

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 1st November, 1979

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

## WATER SUPPLIES: SERVICES

### *Disconnection and Restriction: Urgency Motion*

The SPEAKER: I wish to advise that I have received the following letter—

Dear Mr. Speaker,

Standing Order 47 provides that a motion "that the House do now adjourn" may be proposed for debating some matter of urgency.

Standing Order 48 requires that a Member wishing to move such a motion shall first submit a written statement to the Speaker of the subject proposed to be discussed.

Accordingly, I advise that when the House sits today, I wish to propose a motion "that the House do now adjourn" for the purpose of discussing the pressing need for the Government to conduct an urgent review of the Metropolitan Water Board procedures that lead to severe restrictions being placed on the supply of water to domestic customers who are having difficulty in paying their bills.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Davies, M.L.A.

### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

I have given consideration to this matter and I am prepared to allow the motion to be moved subject to the conditions that apply. Usually in these cases there should be two speakers from each side, each person having a time limit of 20 minutes with no right of reply. Are there seven members who are prepared to support the motion?

Seven members having risen in their places,

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [2.20 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the consideration shown to my request and I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Last night we witnessed an altercation in this House which brought to our notice some of the unfair procedures—albeit only temporary, but nevertheless unfair procedures—adopted by the Water Board and the lack of consideration being shown to people who had failed to meet the

payment of their water rates; and as a consequence, without warning the restriction of their water supply.

I did not say cut off because the water supply is restricted by placing a small disc in the meter. If the disc is held close to the eye one can see there is a small opening. This disc is placed in the meter and restricts the water coming through. Only the merest trickle of water can be obtained. I have brought a disc with me to show the House what the disc looks like because I am concerned that the water supply can be restricted in this manner.

I was concerned last night when the member for Balcatta made a statement saying there has been a 500 per cent increase in the number of people having their water supply restricted. It was by some fortuitous or unfortuitous circumstance that the restricters of water supplies went through the Victoria Park electorate today. I have had more than a few phone calls during the morning about the procedures which have been adopted.

One man who regularly paid his account in January—he said I can look at his cheque book, and he takes the blame for not paying his water rates—has had his water restricted because he had not paid his account.

Mrs N. Govan of 117 Howick Street, Victoria Park, had her water supply restricted yesterday after paying on the 10th July \$78.83 of her account issued on the 2nd July for the amount of \$157.65. In case anyone is interested in looking at the account, the reference is 199 0337 20/2. The account was paid at the Superannuation Building and the cash register receipt number was 4610. It appears the cashier did not retain portion of the account as a record of payment for the Metropolitan Water Board, and Mrs Govan did not realise she had both receipted copies.

The board has advised that Mrs Govan paid a cashier at the Superannuation Building who was operating a manual machine. As the cashier handed back both copies of the receipt, there was no record of the account to which the payment should have been credited. The Metropolitan Water Board operates a computerised payment system. The account was not paid through the cash register with the computer link but through the manual machine. The board also advised that the payment made by Mrs Govan was credited to the Departmental Receipts in Suspense Account until the client could be identified. Mrs Govan's water is being reconnected today free of charge.

This indicates inefficiency on the part of the Metropolitan Water Board, which is using two systems, a computerised link and a manual system; and incompetence on the part of the

cashier; and a woman is put to unnecessary distress because the water supply was restricted.

Mr I. S. McIntyre of 96 Kent Street, Victoria Park, had his water supply restricted today, the reason being that the account had not been paid. But the account was sent to an old address where Mr McIntyre had not resided for 2½ years. The old address was 19 Salisbury Avenue, South Perth. The change of address was noted on a bill dated the 10th July, 1978. The next bill dated the 23rd February, 1979, was sent to the correct address—96 Kent Street. No bill was received after that. Mr McIntyre checked with the Metropolitan Water Board today and found the July, 1979, account was sent to the Salisbury Avenue address again, where he had not resided for 2½ years, and he did not receive the bill. Although it is through no fault of his that he has not paid the account, because he has never received it, through the inefficiency of the board sending it to the wrong address, the board is now demanding that he pay \$15 reconnection fee.

Has any member ever heard the likes of that? Any member on the Government side would be jumping up and down if a constituent came to him under those circumstances and would say how grossly unfair it was. Mr McIntyre is going along this afternoon to pay the bill and I will certainly see he gets a refund of the \$15 plus an apology—and, I should think, payment for inconvenience.

What are the changes of procedure which we need to investigate? We all know roughly what happened under the old procedures. A notice was sent out and one was warned that if one did not pay by a certain date the water supply would be cut off and a final notice came in due course.

We now have computers which do not think about people, and apparently people are not able to control computers properly, because in regard to both the Metropolitan Water Board and the State Energy Commission I have had complaints which are directly attributable to the work of the computers and the inefficiency of the people working them. Under the old system a notice was left saying—

**THE WATER SUPPLY TO THESE  
PREMISES HAS BEEN  
—DISCONNECTED—**

It will be necessary to apply for reconnection to

Head Office—2 Havelock St West Perth  
Fremantle—Crane House, High St  
Fremantle  
Or Phone for further information

A phone number and an after-hours phone number were given. They were the old days, no doubt referred to as “the good old days”.

The current notice is twice the size of the old one and it says—

**METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY  
SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE BOARD  
WE REGRET THAT AS PAYMENTS  
ARE IN ARREARS IT HAS BEEN  
NECESSARY TO**

**SEVERELY RESTRICT YOUR  
WATER SERVICE**

**TO RESTORE NORMAL  
SERVICE—OVERDUE AMOUNTS  
MUST BE PAID TOGETHER WITH A  
FEE OF \$15.**

**OFFICES FOR PAYMENT:  
WEST PERTH—1st FLOOR, DUMAS  
HOUSE, 2 HAVELOCK ST.  
FREMANTLE—CRANE HOUSE, 185  
HIGH STREET.**

**RESTORATION WILL BE CARRIED  
OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE DURING  
NORMAL WORKING HOURS.**

No phone number or after-hours phone number is given to enable people to ring. What would happen to a family who happened to be out when the workman called? They would be in a nice position when they came home at five o'clock and found they would not have any water supply until the next day, even if through inefficiency the board had made a mistake. There would be nothing they could do about it. An address is given but no phone number and certainly no after-hours phone number. What kind of service is this we are getting from the Metropolitan Water Board?

I point out that the SEC, which is also running on computers, sends out a letter when an account is in arrears. The letter reads—

I regret that it is necessary to forward this reminder that your account for electricity and/or gas supply was still unpaid at 4.30 p.m. on the 30/10/79

In order to avoid further action which could result in disconnection of supply without notice, payment of the amount owing should be made by 4.30 p.m. on the 6/11/79

When making payment you should bring or send the account you originally received. Failure to do this could delay the crediting of your account which may in turn lead to disconnection of your supply.

The letter is signed by the Supervisor, Project Control. It is not unreasonable. It is the formal

final notice to pay up or the supply will be disconnected. But even this does not work.

The day before yesterday I had in my office a pensioner who paid half his account. He said he could not pay any more of the account until the next pension day. He was told not to worry about it, that he could come back on that pension day and the supply would not be disconnected. A day and a half later he received a notice from the SEC saying, "Pay up by such-and-such a date or the supply will be disconnected." To the credit of the SEC, when I pointed that out I was told it was all done by computers, that the SEC did not know how to put a stop to it, but in this case the man's card had been noted that an extension had been granted. Indeed, he had been granted an extension until five days beyond the final disconnection date. So although the office knew about it and he had five days more than he thought he had, he had been told that unless he paid up by such-and-such a date the supply would be disconnected.

Surely to goodness if an extension of time is given at the counter, the person could be given a note saying, "If you do get one of these letters, ignore it." But, no; the computer seems to have beaten the staff. To their credit, they are looking at the matter; but the Metropolitan Water Board appears to be doing nothing at all about it. The board is going merrily on. Despite the mistakes, it is restricting the supply of water to consumers. Workmen are going to houses, inserting a disc in the meter, and leaving a notice saying this was done because the account is in arrears. Not even a phone number is given at which the department can be contacted. Surely to goodness it would not hurt to print a phone number on the notice; it was included on the old notice. I know the Premier will say people can look up the number in the telephone book, but there is no harm in including the number on the notice.

