and effrontery to say that I am underhanded, I will certainly accept the challenge. If the people of my electorate do not believe I am doing the right thing, I will not be here after the next election. I do not believe that will happen. Once this whole matter has been aired, we will have a better council and one that will take care of its ratepayers in a better way. I conclude my remarks on that note.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [3.14 a.m.]: I wish to make a few remarks about local government and town planning. I am sure this will make the Minister say that I am viciously attacking or hounding an officer of the Main Roads Department as she indicated the other day when she was not able to answer the questions I put to her. This is always a good way to cover up if one finds things are a little too hot. I brought this matter up because the councillor concerned went to his own member—the member for Murdoch—but he was not able to get any satisfaction.

He said he could not do anything, and the Government has done everything in the proper way. He came to me to express his concern regarding the leaking of information.

It seems there is a double standard with this Government. It depends on what the information is, and to whom it is leaked as to how the Government reacts. If the Government is going to adopt a standard, it should be the same in all cases and should not conflict.

Mr Jamieson: It is all right to leak it to private enterprise, but not to anyone else.

Mr DAVIES: That is the point I was about to make. I will not deal with it at any great length at this time. However, I serve notice that unless we receive some satisfaction on this matter we will raise it again when Parliament resumes. I am not after anybody's blood, but I do want justice done. It is no good the Minister lifting her head above her pile of *Hansards*, and smirking.

Mrs Craig: I am lifting them higher so that you cannot see.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister has no need to do that; she is not ugly. I do not dislike her face. However, I do dislike the rather cavalier manner with which she has treated this matter. This councillor has tried to do things in a proper way, and he has been given the runaround and the treatment. At least the Minister should show him the courtesy of giving him 10 minutes of her time; he has made himself available at any time. He raised the matter through the proper channels. He saw his local member, who is a member of the Minister's own party. His local member said, "I can do nothing for you." Having gone through the proper channels, he brought the matter to me.

I do not intend to go through all the correspondence on the matter. It is quite apparent that the technical subcommittee which was estab-

lished to report to committee "C" had a report to present to that committee on the 7th November this year. All councillors in the south-east corridor were invited to attend, because it affected all of them. I understand some 50 attended, and a broad outline was given.

Those councillors were asked to keep the information confidential. Councillor Tacoma asked why the information had been given to three developers in a letter of the 16th October. It had been given by Mr Hackett from the Main Roads Department after he had consulted with senior officers of the Town Planning Department; we do not know who they are, and there is no indication of who they are in the report.

As a matter of fact, I could tear that report apart fairly easily, but I will not bother to do so now. I am simply serving notice that unless we receive more satisfaction between now and the time Parliament resumes we will be doing something about this matter again, because I do not believe private developers should be privy under any circumstances to confidential information which should be given out only at the proper time, to the proper people and in the proper order.

If the information had been made available on a confidential basis to the Town of Canning or to any other shire and it had been leaked, those concerned would be subject to a penalty. The Government says, "We must be fair to everybody." The Government is not being fair to everybody. Somebody is getting the advantage of receiving extra information, and that is just not good enough.

Councillor Tacoma's honour is at stake. He has played this strictly down the line and has done everything in a proper manner. Indeed, when a special meeting was convened for the councillors to be given confidential information, he moved a motion which was unanimously carried that the information be not given, despite the fact that senior officers from the Town Planning Department and the Main Roads Department had gathered to pass the information to the council. They did not want to be in the position of not being able to discuss it.

I understand that the town planner and engineer of the Town of Canning, Mr Chamberlain and Mr Ron Andrews, know the recommendations because they were on the committee. Until this information can be properly released it should not be released. To say that everything has been done in a proper manner is neither satisfactory to the Opposition nor acceptable to me.

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Local Government) (3.22 a.m.): I do not wish to add anything to the statement I made to the Chamber at the time we witnessed the dismissal of the Bayswater Shire Council. I think the member for Morley understands that point full well. Perhaps I should reiterate the point I made at that time; namely, that there is no intention of releasing the first report for the very reason there may be some innocent persons who really were never implicated. I believe it was this Government's duty to indicate quite clearly that there were sufficient reasons for dismissal, and the tabled document did that.

I must register my great disappointment at the fact that two members in this Committee have used this opportunity to denigrate councillors. If that is what they choose to do I am sorry. I do not intend to comment on the points they have raised, except to say I am somewhat concerned it should have been suggested that a person who stands for council is acceptable only if he can say, "I live here, I have a house in the area", and that no-one else is acceptable.