Having been told the supply is disconnected, what do we find? We find people must pay an additional \$15 to have it reconnected, and it will be reconnected only during working hours, and then one has to wait one's turn. If the department has been super-enthusiastic and has restricted many water supplies and the accounts are all paid in the one day, there is no guarantee water supplies will be restored immediately. Persons must wait upon the wish of the department. It is as simple as that.

When will we get some service from the department? We are introducing computers and doing away with staff. We applaud the saving in money, but goodness knows, the water is of poor enough quality already and it appears that—

Mr Jamieson: We have increased the staff.

Mr DAVIES: That is astounding! Now we have computers and an increase in the staff. Apparently the department is not very fussy in what it does.

I will read the instructions to service layers. Firstly they must check the name of the occupier of the house, and if the occupier is not home, they must ask a neighbour. Would not that be lovely, to have someone nipping in next door and saying, "I am going to cut off next door's water supply because he has not paid his bill. Is his name Bill Smith, because I wouldn't like to cut off the water of the wrong person?" Even so, service layers have made incorrect restrictions of water supplies on a number of occasions.

The instruction sheet says the docket must be marked "Tenancy verified". If no-one is at home and the name of the owner cannot be ascertained from neighbours, the water may be cut off. If the house is vacant and not shown as a State Housing Commission home on the docket, again the water may be cut off.

However, the water may not be cut off if the house is vacant and is a State Housing Commission home. The instruction says the supply should not be cut off if there is serious illness in the house. I do not know how the workers assess whether serious illness is in the house. Do they go into the bedroom and check the temperature and pulse of the patient, or do they take the word of the person who answers the door?

Workers must not cut off the water if there is a baby in the home. I have been reliably informed that the men have been told to ignore that direction. Obviously that is so, judging by the case presented by the member for Fremantle last night. I do not hold with the manner in which he protested, but I do believe he was justified in being incensed and outraged about the way the Premier answered his question. Obviously that instruction is not being followed, because the member for Fremantle said two young babies were in that house, and that was verified in today's newspaper.

Workers were instructed not to cut off the water if there is a baby in the house, but obviously they have since been told to ignore that instruction.

They are instructed not to cut off the water supply if a pensioner occupies the house. Again, I have had pensioners complain to me that their water supply has been restricted; so I do not know what notice has been taken of that instruction. The next instruction is that the water supply

should not be cut off if the name of the occupier is not that shown on the docket. The last instance in which the water supply should not be cut off is if the occupier threatens violence.

In the case of serious illness in the house, a baby in the house, a pensioner in the house, the name of the occupier not being the same as that shown on the docket, or of the occupier threatening violence, the worker is instructed to call the depot on the two-way radio. He cannot telephone, because the number is not given. What happens? Does the conversation go like this: "There is a bloke here with cancer." "How does he look?" "He doesn't look too good to me." "Righto, leave the water on." Is that the capricious way in which this matter is being handled?

In the case of the occupier threatening violence, the worker is instructed to call the depot on the two-way radio and wait for the foreman to arrive—I suppose with a policeman.

After the disc has been fixed in the meter, the worker is instructed to record the meter number on the docket and if the number is different, he must inform the depot. I should imagine a fair bit of that would be going on, as a result of the blues which have come to my notice only this morning. Secondly, he is instructed to record the meter registration—that is in case anyone happens to rip the disc out of the meter. The next instruction is that he must fix a red plastic cut-off notice to the meter. I do not know what "cut-off" means when in fact the water supply is being restricted; although to all intents and purposes the water supply is being cut off, because only a very small amount of water can pass the disc. The fourth instruction is that the worker must give the occupier a printed notice or, if the occupier is not home, put it in the letter box.

I do not know what would happen in the case of a person who has gone out and left a hot water system running. I understand it is not unusual for persons to leave automatic washing machines connected to a hot water supply. What will happen if the water supply is severely restricted and the hot water system runs out? Will it be ruined, will it blow up, or will whatever happens when a hot water system overheats occur?

I am grateful to the member for Fremantle for bringing this matter to my notice and to the notice of the House last night. I am grateful to the Metropolitan Water Board also for sending its workers through Victoria Park this morning and making so many blues. I am far from content or satisfied that proper attention is being given to

the user of the water and the occupier of the house before supply is cut off.

I am outraged indeed to think that workers have been told to ignore the instruction not to cut off the water supply if a baby is in the house. That is the kind of thing we do not want to live with. Even if it costs us more, let us go back to the old system of telling people that their supply is about to be disconnected, as the SEC does. That instrumentality supplies a printed notice from its computer. All right, it will cost 20c for a stamp and a small amount for the notice, but that will not break the Metropolitan Water Board. At least let us have reminders sent out because people do forget to pay accounts for all kinds of reasons.

However in respect of the Metropolitan Water Board there seems to be only one procedure. If the computer says the occupier owes money or his account is overdue, the supply is cut off—or if we want to be correct, it is restricted to the amount of water which can flow through a pinhole. That is just not good enough, and that is why I have moved this urgency motion so that we can discuss with the Government the pressing need for the Government to conduct an urgent review of the Metropolitan Water Board procedures that lead to severe restrictions being placed customers who are having difficulty in paying their bills.

Let us recognise that many people in the community, as a result of economic conditions, are unable to pay their bills. Probably they are hoping against hope they will get a job before long, and will be able to pay their bills. I know the Metropolitan Water Board probably would give them an extension if they approached the board, but when we see computers spewing out letters and instructions without any feeling or acknowledgment of the situation of the persons concerned, I become extremely disgusted.

I believe the Government should immediately review these procedures so that the kinds of instances I have quoted will not occur again.

**MR JAMIESON (Welshpool)** [2.40 p.m.]: I support this motion very strongly because I have considered doing something about this problem for a long time. The situation has become progressively worse and has only come to the surface as a result of the happenings of last night and those listed during the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition.

I have had constant complaints about this matter and I have been in contact with the Acting General Manager of the Water Board. I had one instance of a lady who phoned me at home to say she had received advice indicating she had not paid her account, in a similar fashion to that

mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. She was sure she had not received an account because she had no reason not to pay an account. She had sufficient financial coverage and she had no reason not to pay. She vowed and declared the account had not arrived at her home. The board's records seemed to show the account had been sent; and as the water had been cut off, just after lunch time she had paid the amount, and she was told the department would reconnect her service. That night there was no sign of the water being reconnected. She became somewhat irate. She phoned me and complained about the board failing to do its job.

When I took up this case with the acting general manager he said he would have to check on it. He came back with apologies and said she had paid her account, but that something had gone wrong and the information was not conveyed from the accounts department to the gang which cut off the water. When she rang the public relations officer on his after-hours number to have him certify that the water should be reconnected, he said he could not do anything because he did not have access to the records to see whether in fact she had paid her account.

All in all, it was a failure on the part of the Water Board to live up to its responsibilities. I mentioned to the acting general manager at the time that surely it was not beyond the board's ability to come up with a system which would enable it to better advise people, even if the system would cost more. He said it would cost the world to have such a system. I said it would be better even if the department had a \$2 late advice fee, rather than charge \$15 to send a truck and men to cut off the water and then send a gang to put it back on again. I thought the board would be better off doing what I suggested. I said a notice could go out with the extra fee included, because it was a late notice or, alternatively, some of the unemployed people around the town could be employed on the public relations office staff so that they could go around after hours and check with people as to why they should not be disconnected or why they had not paid their accounts. But this seemed to be too hard for the Water Board to undertake.

Nothing is too hard for a Government organisation to do in order to live in harmony with the people it is serving. This is where the board seems to have gone right off the beam and no longer has the faith of the people it is serving.

One only need look at the Ombudsman's report year after year to see that the Government department with the most complaints levelled against it is the Metropolitan Water Board which

gets hammered every year because of its mistakes and the problems it has with its customers. It has a large number of customers, but I imagine the SEC would have even more, and that authority does not seem to run into trouble with the Parliamentary Commissioner of Administrative Investigations, as does the Metropolitan Water Board.

I was concerned about this when I was the Minister in charge of the department. I said the matter had to improve because we could not have the Parliamentary Commissioner saying that the board was doing something which was not favouring the public.

The present Government does not seem to have gone along with this attitude. It has more or less looked at the matter and let it ride. The Government has probably said that the Water Board is autonomous. It is autonomous when the Government wants it to be so, and it is not autonomous when the Government wants it the other way. The board has reached the stage of being over-severe with its customers. There is no need for this type of action.