In regard to the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I have made it quite clear that I am satisfied there was no impropriety. I regret that he feels councillor Tacoma has been given "the runaround and the treatment". I had a conversation with the member for Murdoch in relation to the matter which concerned councillor Tacoma; I believe that matter referred principally to his concern about his non-admittance to a meeting. In that particular instance the councillor did turn up to an executive meeting which he was not entitled to attend.

Mr Davies: That is a matter of doubt, you know.

Mrs CRAIG: It was an unfortunate fact; councillor Tacoma was the recipient of an agenda because he telephoned and asked for one. The position was clearly explained to him. I thought he understood the situation, and there was absolutely no need for him to come to see me.

In regard to the other matters, I believe Mr Hackett has written to councillors. It seems to me that the Leader of the Opposition is in receipt of far more information in relation to this matter than I; the question on the notice paper today certainly indicates that to me. I think the message is quite clear.

Mr Davies: What message is that? What is quite clear? Speak up! What are you trying to say?

Mrs CRAIG: I wish the Leader of the Opposition would not be so rude.

Mr Davies: I am not being rude; I cannot hear you.

Mrs CRAIG: If the Leader of the Opposition would stop talking, he might be able to hear.

Mr Davies: I think you are incompetent!

Mrs CRAIG: I have no intention at this stage of the proceedings to elaborate in any way on what I have already said. The Leader of the Opposition chooses to bring this up continually because he is determined with a deep vindictiveness to discredit an officer which in this case I do not believe he has the right to do. I will defend that officer to the best of my ability because he has written to the people concerned and indicated exactly what action was taken by him.

Mr Davies: It makes no difference at all, Madam.

Vote: Local Government, \$987 000—put and passed.

Vote: Town Planning, \$2 310 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$1 887 000.—

Mr DAVIES: This item provides for the salaries and wages to be paid to officers who give out information when they should not give out information. I am sorry if the Minister is upset and I apologise if she believes I have been rude to her. However, it seems quite evident to me the Government feels it can get out of any position in which it finds itself simply by saying, "I refuse to answer any more questions." We have had the position where this Chamber has been treated with contempt and the Legislative Council has been treated with contempt.

Once again, I serve notice on the Minister that unless I obtain some satisfaction, and unless she agrees to see councillor Tacoma and hear him out—he is entitled to state his case because his honour as much as anybody else's is at stake—the Minister has not heard the last of this matter. Councillor Tacoma did everything required of him. He approached the member for Murdoch as his local member and when he was unable to obtain satisfaction there he tried through the council to keep things quiet, as he was required to do.

Now, I am supposed to be privy to additional information to which the Minister for Local Government is not privy. I will make available to her at any time the file I have on this matter. It comprises a letter dated the 16th October which was sent out and published in the council minutes and which admits to the information

being made available to private developers. The rest of the question I placed on the notice paper related to the very documents the Minister tabled in this Chamber. If she did not read them before tabling them, I am sorry for her. However, they are the only documents I have.

The Criminal Code was brought to hear on some poor little clerk in the State Housing Commission. The Government immediately called in the CIB when there was an alleged leak. However, what happened when there was an alleged leak which gave an advantage to private developers? The man who allegedly leaked the information said in a letter that he was sorry and the Town Planning Commissioner put out a report comprising one page saying that he had asked some senior officers, and they decided—contrary to the Act, apparently—that the material could be released.

By what authority can this be done? Why is a double standard being adopted by the Government? I am not being vindictive. However, we want to see justice done. Who is the Minister trying to defend? Is she trying to defend some sleight of hand which goes on within her department? These are the kinds of things we want to know. If we had received a modicum of satisfaction we would not have said another word. However, one can drive a horse and cart through the papers which have been tabled and the explanation which the Minister has given. Yet we were supposed to sit down and accept them and say nothing more. We will not do that.

I will repeat for perhaps the fifth time that unless we receive satisfaction, I serve notice on the Minister that the matter will be raised when Parliament resumes.

Vote put and passed.

Part 14: Minister for Health and Community Welfare—

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) (3.30 a.m.): It was less than 24 hours ago that I was at Wittenoom and members may have heard on the radio or in the Press that people there are most angry at the Government for its cavalier treatment of them. We all know the background and why there is likely to be a danger for people to continue living in the town. The matter has been brought to the notice of the Government in various ways and on various occasions.

After some months the Minister for Mines, the former Minister for Health, and the former Minister for Labour and Industry visited the town. They arrived by charter on the 23rd June last and spent some four hours in and around

the town. I was unable to locate anyone to whom the Ministers had actually spoken. A Mr McGuire, who is associated with Pilbara Tours, arrived by charter some short while before the ministerial party and left just after, and he is on record as making a statement. The next day there was a statement by the Minister for Health indicating the Government would make its decision known within a fortnight.

We take it for granted the ministerial party was going there to examine the likely dangers from breathing blue asbestos fibres because of the increasing concern over the past months regarding the health of the people, particularly those who had worked in the mine and were now living in and around the town. We presumed the Ministers had arrived to investigate this and that they would let it be known what happened.

Despite the fact that the Press on various occasions asked what progress was being made, up to date no decision has been made. The people are angry for a number of reasons, but mostly because not even a progress report has been given. They are not even convinced proper tests have been carried out to see just how much asbestos fibre is in the air. It is true that for a period of about one week instruments were worn by nine volunteers in and around Wittenoom and that filters from these were sent down to Perth for analysis. It is also true to say that some time after the ministerial visit, Dr Cumpston, who is from the Clean Air Division of the Public Health Department, visited the town and interviewed certain people who were prepared to talk about the problem. I believe he was there for two days and he spoke about the results of the tests, and he answered queries.

He pointed out the difficulties of getting proper air samples. He pointed out that the figures he had indicated that the amount of asbestos fibre in the air at times was considered unsafe. He said there was more fibre per cubic metre than would be safe, but qualified this by saying it would be different in different cases. There was more fibre in the air when it was blown up by cars travelling along roads. It varied in and around the town, depending on what sort of day it was. He qualified this further by saying it would depend on whether there was a wind or not, or whether it was wet or dry. The people have been told nothing final about the problem.

Through their members of Parliament they have made approaches to the Government, but the answers to those approaches have been that the matter is under consideration. It has been under consideration for far too long! I have a tape with

me of a conversation between one of the residents and Dr Cumpston, which indicates to me that whilst it may be reasonably safe for adults to remain in the town, it is not desirable that children should remain there.

This has gone on for something like two years. As a result of all this the town is slowly grinding to a halt. The tourist season just past was probably the worst for a considerable number of years. Indeed, two tours booked for early next year have been cancelled already.

The West Pilbara Shire seems to have abandoned the town altogether. Nothing at all is being done; certainly nothing has been done during the current financial year. Generally, requests for the council to be present at meetings have been ignored, although one local councillor has gone along to the meetings. Unfortunately, he has been charged with defending the council, rather than adequately representing the people of Wittenoom. I cannot make a statement on that because I have insufficient information to make a judgment. However, that is the kind of representation the locals have been getting from the shire.

The people calling the meetings are not stirrers; they are people with a genuine concern. One man has a wife who is pregnant, and another man has young children; both these men are genuinely concerned. Both want to know just what is their position. I believe the people there are the hard core residents who genuinely want to stay in the town. There are only about 143 of them. There are two exploration groups and certain Government officers, such as the postmaster and the shire people. There are very few others. The people there at the present want to remain there.

Members who have been to Wittenoom will appreciate how beautiful the scenery is and what a great tourist attraction we have within reasonable striking distance of Perth. It is probably one of the finest areas for scenery in the whole of Australia.

However, people are obviously not interested in going there and no-one seems to want to spend any money there; that is, no-one except the State Energy Commission which has just built a new power house costing in excess of \$250 000.

The Minister for Mines looks after the SEC also. I am sure he was distressed to find the SEC had built that power house when there is such a question mark hanging over the town.

Mr Mensaros: It depends at which time you date the question; it has been established for nine months.

Mr DAVIES: I think it was two years ago when I first raised the question of the danger from asbestos. It has been under constant review since then. I suppose a power house can still send its product over some distance even if the town has to be shifted.

It seemed more than passing strange that we should have this one Minister responsible for two aspects of development in the town. If it had not been for the SEC employees present in the town, this year would have been a really disastrous one. So the power house has been of some good to some people.

Mr Mensaros: The generating plant was run down and dangerous.

Mr DAVIES: I suppose it depends on which comes first. If the Government had made a decision regarding the future of the town, it could have decided how much it could have spent on the town. It becomes as simple as that. The Hamersley exploration team has its own power plant and perhaps it could have been able to feed power to the town. It does seem the town is being run down generally, and apart from the power house the Government has not been spending money.

The West Pilbara Shire has not budgeted one cent for the town in the current year. The shire is showing an amazing lack of interest in its ratepayers. It seems that persons with young children are being transferred out of the town if they ask for a transfer. The schoolmaster, who has done a splendid job in fund raising this year, is going after one year in the town. The normal appointment is for two years. He is leaving because he has young children and is being replaced by an unmarried man.