Previous Ministers for Water Supplies, including the Deputy Premier, know that in the case of country cut-offs, the Act states that a list must be referred to the Minister before the PWD can take action. It seems here we have a different set of circumstances, where people in unknown situations in the metropolitan area, through no fault of their own, are placed in jeopardy by having their water supply cut off. This is the very action which is being taken. I do not intend to argue whether the water is cut off or restricted, because the piddling amount one can get through the taps with a disc placed in the meter would not allow enough water in half an hour to make a cup of tea. As far as I am concerned, the water is cut off.

Before that drastic action is taken it is important to realise that the Perth region is either deep sewered or septic sewered; there are no night soil facilities now. All householders need water for the various necessities of life. I cannot see how in any way this is going to assist the people, or how it will assist the Government in a public relations exercise, to carry on with the unfortunate situation which now exists.

It was only a few weeks ago that I saw a woman who had had her water supply cut off being interviewed on TV. She was the wife of a fairly prominent citizen and she was irate. She had a receipt which very clearly indicated she had paid her account. Nevertheless, action had been

taken to cut her supply. All this is quite unnecessary.

The problem stems from the new accounting system. If we examine the regulations of the MWB, I am not too sure we would find it is justified in cutting off the supply of water if the first moiety is not paid. The word "moiety" is used on the board's accounts. It is not a word used very much these days. It means half the account. I do not know why the board does not simply state that unless half the account is paid within a certain time, action may be taken to cut off the water supply. Why the board insists on using this word I do not know. A more simple term would help consumers know exactly where they stand.

Up till the recent change in the system—which has been changing progressively over the past few years to this mongrelised pay-as-you-use system—a person had until January to pay his bill, even though it could be paid in two moieties. The only saving was that if one paid before the end of November one received one's excess water at a reduced rate. It was an incentive for people to pay their accounts early. It was not a bad system.

Now it has changed to this sudden death situation on failure to pay the moiety by a certain time. Even though a person is not obliged to pay the entire bill until the end of the period, I am not too sure the Government is on very good ground. The board should clearly indicate whether it wants half the bill paid by a certain time. Many people are in the unfortunate situation where they may not be able to raise the full amount first up. It will at least give them that extra time in which to get together the necessary finance.

It is all very well for those who can write out a cheque to cover their financial commitments, but not all people in the community are in that position. Many of these people are mothers who are supporting children and their only income is a social service cheque. They do not have very much to spare at the best of times. Fortunately some of them are in SHC homes and apparently the department has some magical way of not cutting off their water supply despite the fact that the SHC does not take any responsibility for unpaid water bills. We know that when a tenant leaves, the incoming tenant seems to end up with the bill of the previous tenant. A number of people in this position have approached me on the subject and I have told them they should write to the Ombudsman. It is quite wrong that someone taking over a house should be responsible for the outgoing tenant's debts and be told he must just pay them. It should be the absolute responsibility

of the Government and the SHC as the Government's agent.

What must the Water Board employees think when they face these people? What must they have thought when they had to deal with the woman referred to by the member for Fremantle last night—the one with the two babies who had the normal amount of washing they would involve, including nappies?

Mr Davies: She had four children including two babies.

Mr JAMIESON: Yes. According to the paper she had other young children as well as the babies. Would the Minister for Local Government like to be in the position of that lady? I am sure she would not like to be.

Mrs Craig interjected.

Mr JAMIESON: It is up to some Government members to worry a bit about what the Administration is doing. If the Administration is not prepared to co-operate with the public and do things for them in accordance with their will, no doubt it will receive its just deserts in due course. However, that does not help the people who are suffering at the present time. It is very much up to the Premier to put a stop to the present practice. He should tell the Water Board that the practice is to be discontinued and that some form of notice to or contact with the consumers must be made before any disconnection is contemplated. Only that will satisfy the people of Western Australia.

Mr Davies: Hear hear!

Mr JAMIESON: With regard to computers, recently in the House I moved a motion and during the debate I gave some figures which indicated that while the staff in control of the Water Board had continued to increase, the outside servicing staff which was coping with an ever-increasing area had continued to decrease. That situation exists even with the use of computers. I do not know what great advantage we get out of computerisation. I know that many problems are encountered because of the human element. Humans will always make mistakes.

It should not be necessary for us to bring a motion like this before the House. Government members must have received an abundance of similar complaints and they should have approached the Minister who should not be bereft of human kindness. He should have found some way to overcome the problem. I have suggested several ways and I do not see why they cannot be adopted. It is up to the Government to sort out the situation the best way it can. It is in charge and it must make the move. I am sure that if it

does not do so before long, the Ombudsman will have to have an extra three or four pages in his report in order to deal with the additional complaints of people who have been unfairly treated.

Members should realise if my suggestion regarding a late fee were adopted those who have not paid their accounts would quickly race in and ask what the hell it was all about and why they were being debited with a late fee. Of course if they can justify their complaints, the late fee could be waived by the board. However, those people would not have to go through the trauma of having their water supply disconnected. I suggest that would be a simple and reasonable way to overcome the problem which now seems to exist in the metropolitan area.

Many of these complaints have been made. Obviously the Water Board is not short of water because no restrictions have been imposed except on those who are unfortunate financially or as a result of computer mistakes and have had recorded against their name the fact that they have not paid because, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated earlier, the information had not been forwarded to the Water Board.

How silly that procedure is. I agree that in some instances finally a threat must be made. Until some people are threatened they do not take the necessary action to pay their bills. Some people in the community will never pay them if they can get away with it. When I was Minister I had to look through the lists at times and I saw the names of some prominent people including chairmen of shires. I recognised their names and they just refused to pay their bills. I had no compunction about recommending that their water supply be disconnected. They would receive a notice to that effect and they would very quickly pay the bill. Most of them were merely lazy and they are the people who should be taken to task for not paying their bills on time.

Of course this is by the by. The main purpose of the motion now is to bring the matter to the notice of the Premier and the Minister so that some action can be taken immediately.

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [2.58 p.m.]: I do not ever cease to be amazed at the total hypocrisy and apparent insincerity of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Davies:** That is your usual line.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Yesterday before Parliament resumed I informed the Leader of the Opposition that certain amendments would be made to the Industrial Arbitration Bill. He asked me to

contact the member handling the Bill for him, and I did so, and made the necessary arrangements. Later in the evening he claimed that the Government had given him no notification of the amendments, and that claim was totally wrong. He then criticised me further and stated that he had not said anything about the notification because he said it had been given in confidence.

However today, I received no notification—

**Mr Davies:** You were not meant to.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** —from the Leader of the Opposition regarding the motion before us. Had he been sincere he would have had the courtesy to give me an indication of his intention because I am the Minister handling the matter in this House.

**Mr Davies:** If I could have got away from my phone I might have done so.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I did not interject on the Leader of the Opposition and I hope he will not interject on me. He is now getting red in the face.

**Mr Davies:** You are not dealing with the facts.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** This shows how insincere is the Leader of the Opposition in this and other issues.

We must bear in mind that the water department in the metropolitan area has more than 200 000 services with which to cope.

**Mr Jamieson:** Not as many as the SEC.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I did not say it did have. I listened to the member for Welshpool with courtesy. I hope he will extend the same courtesy to me.

**Mr Jamieson:** Aren't we testy this Thursday afternoon?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** There are 250 000 services in the metropolitan area. The Water Board does not run at a profit, but it must keep costs down as much as possible. If the board gets to the stage where it allows people to get away with not paying their bills year after year, a tremendous burden will be placed on those who do pay their water rates. This is one aspect we must consider.

If anyone has any special problems with regard to the payment of his bill, the board will make special arrangements with him and the supply will not be disconnected.

But let me say that between 1971 and 1974 when the Labor Party was in power there was a total cut-off of water when people did not pay.

**Mr Bryce:** How many?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** There are no total cut-offs today.

Several members interjected.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** It is certainly unpalatable to members of the Opposition because they were so much harder when in office than we are today. We are more compassionate in this field. When the Opposition party was in Government there was a total cut-off. We have rearranged things and there is no total cut-off if people do not pay their water rates. They are allowed a restricted service which gives them between 1 and 1½ litres a minute; in other words, over 2 000 litres a day are supplied to people who do not pay their water rates. So there is no total cut-off as applied when the Opposition party was in power.