The ranger has a young child and he put in for a transfer, which was refused initially. After Dr Cumpston visited the area he again applied for a transfer and within a week his transfer was granted. He is being replaced by a ranger who is married but has no children. It seems, where possible, action is being taken to take children out of the town.

The Opposition applauds this but I cannot help but feel it is all helping to run the town down. It is acknowledging a danger before anything has been said positively and it is likely the news will be that everyone should get out of Wittenoom. Neither I nor the people of Wittenoom know what the position is likely to be. They want the

position clarified and this was stated in the last letter they sent to the Premier dated the 21st November, 1978. It reads as follows—

This non-payment of charges will remain in force until such time as we receive a satisfactory answer from your Government on the following points:—

- (1) A statement regarding the level of health risk in the Wittenoom township appertaining to asbestos tailings.
- (2) A statement on the future of Wittenoom.

Following last week's Cabinet meeting the Premier said a decision may be made this coming Monday, but the people of Wittenoom were not happy about that. They will be happy if the Premier's promise is kept, but they point to the fact that such promises were going to be kept in a fortnight, another fortnight, in a few weeks, and now next Monday. I am trying to impress on the Premier the need to make a decision.

Complexities are involved and I was fair enough to point this out to the residents at a meeting on Wednesday evening. Seventy-eight of the residents turned up at that meeting. Some progress must be made and a progress report should be prepared. I am not opposed to the people of Wittenoom being told what the decision is before Monday. I realise the Premier is not usually bursting to tell the world at large what Cabinet has decided. We would like to know when and how he is going to do anything for the people of Wittenoom.

The townspeople are not excited about the West Pilbara Shire's attitude. I do not know whether it would be best to do something through the shire or through Mr Godwin, who has written several letters to the Premier. Obviously the Premier knows where to contact the man because he sent him a telex at his place of work yesterday. The people have to be given adequate notice of any meeting. It is not possible to call a representative meeting during the day as most of the people are working. It would have to be held around 7.30 p.m., which is the usual time for the holding of their meetings. The people want to know the Government's recommendation and on what basis the Government has made its recommendation. That is not unreasonable. They will not be happy unless they know why a decision is made and the basis for it.

There seems to be a lack of co-ordination and genuine effort to do the sampling upon which the Government might be required to make a

decision. The personal sampling which was done for about a week some time ago, and which was due to recommence early in October, apparently has not been recommenced.

It was thought at the meeting that volunteers were required, but when a call for volunteers was made a lady who works for the shire and whose name I do not recall said from the back of the meeting, "Don't worry about volunteers. We have all we want." If they have all the volunteers they want, we wonder why the programme is not proceeding.

No-one is taking an interest in the people of Wittenoom. If someone is taking an interest in them it is not getting back to them by way of communication.

I point to the short visit by three Ministers—a high-powered contingent—who do not appear to have made any contact with the representative residents in the area. A statement was made in Perth by Mr McGuire who arrived shortly before the Ministers and, I understand, left just after them.

The shire has not shown itself to be willing—in fact it has shown a marked reluctance to co-operate—so the people are left to their own devices. I think the threat not to pay any Government or shire rates, taxes, and charges was spontaneous because they felt so frustrated that no-one was taking any notice of them.

They have received a telex and letter from the Premier indicating that the matter is under consideration and that they will be notified of the result shortly. I realise that there are problems, but it would have been so much better if someone had gone there to speak to the meeting and explain those problems. It is more than five months—five months and a day—since they were told they would get the result within a fortnight, yet the other day, when I asked a question regarding the matter, the Minister for Mines said it was not really anything to do with his department, and I suppose that is right.

He had been up there, but it is certainly not a mining matter; it is the result of a mine. When the member for Maylands asked what has been done in regard to sampling, the Minister repeated what we already knew. He said he did not know whether any more was being done.

This is the kind of disorganisation which makes the people so unhappy. I had hoped to go up there after the session concluded, but I was pleased to receive the invitation because it meant I was there on Wednesday evening. I can only repeat to members the feeling of these people

and the hope they have that someone with authority from the Government will be sent there to let them know what is happening.

It seems to them that perhaps there might not be very much danger in their living there. I certainly do not think there is danger in a casual visit and it seems, except for young children, there is no danger in living there. However, we know that there are many young children up there.

All around the town there are asbestos fibres—on the airstrip, on roads, and in the houses. They have been used in the mixing of cement and they were on the race track. However, the race track has now been covered with loam and grass is growing on it. Despite this, there must be some fibres in the air all the time because large dumps still remain at the mine site and there is a notice indicating that the tailings must not be removed and that there is a penalty for their removal. I think it was issued by the Public Health Department, but it is almost impossible to read the notice because it is so old. Therefore, it does not impress upon people that there is a danger in the removal or disturbance of the tailings.

All the people have stories to tell, even people who told me they are prominent members of the Liberal Party up there. They all ask why they cannot obtain a result. I have pages of notes from people who have explained their case to me and asked what shall be done. They want to know whether there is any danger and what the result has been of the work carried out over more than five months. If there is no result they should be told, even if it is thought that it will take another six months.

One person indicated to me that he would rather wait another six months if it meant they would get a thoroughly proven recommendation and I can understand that such an opinion would be acceptable. Someone in authority must communicate with them and let them know what is going on and whether or not there is to be a continuing sampling. Everything seems to have been done so far on a far too casual, *ad hoc* basis and I hope that what we read in the paper recently was true; that is, that one of the Cabinet Ministers—perhaps the Minister himself—is going up there. Indeed, I plead for it to be true even if it is only to tell these people what progress is being made and that there is no recommendation at present.

Because of the lateness of the hour I will not detail some of the material I have, but I do hope something positive will be done for these

people who have been on a hook, nibbling as it were, for far too long. They deserve to be told what their likely future will be.

MR HODGE (Melville) (3.52 a.m.): I want to take the opportunity to express my disappointment about the way Western Australia has been treated by Senator Margaret Guilfoyle in respect of applications made from this State under the family support services scheme.

About March of this year, the then Minister for Community Welfare, the member for Kimberley, wrote to about 100 or 200 groups throughout the State inviting them to make submissions for funds under the new scheme which is to be a jointly administered scheme funded by the Federal Government. An amount of \$1.2 million is allocated to Western Australia, so the Minister tells us.

The Melville City Council formed a subcommittee of councillors which did a lot of hard work and made an excellent submission to the joint Commonwealth-State committee set up to administer the scheme in this State. The committee suggested the council should be funded for two full-time social workers and a part-time back-up office worker. The total amount sought over the three-year period was about \$80 000.

The application was considered by the committee and negotiations and discussions were held between the committee and officers of the Melville City Council. The original submission was trimmed down and the council agreed to reduce the amount claimed to about \$56 000 which was enough to fund one full-time social worker and one part-time social worker, the office worker to be paid for by the council. This represented a significant reduction in what the council was seeking.

I am told that eventually, out of 100 applications received by the Commonwealth-State committee, 26 were approved by the committee and sent to Senator Guilfoyle for her formal acceptance. The applications were all thoroughly scrutinised, examined, and costed so that they would not exceed the \$1.2 million allocated to the State.

After waiting for a period of about six months for this formal recognition from Senator Guilfoyle, it came only after a bit of prompting from our State Minister for Community Welfare. Eventually we received the final announcement which we had expected to be a formality, but much to the disappointment of many people in Western Australia only 21 projects were approved.

Five worthy and needed projects were rejected. No explanation has been advanced by Senator Guilfoyle as to why the applications were rejected. They were all subject to the closest scrutiny by the Commonwealth-State committee and recommended by the Western Australian Minister. They did not exceed the budget allocated to the State. In fact, the total grant made to the State was about \$900 000 so that at least \$300 000 does not seem to have been allocated as yet.

I am hopeful that if the State Government was prepared to take the matter up and push it fairly vigorously there is still some hope the five rejected applications might be reconsidered by the Federal Minister. Only about \$100 000 is involved to finance the whole five projects.

Some worth-while applications were made and then rejected out of hand without any explanation being given. We deserve one. It is not asking too much for the people of Western Australia to be given an explanation by the Federal Minister. I am sure that if the Premier or the Minister took the matter up and pressed vigorously enough, we would get one. In fact, the matter may be reconsidered and that is really what I and many others are seeking.

The projects are worth while. Indeed, there is a pressing need for social workers in my electorate. The MCC does not employ one, and yet we have a very large SHC area. In fact, there are two in the municipality and also other low-income areas which have many problems necessitating the assistance of welfare workers. At this stage the MCC cannot employ a social worker out of its funding and it submitted a good, well-documented case which should have been accepted by the Federal Minister. So I urge the Premier, who is standing in for the Minister for Health, to take this matter up to see whether he can persuade Senator Guilfoyle to give some explanation as to why the five projects were rejected and perhaps she will reconsider them.

MR WILSON (Dianella) 13.59 a.m.: I wish to raise the matter of the continuing delay in the preparation and gazettal of new regulations for noise control. On the 6th April this year I was informed by the Minister for Health that the new regulations were in the process of preparation. On the 9th August I asked the Minister whether he was aware of the suffering caused to people from the high levels of noise and particularly that caused by air-conditioning units in adjacent premises. The Minister indicated that he was aware of this problem—

Mr Davies: An old one.