**Mr Jamieson:** That is a lot of nonsense. It was after they had been advised.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Of course, it is unpalatable to members opposite because it shows this Government is much more compassionate than they were. We have become used to the Leader of the Opposition being a knocker. In the last three days in this House he has knocked the Department of Labour and Industry, the Crown Law Department, and now the Metropolitan Water Board. It is an indication how members opposite operate.

To take a particular operation, an account is sent out from the board, and I am quite happy to table one of them in the House. It states very clearly in large letters across the bottom—

Properties for which accounts are in arrears 30 days after due date for payment will be subject to cut off without notice.

These accounts were sent out at the end of June, and about four months have elapsed since then. In addition, in all the cases I know of, much longer than 30 days has been allowed before cut-off. The board accepts half-payment now and the other half in January next year, and if any individual experiences problems the board will make arrangements to overcome them.

**Mr Bryce:** That does not happen.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** It does happen. Part of the problem is that some people when they are in trouble do not go to the Metropolitan Water Board and notify the board of their problems. We must bear in mind that the losses incurred by the Metropolitan Water Board are losses to all consumers throughout the metropolitan area. All consumers who pay their accounts must make up any losses involved. I believe that last year the Metropolitan Water Board lost something in the vicinity of \$5 million.

Of the people who have had problems this year, at present 149 have had restricted water supply

and have not been reconnected. If any of those 149 people have special problems they should go to the Metropolitan Water Board and arrangements will be made for reconnection. They may pay part of the amount owing and their supply will be reconnected—and when I say “reconnected”, it has not been cut off, as happened when the Labor Party was in power, but the service has been restricted.

**Mr Jamieson:** That was after the final notice went out.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** How many people have not paid at this stage? The board has sundry debts of \$3.8 million at this point. If these debts are not paid, water will cost more to all the consumers who have paid. In certain instances compassion must be extended. If those people go to the Metropolitan Water Board and discuss the matter, arrangements will be made to assist them one way or another, perhaps by allowing them to pay over a longer period. However, these people do not do anything about their problems. They do not advise that they cannot pay; they just let the matter go on.

Surely in the interests of the other 250 000 services in the metropolitan area, we must consider what happens in due course. I do not say some of the 149 people should not have their service restored—I do not know the full details. But if we forget about them, next year there will be 549, and the year after a still greater number, and the consumers who pay will be inconvenienced to a much greater extent.

The Government is compassionate towards those who have problems and, as the Minister for Water Supplies has already indicated to me, special arrangements will be made in cases where people have legitimate problems. I do not think the Metropolitan Water Board can be expected to do more than that, and I urge people who do have special problems to go to the board so that we can endeavour to help them. We must also look after all the other people in the metropolitan area who pay their accounts.

I make the point that we have not cut off the water supply, as the Labor Government did. We have restricted water supplies to about 2 160 litres a day per house. The Government will assist any legitimate cases of hardship which come forward. I ask the people who have legitimate hardships to go to the board.

I reject the motion.

**SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)** [3.06 p.m.]: I merely want to comment briefly on the motion because my colleague the Minister for Labour and Industry, representing the Minister



for Water Supplies, has adequately dealt with the matter. However, I believe I should make some comments because of the events to which the Leader of the Opposition referred and which he said brought this matter to his notice.

Mr Davies: What was done in Victoria Park this morning.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to recite very briefly to the House the question asked by the member for Fremantle.

Mr Jamieson: You were too quick in jumping off the mark there. You just do not like him and you did not listen to him properly.

Mr Sodeman: You did not like him much. You kicked him out of the party.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The question was—

Will he celebrate the 150 years of Western society here by guaranteeing adequate water supplies to every household or does he advocate a return to the bucket-and-well water supply?

He made no reference to any mother in difficulties or to mothers with babies.

Mr Jamieson: He did not have to.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I was entitled to take his words at their face value. I regarded them as being completely irresponsible and in fact objectionable. Members opposite know it is not uncommon for the member for Fremantle to ask questions of this nature on various matters, and we sitting over here have only to look across there to see how some members bow their heads in a certain amount of concern and anguish when the member for Fremantle stands up to ask his questions. So the honourable member received the answer he deserved.

I do not think certain branches of the media have been quite fair in presenting this matter to the public because they have given the impression that the honourable member stood to ask a question on a matter of water supply to this mother with the baby and young family.

Mr Jamieson interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He asked a cynical question and it deserved the answer it got. We have seen last night and again today a demonstration of straightforward political sadism, and political cynicism at its worst. If the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Fremantle really want to get a solution, they know there is a way in which genuine cases of hardship can be resolved—

Mr Bryce: That is not true.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and have them resolved quickly.

Mr Davies: While the water supply remains cut off.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to refer to a few of the cases raised by the Leader of the Opposition and by his colleague, the member for Welshpool. It is true that there will be such cases in an organisation as large as the SEC—

Mr Davies: And as inefficient.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —as large as the Metropolitan Water Board, and the Country Water Supply and the sewerage section. There will be human errors, and there will be accounting errors.

Mr Davies: And inefficiency.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Anyone who denies that errors can occur would be completely unrealistic. One accepts that errors occur, and there is no excuse for not correcting such clerical or human errors. In my experience it is only a matter of contacting the organisation concerned, explaining the situation, and then it is adjusted. One would think, from hearing the Opposition members today, that these matters are never corrected and that the people concerned are simply fobbed off.

To make statements like that is not fair to the people who administer these departments and who deal with thousands of consumers in the course of a year.

I want to make the point that there is a basic principle involved here; that is, the people who owe the money should pay the account.

Mr Davies: Correct.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Opposition believes that the people owing the money should go on deferring payment. If we did that sort of thing it would be completely unfair to the people who meet their commitments on time.

Mr Davies: We are complaining about the system—the inefficiency.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The practice is to allow a reasonable time for the payment of accounts, and the Government supports that practice. We do not expect people to pay a bill the day they receive it. A sensible system is laid down and the people know when and how they are to pay their accounts. The people who are careless in paying accounts must accept the consequences; and at all times any Government would expect the Minister and the administrators of the departments to show some good sense and tolerance.

The complaint made by the member for Welshpool is that the men who go out on the job are ignoring the instructions spelt out for them. I would not know whether or not that is so, but I am sure the Minister will investigate the situation of disconnections being carried out when there are babies in a house. I will discuss this matter with the Minister. We are assuming that the information given by the member is correct, and if it is, we will want to know why this instruction is being ignored.

I will also take up with the Minister the case of incompetence referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. However, this is not really what the Opposition is getting at—it is just trying to seize an opportunity which it hopes will gain some political marks for it. It is straightout political sadism and political cynicism of the worst kind.

Several members interjected.

Mr Davies: Let him say this—it will be lovely on the record.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If members opposite really want a solution, they know the way to go about it. Because of their seniority and experience as Ministers the two members who have spoken know how quickly a solution can be reached.

Mr Davies: How about solving it and getting the water connected for the man in Kent Street? How about reconnecting his water supply?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not intend to refer to specific cases. The Minister has said already that because of the explanation given in one case, the disconnection will not be carried out.

Mr Davies: You are saying that you can reach a solution.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition is the greatest distorter of these matters imaginable. He does himself no credit.

Mr Bateman: Rubbish!

Mr Davies: I will make you an offer—will you fix up this case by 5 o'clock? Will you do it?

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Leader of the Opposition takes words out of context.

Mr Davies: No, you just said it can be done.

Sir CHARLES COURT: These are just silly boy interjections.

Mr Davies: I will give you the case and see whether you can fix it up by 5 o'clock.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Minister for Labour and Industry told us that there is no cut-off now. That is a tremendous improvement on what used to be the position.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I believe the Leader of the Opposition just threw something across the Chamber, and I would point out to him I regard that as objectionable behaviour. If he did so, I would ask him to apologise.

Mr Davies: I will certainly apologise.

Mr O'Connor: It is not the first time he has acted like a baby.

Mr Davies: I wanted the Premier to be aware of what a disc was like. I thought I was doing him a service, but if he will throw it back to me, I will be pleased to have it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: As I was saying, there is no cut-off.

Mr B. T. Burke: Until six weeks ago there was, until I made representations in the case and Mr Coonan agreed not to cut the water off completely.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to say there is no cut-off.