Mr WILSON: —and that the new regulations were in draft form. It was hoped they would be introduced in the near future. On the 19th September I asked the Minister again whether he was then in a position to indicate when the new regulations would be brought in. He said he was not in a position then but he hoped to be able to make an announcement within the next few weeks.

Subsequently when I put question 2141 on the notice paper I was again querying the Minister as to when these regulations were to be expected, and the Minister regretted to inform me that the Crown Law Department was preoccupied with legislation for the current session and was unable to attend to these regulations.

I raise the matter because it is of particular concern to a constituent of mine. It is a matter which is causing a severe deterioration in the health of a person who lives adjacent to premises where the noise from the exterior outlet of an air-conditioning unit is of a level which is causing this woman to be literally driven mad.

She is in a position where she has no recourse for relief. The offending unit is adjacent to the bedrooms of her two children. During the hottest days of last summer the windows had to be kept closed in order that the children might have a chance to sleep. The woman concerned cannot do any gardening adjacent to the air-conditioning unit—which is left on all the time—because the noise level is so intense.

As I said previously, as a result of this constant impingement of noise and the way it impinges on every aspect of her life and the life of her family, her health is deteriorating. I would have expected that the new Minister, in the enthusiasm of his new appointment, might be prepared to take up a matter of this kind. I realise it is a matter I am raising on behalf of an individual person but I would consider that at the highest levels of Government, even at the Ministerial level, it is still possible to have some concern for the anxieties and deterioration in health of one individual person. I had always believed, and the people on that side of the House have always tried to lead us to believe, that their prime concern is with the welfare of the individual. As a result of my dealings with the various Ministers and their departments I am having second thoughts about that.

There have been times when the local government noise abatement officer and noise abatement officers from the department have been involved in this case. On a number of occasions the person concerned has been led to believe something was to be done, and her anxiety and health

problem has now been complicated because on all those occasions the hopes that have been raised have been subsequently dashed, and the situation has been made even worse because of it.

Most recently, on the 15th November, I had a reply from the Minister to a question concerning the same problem in which I referred to the latest letter that has been sent to the department by the City of Stirling requesting that a certificate be issued in respect of noise from an air-conditioning unit in this home in Alexander Drive, Dianella. I asked—

(4) Is the commissioner aware of the possible anxiety, personal distress and deterioration in health which has resulted from this prolonged noise nuisance?

(5) When can a reply be expected to the request for the issue of a certificate?

In answer to the former question the Minister replied, "Yes", he was aware of the distress and deterioration in health resulting from this prolonged noise nuisance. His reply to the latter question was simply—

(5) This request is receiving consideration and a reply will be sent in due course.

I understand that is a fairly routine reply, but the problem being faced by the person concerned is not a routine problem. It is a problem causing tremendous personal distress and threatening severe deterioration of health.

The other night when I interjected on the Minister, he refused to bleed for me on a matter concerning Aboriginal welfare. Through the Premier, as the Minister is not present, I put a personal plea to the Minister that in this case he might be prepared to bleed a bit for this individual. I realise that Ministers and big Governments have not much time to spare for the personal distress of individuals.

I hope in this case the new Minister, who some even believe might aspire to the leadership of his party and the leadership of a Government in this State, might have time to spare to ensure the request on behalf of this individual is given some special attention so that this person's distress and health may be improved and we may regain perhaps some new hope in Governments being concerned about the welfare of individuals.

Votes: Medical, \$258 551 000; Public Health, \$36 557 000; Mental Health Services, \$44 349 000—put and passed.

Vote: Community Welfare, \$33 476 000—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$15 269 000—

Mr PEARCE: I wish to raise a specific matter with regard to community welfare. I am concerned about the operation of the Children's Court. I have asked a number of questions—and, I might add, received most unsatisfactory answers to them—about the operations of special magistrates of the Children's Court. The answers were insulting.

It was drawn to my attention that one of the special magistrates—and I did not pick on that lady because I had any personal animus against her, indeed I have never met her—was 72 years of age, hardly an appropriate age to be on a Children's Court. In answer to other questions it turns out she is not qualified to be a magistrate. This was where the answers became insulting. When I asked in what way she was qualified, I was told she had 13 years' experience in the position. When I further asked whether she had any academic or legal qualifications, the answer was, "Yes". So I had to come back the next day and ask what they were. The answer was that she was a justice of the peace.