Mr B. T. Burke: I will read you a letter from your Minister in a moment.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to remind members opposite of the official advice; when a disc is inserted there is still a flow of 60 to 90 litres an hour.

Mr Jamieson: It depends on the pressure—where you are. It is not consistent.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is why I said it can be between 60 to 90 litres an hour. It is a minimum of 60 litres, but it could be up to 90 litres.

Mr Davies: You could have a good shower in that!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I must admit that I am not really used to metrics yet, but the conversion of those figures is a minimum of 13 1/3 gallons an hour to a maximum of 30 gallons an hour. That is a far cry from the days when it was all or nothing.

Mr B. T. Burke: Six weeks or so ago.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Balcatta wants to take credit for this as though he were a great knight in shining armour—

Mr Davies: You are trying to take credit for a policy just implemented.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and yet his colleagues are complaining that the Government is niggardly and mean. One does not have to be very ingenious to work out that this would mean a fair quantity of water over a full 24 hours. It is a

very realistic and sympathetic approach to the problem, and preferable to the previous position.

Mr DAVIES: Oh, so you should stay up all night?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Surely the Leader of the Opposition has heard of filling up the bath?

Mr DAVIES: Do you drink your own bath water?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Many country people would regard this as a generous supply, and certainly better than the conditions under which they live.

Mr DAVIES: You are really battling.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. One interjection at a time is reasonable, but it is unreasonable to have a barrage of interjections.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The Government rejects the proposition completely, and we regard it as political opportunism, political sadism and political cynicism at its worst.

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I take it that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is seeking the call to make a speech. Is that the intent of his rising?

Mr BRYCE: That is quite right, Sir.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition wrote to me and asked me to bring this matter to the House, and I agreed to that course subject to two conditions. One condition was that there would be no more than two speakers from each side of the House with a time limit of 20 minutes for each of those speakers.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated his acceptance of that proposition, although he did say he would have preferred three speakers. I said, "Well, my conditions are that there will be two", and he named the two people who would in fact make their contributions.

Mr DAVIES: With due respect, I did not name any two people.

The SPEAKER: I believe you did, but let us assume that you did not. I then came into the House, read the letter, and then stated the conditions under which the debate would be held. Those conditions were not challenged at that time, so I take it that was an acceptance by the House of the conditions laid down. It is established clearly by previous actions of the Chair that the Chair retains the right to lay down conditions. Conditions have been imposed on three separate occasions, once by Speaker Norton and twice by Speaker Hutchinson. I believe, in the circumstances, that the conditions under

which this matter was to be brought to the House were reasonable. I do not give the call to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition, in accordance with the practice of the House, to withdraw his motion.

### *Points of Order*

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, I find on checking the records in respect of these debates as far back as 1918 that it has been the customary practice to allow three speakers from either side of the House to participate.

The SPEAKER: I have the gist of the member's point of order. It is true that on the last three occasions—the ones I looked at—three speakers were allowed. However, I was prepared to allow the debate to proceed on the basis of there being two speakers. Those conditions were accepted by the House at the commencement of the debate. I rule that there is no point of order.

Mr DAVIES: It is very true indeed, Mr Speaker, that you did say two speakers. I said, "It is usually three." You said, "No, it is always two." I said, "I have to go into the House. It is three; but I will accept two." I later found out that it is always three. It has been three on the last three occasions. Nevertheless, if you do not want to claim that you misled me or that you—

Government members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVIES: —or if you misled me and you feel—

The SPEAKER: Will the Leader of the Opposition resume his seat?

It is true I said that I believed it was two. However, I made the ruling that it was two; and if I had been in error at the time I arrived at my decision to make it two, the time to dispute that was when the conditions were laid down by the House. It is too late now for you to debate it, and there is no point of order.

The member for Swan appears to want to take a point of order.

Mr SKIDMORE: I rise on a point of order, because I had discussions with you, Mr Speaker, on this particular matter. I raised it as a matter of great concern to myself. In the Standing Orders it appears, notwithstanding practice and precedent which may take note of circumstances at the time of the incidents concerned, there should be no judgment made upon the number of speakers in the issue. The point I make is that as the Standing Orders do not state in any manner, shape, or form that there shall be a restriction placed upon the

people who may speak on such an urgency motion, the Standing Orders should be paramount. The Speaker should not be allowed to deliberate on a matter which involves a question of a moral attitude, a social attitude, or any other attitude. If there is to be that decision it should be on the occasion that the urgency motion is raised. My point is that debate should be allowed, under those circumstances.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. As far as I am concerned my rulings stand in respect of this matter.

### *Debate Resumed*

The SPEAKER: I now call on the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his motion.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [3.23 p.m.]: I have made a contract, although I feel—

Mr O'Connor: You will try to get out of it; but it is still a contract.

Mr Pearce: You boys are expert at getting out of contracts, you crooks.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DAVIES: If you had let me finish earlier, Mr Speaker, I was about to ask that the motion be withdrawn. I still want to make the point that we would have liked the opportunity to reply to some of the statements the Government made. That is why I spoke to you while you were sitting there. If you want fair debate—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has withdrawn his motion.

Mr DAVIES: I have not used those words yet.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the motion forthwith, otherwise I shall simply put the question.

Mr DAVIES: I seek leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## FISHERIES

### *Herring and Tailor: Petition*

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe) [3.25 p.m.]: I have a petition from 1 677 citizens 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:

1. Fully support the Director of Fisheries & Wildlife and his department in asking the South Coast Fisheries Parliamentary Study Committee to declare Herring a **FOOD FISH ONLY**.
2. We are greatly concerned with the mass slaughter of herring being used as fertilizer, pet food and cray bait and have noticed a sharp reduction of the fish captures in our sport.
3. We ask the government to act now and declare the **HERRING A FOOD FISH ONLY** so as to conserve this fine fish for all future generations.
4. We also support The Australian Anglers Associations endeavour to declare tailor also as a **FOOD FISH ONLY**.

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

The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly. In mentioning that it bears 1 677 signatures I am relying on advice to that effect. I have not counted the number of signatures personally.

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

*See petition No. 100.*

Mr Davies: You are not entitled to do that. If you have signed the petition, you are not entitled to presume.

## WHEAT MARKETING BILL

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier), and read a first time.

## METROPOLITAN REGION TOWN PLANNING SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### *Second Reading*

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning) [3.28 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The amendments that are proposed in this Bill are largely administrative and are designed to improve the flow of work through the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and to provide some additional powers in respect of enforcement when breaches of the Act or scheme

occur or where conditions attached to development approvals are not complied with. They arise from continuing examination of the authority's day-to-day affairs and from recommendations from the authority and from local authorities.

I do not believe there are any contentious proposals included in the Bill and because of their detailed nature, I will explain them as briefly as possible.

With the appointment of a full-time chairman, he will assume an important part in the day-to-day activities of the authority and provision is made for a new definition of "chairman" and for the appointment of one of the members as deputy chairman to act in his absence. The provisions define the respective roles and include provision for the election of a member to preside at a meeting if both are absent. The authority, when first established, comprised 11 members, including the chairman, and six members therefore represented a majority. Since then the number of members has been increased to 13 by the addition of the Director General of Transport and the Director, Department of Conservation and Environment. An increase in the number providing a quorum of seven will restore the provision to its original intention.

During its 19 years of operation, the authority has established a system of committees to assist in handling the matters dealt with by the authority. Some of these are of an on-going nature whilst others are task orientated. Amendments proposed in the Bill deal with the former category and are designed so that the authority is empowered formally to establish a committee structure and to delegate any powers it considers appropriate to a committee.

Introduction of formal committees as a part of the authority's administrative practice has the potential to reduce time taken to convey decisions to the interested parties. Powers of delegation are contained in the Act and are revokable at the will of the authority.

There are three proposals for varying the financial provisions of the Act. The first relates to the provision for the remuneration of members and provides more flexibility to the Governor in considering appropriate payments to members.

The second also is designed to provide some flexibility in funding staff services for the authority where departments are unable to meet urgent requirements from within their annual allocation of funds.

The third relates to section 37 of the Act where provision is made for the authority to purchase land before the scheme comes into operation.

This provision does not continue beyond the making of the scheme and currently the authority is unable, in similar circumstances relating to an amendment, to purchase such land irrespective of the circumstances. This has led to a number of cases of hardship where owners, who have accepted the scheme proposals, are effectively unable to deal on their land pending completion of the statutory steps.