No legal or academic qualification is required to be a justice of the peace. One just fills in a form, and if the Attorney General likes one, one gets the job. Many of the problems arising in senior courts arise originally in juvenile courts or Children's Courts and are related to the way in which children are dealt with in those courts. This probably marks their attitude towards the legal process.

I think the time has come for special Children's Court magistrates to be appointed—fully qualified people who work on a full-time basis and are able to participate in the processes of a Children's Court in a legal way and not in the way one would expect a magistrate to operate in another area.

The Minister is not here and most members are not here, which is hardly surprising at 4.10 a.m., and most of those who are here are asleep.

Sir Charles Court: It is a pity you do not know the lady in question. Most people on your side would regard her as a person who is very well equipped for the work she is doing. My understanding is that at the time there was a desire to have people who had a humane, personal, and warm approach to the matter, rather than people who would be purely legalistic.

Mr PEARCE: I thank the Premier for the interjection. I make it clear I have nothing against the lady.

Sir Charles Court: I did not speak by way of criticism of what you said, but if you knew the lady concerned I think your attitude would be different.

Mr PEARCE: I am not suggesting she is not doing a reasonable job in all the circumstances, but I accept the point made to me by legal people recently that the Children's Court is an inappropriate place to have people who do not have any legal training. The Premier is probably quite right in suggesting the lady is there because an effort was made to get non-legal people into the Children's Court, but if young people go into the legal processes through the Children's Court and it does not operate in a particular way, and particularly if punishments are not dished out in a meaningful way, they can develop a contempt for legal processes because of their earlier experience with the Children's Court, and this can lead to problems later on. I stress I am not getting stuck into the lady but I think the time has come for special Children's Court magistrates to be appointed.

Vote put and passed.

Part 15: Minister for Water Supplies—

Vote: Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Drainage and Irrigation, \$44 339 000—put and passed.

Part 16: Minister for Mines—

Vote: State Batteries, \$1 750 000—put and passed.

Part 17: Minister for Transport—

Vote: Railways, \$152 073 000—put and passed.

Schedules A to D put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [4.16 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [4.17 a.m.]: I know it is late and it is unfortunate that the Treasurer wants to handle the business of the House in this way, but I want to take him to task in respect of some comments he made particularly in respect of part 1, when I dealt with the matter of the deplorable situation in which members of this Parliament find themselves in comparison with

members of other Parliaments. I refer to the matter of travel arrangements. The Treasurer made great play of the fact that we cannot take this in isolation, and that we must consider the overall position. He said members are far better off now than they have been. I have been here for a long time—as long as the Treasurer—and I knew at the time that was not a fact.

In all fairness, I ask the Treasurer to have another look at the position after the figures are recorded because it is vital not only to members but also to their constituents that members should have decent travel arrangements. I know the Treasurer is not very interested in what I am saying and is anxious to get home, just as I am.

Sir Charles Court: No, I am not.

Mr JAMIESON: However, I would like to show the Treasurer the expenditure for the Legislative Assembly in 1953-54—the year in which he and I entered the Parliament. In that year the percentage of expenditure on the Assembly and members' salaries more than doubled the present figure, because it included all matters appertaining to the Assembly, plus the item relating to special Acts for salaries, etc. In 1953-54 the total expenditure of the Legislative Assembly was \$16 732, and the expenditure under special allowances for members' salaries, etc., was a further \$139 000; making a total of \$155 732. In that year the total expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund was \$36 191 040. The expenditure on the Legislative Assembly and members' salaries expressed as a percentage of the total Consolidated Revenue Fund expenditure was 0.43.

Over the years that percentage has progressively decreased. I point out that the only way we can make a comparison is by using the percentages. The Treasurer made great play of electorate offices, and that sort of thing; but even allowing for that the percentage has become far less. I intend to ask that the table I have had drawn up be incorporated later so that members will be able to see what has happened, because this is a serious matter which should not be treated lightly.

In the current year, 1978-79, the total estimate for the Legislative Assembly is \$212 000, and the estimated expenditure under special Acts providing for salaries is \$1.863 million, making a total of \$2.075 million. The total estimated expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund this year is \$1 099 239 000. Therefore, the total expenditure on the Legislative Assembly and members' salaries amounts to 0.189 per cent of the total expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

That is, however, not a fair comparison because this year—and for this year alone—the payment of office expenditure has been included in House Committee funds, and is not included in the two items to which I have been referring. Therefore we can go back and make a real comparison and members will be able to get some idea of what is the position.

In 1977-78 the total expenditure of the Legislative Assembly was \$703,036.