This is a provision designed to avoid as far as practicable hardship to owners whose circumstances require them to sell during the lengthy amendment processes.

The current amendment procedures set out in the Act result from changes made over the last 20 years. They are not easy to follow and have been redrafted to incorporate the second schedule in the body of the Act. As now proposed, procedures for bringing the scheme into operation and making a major or a minor amendment, are set out separately and do not require further explanation by me.

However, one change is proposed in procedures which does require explanation and stems from a study of an apparent anomaly that arose from an amendment tabled in Parliament in 1978.

Currently, amendments tabled in Parliament do not come into operation until the prescribed number of days have elapsed and until any motion to disallow the amendment, of which notice was duly given, has been defeated.

Because notice was given, but the motion was not moved and debated, uncertainty arose as to when the amendment could become effective.

A review by Crown Law Department officers drew attention to the similarity of the procedures with that covering regulations, but concluded that an effective date under the present provisions could not be readily defined.

The amendment proposes that schemes should now be processed in the same way as regulations. The advantages from a practical point of view are that the amendment would come into operation on the day the approved amendment was published and would remain in operation unless disallowed.

It would bring into play the compensation provisions of the Act, to the advantage of landowners. On the other hand it would make the scheme operative before it was tabled.

As Parliament retains its right to disallow, I believe the proposed procedures offer a practical solution to the problem.

The metropolitan region scheme is under continual review and amendment. Whilst the authority has attempted to keep the public properly informed by the publication of up to date maps, these lack statutory significance and the need has been seen to provide for periodic consolidation and the essential safeguards for accuracy, checking, and certification.

As well, the scheme map is at present drawn on a base map at 40 chains to one inch and provision is made for redrawing it at an appropriate metric scale. Apart from any other considerations, the old scale is no longer compatible with current mapping series. It is expected that the first consolidation and change of map scale will occur on the first reprinting.

Consequent upon an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme there is a need to amend a local authority's town planning scheme.

There are two separate circumstances that arise and as far as it is possible the provisions are drafted to overcome duplication of procedures, as well as ensuring compatability between the two schemes.

The first relates to an amendment that includes land as "reserved land"; that is, for some public purpose, within the provisions of the metropolitan region scheme. In such cases the council has no option but to amend its scheme to comply. However this involves council in very largely duplicating the procedures already followed by the authority in amending the metropolitan region scheme, even though it could not uphold any objections lodged. Considerable time and cost savings to councils would result.

The second position arises when an amendment takes land out of a "reserved" classification and in such circumstance a council must take action to make appropriate provision in its own scheme.

The new provisions oblige it to do so. Undue delay can cause embarrassment to landowners waiting for approval to develop land that has been released from reservation.

Provision is made to increase all penalties as they have not been varied since 1965 and bear little relationship to today's values and costs. Penalties, if they are to be prescribed, should bear some relationship to the scale and value of development projects if they are to be a meaningful deterrent. They are in each case the maximum that could be awarded and it is at the court's discretion.

The remaining two alterations are also related and arise from representations over several years from local authorities and, in particular, Stirling and Perth City Councils. Both councils have experienced difficulty in rectifying breaches of scheme provisions and conditions acting under their delegated powers.

Each has submitted opinions and recommendations of their legal advisors. They are very similar in nature and point to the difficulty of securing a halt to unauthorised work and successful prosecution as well as a difficulty in recovering costs if restoration work has to be undertaken by the council.

Similar action has also been recommended by Crown Law Department advisors.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Taylor.

### **GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS ARBITRATION AND APPEAL BILL**

*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

### **APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)**

*Second Reading: Budget Debate*

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

**MR LAURANCE** (Gascoyne) [3.35 p.m.]: The Budget presented to the Parliament by the Treasurer a few weeks ago was extremely good news for Western Australia. That is important for the electorate at large in this State, because within a few months it will be required to make a decision and I am sure, as a result of the sound economic management—amongst all the other positive achievements of the Government over the last approximately six years—that a mandate for another three years will be given to this Government. Some of the best news in relation to the Budget is contained in part of the Budget papers. It is a booklet called *The West Australian Economy 1978-79* and I would like to quote briefly from some parts of it, because I believe they are relevant to the debate and of importance to the State.

The first quotation I would like to make from the document is—

The gross value of agricultural production increased by almost 31 per cent to a record level, reflecting a record wheat harvest and increased prices for meat and wool.

That is particularly good news for this State which is so largely dependent upon its agricultural

production. This good news is tempered only by continuing drought problems in north-eastern wheatbelt and pastoral areas.

Another important aspect of the West Australian economy as outlined in this booklet of 1978-79 is as follows—

The inflow of private capital into Western Australia was at its highest level for seven years.

That is an important aspect in relation to the health of our economy. It indicates a return to political stability, sound economic management, and the encouragement of investment in this country.

To continue my quotations—

The value added by the Australian mining industry for the previous year—

That is the latest year for which figures are available, 1977-78. To continue—

—was \$3 905 million, about one-quarter of which arose from operations in Western Australia.

Prospects are particularly bright in this sector of our economy. We have improving markets, we have strong upward movement in the price of base metals, and many new, exciting projects are being launched.

The booklet makes the following comments in relation to inflation—

The Perth CPI continued at single digit figures throughout the year for the 12 months ended June, 1979. The increase recorded for Perth was 8.6 per cent, below the weighted average of the six-State capitals of 8.8 per cent.

Further on the booklet refers to inflation again and says—

Australia's rate of 8.2 per cent for 12 months to March, 1979, was less than the average rate of 8.8 per cent experienced by member nations of the OECD over the comparable period.

Mr Skidmore: Should we be proud of that?

Mr LAURANCE: That is particularly important and I will return to the situation in regard to OECD countries in a little while. However, whilst we are considering that particular quotation, I would like to repeat that Australia's inflation rate for the 12 months to March, 1979, was less than the rate experienced by the OECD nations. In other words, we were able to do better than our major trading partners.

Mr Skidmore: What is the relevance of that?

Mr LAURANCE: I will come back to that interjection later.

Population statistics are very interesting also when we relate them to the state of the economy. I should like to quote again from the booklet as follows—

During the year ended the 31st December, 1978, the population of Western Australia increased at the fastest rate of any State.

That is important for the health of our economy.

Mr Bryce: The level of unemployment increased also.

Mr LAURANCE: I should like to turn now to wage rates and earnings. We see that the rate of increase over the period 1978-79 is 6.7 per cent. It is interesting to note that these figures are also given for the current year and the previous four, making a total of five years. The statistics show the figures for 1974-75 up to 1978-79. It is quite staggering that this is the last year we will see the spectre of that disastrous period in Australian political history still being recorded in the economic statistics.

In the first year, 1974-75, the increase in average weekly earnings as compared with the previous year was 26.6 per cent. The figures for the following years are 16 per cent, 12 per cent, and 9 per cent. The figure for the latest period, 1978-79, is 6.7 per cent. These figures indicate we have put those disastrous years behind us, and next year those figures will not be shown.

In the period 1972-1975 there was high unemployment in the Australian community and the public understand the reasons for that. That period made the Australian dollar worthless and decimated the savings of people in Australia. It is difficult to forget those years. The Opposition has accused the Government of continually dragging this up, but it was interesting to read in one economic bulletin to which I subscribe a comment about this period. It was in the National Bank monthly summary for the month of September, 1979.

This is the latest edition and I would like to quote briefly from the bulletin because it says that we have to continue looking at that period in Australia's political history to see what is happening in the country. It reads as follows—

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in April 1978 that "looking at wages from the cost side, over the period 1972 to 1975 Australia exhibited the largest gap between the growth of real wages and the growth of productivity of any OECD country for which comparable data is available". This phenomenon has been termed the "real wage overhang" and while there is general

agreement that the gap has since narrowed, it is apparent that its impact on business confidence, investment behaviour, corporate profits—

I will stress the most important point, and that is—

—and the structure of employment is still with us and likely to remain for quite some time.

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: So in this latest edition we are still told about the factors at that time.

Members opposite would not want me to speak about the economy without referring to the question of employment. I will quote from the Budget papers on the state of the economy. It reads as follows—

Civilian employment in the State fell by 0.4% between June 78 and June 79 partly as a result of industrial disputation.