The special Acts that are provided for salaries constituted \$1,714,527. A combination of the two constituted \$2,417,563, out of a total Consolidated Revenue Fund of \$986,678,658. That represented 0.245 of 1 per cent of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Looking at this over a five-year period, it runs from 0.43 of 1 per cent down to the stage where last year it was 0.245 of 1 per cent, or about half of what it was when the Premier and I first entered this place.

The Premier said we must compare everything, and I have done so. His statement that members are better off now than they have ever been obviously is a lot of nonsense because clearly that is not the case. I am sure the Premier is not interested in being convinced of this matter; however, he should take it into consideration.

If a certain percentage allocation was considered fair enough 25 years ago it should apply today. I am certain the same situation would

apply with the Legislative Council, although the figures I have extracted refer only to the Assembly. When we reach a situation where the allocation is half what it was 25 years ago, it is time the Government did something to provide better services, and not be so parsimonious and mean, as the Premier is inclined to be.

The Premier has the money; he cannot deny that. He will have a considerable surplus, as was clearly indicated by the Minister for Housing in Federal Parliament only two days ago, when making a speech about housing finance and comparing the budgetary positions of the various States. Western Australia proved to be exceptionally well off.

We are not asking for much; it would not amount to \$100,000 or even \$50,000. The Government should make provision for air travel for members within this State. I do not ask for overseas travel concessions but it is the Government's responsibility and the members' right—as it is in all other States—to be able to travel throughout their own State. Of course, accommodation, meals, etc. would be the members' own responsibility. I make no bones about advocating this reform at this late hour.

The following material was incorporated by leave of the House—

Year	Legislative Assembly Expenditure: Grand Total	Provided under Special Acts—Salaries and Allowances Tribunals Act	(A + B)	Total Expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund: Governmental (C)	(A) as a percentage of C	(B) as a percentage of C	A + B as a percentage of C
1978-79	\$212 000 estimate	\$1 863 000 estimate	2 075 000 est.	\$1 099 239 000 estimate	0.019	0.169	0.189
1977-78	\$703 036 actual	\$1 714 527 actual	2 417 563	\$986 678 658 actual	0.071	0.174	0.245
1973-74	\$197 595 actual	\$775 812 actual	972 848	\$385 901 790	0.051	0.201	0.252
1968-69	\$75 940	\$533 955	609 895	\$155 306 974	0.049	0.344	0.393
1963-64	\$23 823 (\$47 646)	\$139 200 (\$278 400)	326 046	\$44 531 551 (\$89 063 102)	0.053	0.313	0.366
1958-59	\$13 052 (\$26 104)	\$122 300 (\$244 600)	270 704	\$28 691 629 (\$57 383 258)	0.045	0.426	0.472
1953-54	\$8 366 (\$16 732)	\$69 500 (\$139 000)	155 732	\$18 095 520 (\$36 191 040)	0.046	0.384	0.430

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [4.27 a.m.]: I know the member for Welshpool feels deeply about this matter. However, I would not be prepared off the cuff to accept that percentage relativity in fact is the final arbiter.

Mr Jamieson: You said we should compare everything.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I know. However, we are looking at an entirely different situation. When he and I came to Parliament in 1953 Western Australia was the poorest of the States; it was a mendicant State. We must consider the total aspect of the matter. However, I will be only too pleased to examine the table incorporated by the member for Welshpool and let him have my considered comments at a later stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (6): RETURNED

1. Western Australian Coal Industry Tribunal Bill.
2. Western Australian Overseas Projects Authority Bill.
3. Nuclear Activities Regulation Bill.
4. Uranium (Yeelirrie) Agreement Bill.
5. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
6. Wheat Industry Stabilization Act Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)
[4.28 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until
11.00 a.m. on Tuesday, the 28th November.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the
Opposition) [4.29 a.m.]: We are quite happy
to go along with this. Perhaps the Premier
could indicate by way of interjection what he
intends to do about questions, which now have
accumulated for two days.

Sir Charles Court: The understanding was that
we would do that first thing on the 28th.

Mr DAVIES: The understanding was that we
were going to hand them in.

Sir Charles Court: We were to try to work
out how to hand them in. We were to devise
a method.

Mr DAVIES: Another five minutes to hand
them in now—it would not worry most of those
who are awake; and it certainly would not worry
those who are already asleep.

Sir Charles Court: I suggest that I arrange
for the Ministers to have their answers distri-
buted. We could then go through the motions
again on the 28th.

Mr DAVIES: That sounds first class. I imagine
there will be an opportunity then for questions
without notice, if there are any, on that day.
I am happy to go along with the motion. We
will not divide!

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.30 a.m. (Friday)