It goes on to make the point that—

Over the three years to June 79 civilian employment in the State increased by 4.1%, considerably above the corresponding increase for Australia of 0.86%.

So over the last three years one could say that there was a considerable growth of employment in the State.

Mr Bryce: Untrue.

Mr LAURANCE: It is patently obvious. I am quoting from the statistics. It is patently obvious that the ALP policies were responsible for the high unemployment in the Australian community and that the Court Government holds the only promise of improving that situation. For that reason I predict that unemployment will not be an election issue. It has become a social issue rather than a political one. To back up that statement, the ALP in this country desperately tried to make unemployment an election issue at the last two Federal elections, and obviously it failed miserably.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.03 p.m.*

Mr LAURANCE: Prior to the afternoon tea suspension I was explaining to the House how much good news is contained in the booklet presented with the Budget papers, entitled, "*The West Australian Economy, 1978-79*". I was pointing out that confidence is already being expressed in this State and by this Government. Eastern States and New Zealand people have already voted with their feet, because they have come here in expectation of the developments that

are taking place and will take place in the future in Western Australia.

In fact, Western Australia could be described as the magnet of Australian States at the moment, and people already have shown their confidence in our future. The Australian Labor Party and members of the Opposition in this place will not agree with that, but the evidence is on the board already in respect of the people who have made up their minds that this is the place to be over the next few years. The Opposition, in its talks on employment, has concentrated on grandstanding over the matter of computer technology. I think the Australian Labor Party in Western Australia has adopted a stance which is typical of its performance. It has spent the last 12 months expressing what is virtually a Luddite view—or a head-in-the-sand view—

Mr Carr: That is nonsense.

Mr LAURANCE: —and has tried to build up a fear-of-the-future syndrome amongst people in respect of technological changes which are occurring. The Opposition has brought a number of speakers over here who have attempted to keep this issue in front of the public, saying what terrible things will happen in respect of employment, and so on. ALP candidates have been blatantly using the fear approach to influence the impressionable youth of our State, and particularly the youth in schools, by going around with a film which, while brilliant in itself, is reasonably emotive.

Mr Pearce: What is emotive about it? Have you seen it?

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, I saw it on the day the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saw it, when he asked whether he could purchase a copy of it. I did not realise he would be such a clever little fellow and use it in schools. Certainly it is quite an emotive film.

Mr Pearce: It is not at all.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It seems to me the member for Gosnells has contributed about half of the debate since he arrived in the Chamber.

Mr Pearce: The better half, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is totally out of order, and I would urge him not to carry on in that vein.

Mr LAURANCE: It is the cynical and blatant campaign of the ALP candidates to go into schools to spread a message of fear—that seems to be the favourite type of approach of members opposite—of the future and that all is lost.

Mr Pearce: That is not true.



**Mr LAURANCE:** After that sort of campaign, I thought it was the height of hypocrisy for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to come to this Chamber and in this very debate only a few days ago accuse the Government of not embracing this new technology quickly enough. What a wonderful thing it would be if only he could convince his party that that should be its stance. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows this Government welcomes progress. He knows it will initiate new development, will attract investment, and can create lasting job opportunities.

On the other hand, the Opposition is a head-in-the-sand party. Look at the things to which the Opposition has said "No." Recently members opposite said "No" to bauxite mining, and they are still equivocating over it. Members opposite said "No" to uranium mining, another important development for the State; they said "No" to nuclear power planning—not to nuclear power, but to nuclear power planning. They are still equivocating over the matter of the North-West Shelf gas project. One of their candidates is openly casting doubts on the viability of the project and whether it should go ahead. The Opposition knows very well that to bar the export of gas is to put the kibosh on the whole development; and yet one of their endorsed candidates still stands up and makes such statements, trying to knock the whole project.

I want to reflect on the term "endorsed" for a moment, because I am referring to ALP endorsed candidates. The Labor Party endorses its candidates; so how can it dissociate itself from the views of the candidates it endorses? It is not possible.

Rather than consider the shallow, hypocritical stance adopted by the ALP on the matter of computer technology, let us look at another field of technology which holds great promise for this country. I refer to the field of satellite technology. This has the possibility of great impact and significance, particularly for country people. However, it offers the possibility of impact and significance not only for country people but also for the nation as a whole.

I was delighted only a few days ago—on the 18th October—to hear the Federal Minister for Post and Telecommunications (Mr Staley) announce that the Federal Government will launch a domestic communications satellite some time in 1984. The following day—the 19th October—a headline appeared in *The West Australian* saying, "Satellite project spells cheer for outback". It certainly does spell cheer, and not only for the outback but also for everyone in the country. What an exciting prospect it is. Satellite

communications represent a modern miracle. The Minister (Mr Staley) has himself described the satellite as having a "magic wand" effect on the Australian outback.

For the benefit of the House, I would like to give an indication of the number of people who will be affected. It seems one of the difficulties is that urban people will say, "That is very nice for those few people living in the hinterlands of Australia, but it doesn't really affect many people." I would like to dispel that by giving some figures relating to the people who will benefit from the satellite.

An estimated 40 000 people live in locations so remote as to have no hope of getting telephone service by terrestrial means. Some 500 000 Australians at present have no television service at all, and of that 500 000, 120 000 people have little or no hope of gaining access to television services by terrestrial means in the foreseeable future. A further 220 000 people have only an ABC television service.

In respect of radio, 375 000 people live beyond the reach of medium frequency ABC radio stations, and some four million people receive only the third ABC network. That gives members an idea of the number of Australian people who will benefit directly from this revolution.

**Mr Pearce:** Are all those people going to be able to pick up the service at a reasonable cost, or will they have to spend money on valuable equipment?

**Mr LAURANCE:** That is a good question, and I will come to it.

**Mr Rushton:** Are you speaking to the member for Gosnells, or the member for Geraldton?

**Mr LAURANCE:** This technological development is the greatest breakthrough for the Australian outback, in particular, in 50 years. Let us go back 50 years to 1929, because I want to refer to one of the unsung heroes of Australia's history. He was an Adelaide electrician named Alfred Traeger who for several years prior to 1929 was working with John Flynn, well known as "Flynn of the Inland". Alfred Traeger was employed by Flynn to try to overcome the vexed problem of radio communications. Flynn himself called the inland the "Dumb inland" because a doctor could be flown to the patient only if it was known where the patient was. In order to break that impasse and to develop what we know today as the Royal Flying Doctor service, it was Flynn's endeavour to provide a cheap and effective means of radio communication.

Alfred Traeger developed a number of models, including some which worked from a car battery.

He developed several means of radio communication, but each had its faults—they were too big, too costly, too clumsy, too complicated for people to operate, and so on. Suddenly, in 1929, Traeger produced the pedal radio, a device whereby the operator could generate electrical power by pedalling, while at the same time communicating through a hand set.

It was necessary to communicate by Morse code on the pedal radio. That was a magnificent development for the people of the outback, and it really led to the situation of today. Outback radios are still called pedal radios, as you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, although it is not necessary to pedal them now. Nevertheless, Alfred Traeger gave the pedal radio to Australia in 1929, and it had a dramatic effect on the Australian outback.

Now, 50 years later, a domestic satellite will give us another dramatic breakthrough, perhaps similar in modern terms to the breakthrough in 1929. The pedal radio lifted the mantle of silence from the Australian outback. The first practical use of the pedal radio occurred at Cloncurry in Queensland, when Traeger installed two or three sets at outlying stations. It was at Cloncurry that the homestead people—mainly the women—first sent Morse code by pedal radio. Immediately after the installation of the sets at Cloncurry, pedal radios were installed in outback areas from one end of Australia to the other.

Western Australia was very much involved in the development of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. In fact, one of the most outstanding examples of the need for that service was at Halls Creek in 1917 and involved a stockman by the name of Jimmy D'Arcy who was injured on a station outside the town. There was a choice of taking him to hospitals in either Wyndham or Derby. Eventually, when he was near the point of dying, he was taken on horseback to Halls Creek because he would not have lasted the distance to one of the other towns. The people with him decided to use the telegraph and the postmaster actually telegraphed a physician in Perth, letter by letter, and the physician in fact dictated to the postmaster how he should operate on Jimmy D'Arcy. D'Arcy survived for several days. Having telegraphed the surgery steps to the postmaster, the physician followed up his call by visiting Halls Creek. It took him several days to get there and by the time he arrived D'Arcy had passed away. An autopsy showed that probably no-one could have saved him and the rough surgery carried out by the postmaster had been a very serviceable job. This incident showed the need for a service such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

My own area of Western Australia was somewhat involved with the carriage of doctors by planes. *The West Australian* of the 8th February, 1922, records that a very famous name in Australian aviation—Charles Kingsford Smith—then a pilot with Westralian Airways, flew a doctor from Geraldton to Carnarvon, as there was no doctor in Carnarvon, to attend a young girl who had been injured. So Western Australia, and certainly my area, was involved in the development of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the pedal radio which came about, as I said, in 1929. I mentioned that because of the tremendous impact that service had on the people in the outback.

These people will now go from a situation of isolation and remoteness to one where they will be able to enjoy facilities known at present only to people who live in urban areas. With the modern technology available, there is no earthly reason why they should not enjoy similar facilities, and let us consider some of them they will be able to enjoy.

It seems possible they will have a choice of two television channels and three radio channels. There is the possibility of telephone, telex, and data processing facilities. These should be available at a minimal cost. One of the things which will determine the cost is the advance in technology. Over the past four years the cost of this sort of equipment has gone down dramatically. So if we look at the launching of the satellite in 1984, we could envisage a further drop.

Mr Carr: How much?

Mr LAURANCE: Anticipating a run of perhaps 25 000 units, the cost could be around \$400 each for a small earth station. If these are required by people not only on remote homesteads, but also those in country towns because of their cheapness, the prices could be kept reasonably low. A bigger demand will mean greater production and so costs will drop.

Mr Bryce: It depends on the satellite which goes up. Some estimates have been made of \$5 000 or \$10 000.

Mr LAURANCE: Not in recent times. The Japanese have a unit which can sit on a table and operate out the window.

Mr Bryce: It depends on the satellite.

Mr LAURANCE: Developments are continuing all around the world, so some very good equipment should be available when our satellite is launched.

I would like to make a couple of points which are relevant to this topic. The satellite system will

be complementary to the existing terrestrial system rather than competing with it. Further, the domestic satellite programme will in no way cancel the already announced programme of satellite services which will be provided by leasing INTELSAT. So people who think they will have to wait until 1984 can be assured that the current programme already outlined will proceed.

There has been considerable development in other countries. France is currently working on a system which will allow consumers to punch into their own telephone by way of typing up a letter or invoice, dialling the number of a remote client, and pushing a button which will allow the message to be repeated at the other end in much the same way as the telex works. This will be available to remote centres in Australia if France can develop the system properly. Japan is also working on interesting developments using satellite systems.

Canada is certainly a world leader in the field of satellite technology. Canada has been of great assistance to us because it shifted its Hermes satellite closer to the equator last August so that we could test its capabilities for Queensland and northern New South Wales. Unfortunately they could not shift their satellite far enough for the experiment to be conducted in Western Australia. Nevertheless, tests were conducted in the Eastern States and they were successful.

Members would have received a copy of the Canadian booklet, "Image Canada". One article indicated that by 1983 the very small township of Elie just east of Winnipeg, with a population of 350, would have single-party telephones, five or more TV channels, FM radio, and two-way computer hook-ups for services like teleshopping and banking from the home.

So there will be an experiment in an effort to provide a complete satellite communication system for that small community. Obviously, if it is successful it will be taken further.

They are the possibilities we have before us. They are the possibilities people in country areas face with the announcement that we are to launch our own satellite. They are magnificent developments with great promise for the Australian people. We have job opportunities attached to these developments and automatically we have them being opposed by the ALP.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

Mr LAURANCE: Their spokesman nationally is Senator Susan Ryan and she is quoted in provincial papers as saying, "Satellite is not the answer". Once again, at the behest of the telecommunication unions, which are fearful of

what will happen as a result of this technology, the ALP has to dance to the unions' tune and oppose the introduction of the domestic satellite.

Mr Carr: You have just spoilt a good, sensible 15-minute effort with some very inane comments.

Mr LAURANCE: I ask the Opposition to join us in welcoming this development.

I believe we should be immediately setting up at State Government level a working party to be involved in this area so as to establish and maximise our involvement from every standpoint. There are many standpoints. I shall go through the areas with which this working party should be involved.

From the point of view of labour and industry, new technology is involved. This is most important because new jobs will be created. There is no point in waiting until 1984 when the satellite is launched before we look at just how we will maximise our opportunities in this area.

With respect to industrial development, the local production of components is a real possibility. We should encourage production and innovation of new products to match this new technology.

The area of education is probably the most important single area. We need to be developing new teaching skills for satellite instruction. We should be looking at the production of audio-visual aids so that the School of the Air and the Correspondence School can utilise the satellite to immediate advantage.

Mr Pearce: Perhaps you could talk to the Federal Minister for Education and have him stop making so many cuts in education spending.

Mr LAURANCE: That was a facetious remark.

Mr Skidmore: It was "spot on".

Mr LAURANCE: Trade training will be necessary for this new technology. This is another area in which the Education Department should be involved.

Agriculture will be involved. There is the possibility of extension work here, particularly to the pastoral industry, which is only just now beginning to learn the value of the extension work that can be offered in the range land management area. Market information will be completely revolutionised by the satellite. These are areas where agriculture needs to be involved.

From the point of view of regional administration, the satellite will provide greater incentive for people to live and work in remote areas. It will mean these people will be on the same terms as people in urban areas with respect

to communications. The isolation and the idea of being cut off from the benefits of urbanised society prevents people from establishing themselves in remote areas. That will be remedied overnight. The satellite will give an impetus to regional development. For that reason, regional administration should properly co-ordinate the efforts of the working party. There are other areas to be considered, although there may not be any need for them to be directly involved.

Mr Williams: What about the effect of mining?

Mr LAURANCE: Mining is a particularly important area. For instance, the satellite will allow mining companies to establish direct contact with their groups in the field. That will have a big impact on exploration and the mining industry generally.

Mr Skidmore: They do that now.

Mr LAURANCE: Communications in the fishing industry will also be completely revolutionised.

Health prospects are just as exciting as for education. I shall quote from the report titled, "Telemedicine—A Literature Review" as follows—

Whilst the technology is adaptable to both urban and rural areas, its greatest impact can be in remote areas where an effective communications system may replace extensive patient or physician travel, make the delivery of health care generally more effective, efficient and convenient, and assist considerably in acute emergency situations.

In other words, I think we as a State should be prepared to capitalise on these magnificent new developments with this satellite technology which are waiting just over the horizon.

MR McIVER (Avon) [4.28 p.m.]: I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate and highlight the shortcomings of the Government, particularly in the field of transport, and to highlight the continued hypocrisy of this Government.

Members will recall that when we were debating the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway we were given an assurance by the Minister and other Government members that everything would be rosy and that the buses would do a fine job. We were told there would be no need for concern. Well, I am afraid in many cases that has not been the case.

Without harping on the subject which was well debated in Parliament, Royal Show patrons and those attending the WANFL grand final at Subiaco were told they would be well catered for.

Mr Rushton: And they were.

Mr McIVER: Correspondence I received was to the contrary.

Mr Rushton: The media did not think so.

Mr McIVER: I am concerned with the evidence I received. It seems some families took two hours to get from Subiaco Oval to their homes. The situation was also highlighted in the media when reference was made to the traffic jams.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: The people concerned lived in Fremantle. Surely they would not bother to write to me and tell lies.

Mr Rushton: How many letters did you have? One bus was involved which got caught in the early traffic. That was the only one.

Mr McIVER: Did the Minister see the instructions issued to the MTT employees prior to the Royal Show and the football final?

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: Some people had to walk two miles from their cars to the ground. These are the facts. Why the Government had to close the line before those two functions were held, I do not know.

Mr Rushton: I can tell you why.

Mr McIVER: It was an error for which the people of Western Australia suffered. Many country people informed me that they did not go to the Royal Show this year. They said that in the past they had driven to Midland to the rail terminal and then had proceeded by train to the showgrounds. As they were unable to do that this year, they did not go. That was a contributing factor to the decreased number who attended the show.

Mr Rushton: We had a record number!

Mr McIVER: I know all about that. In future I will pass the letters on to the Minister so that he might answer them.

Mr Rushton: You do that.

Mr McIVER: In addition, it was an economic blunder to close that line.

Mr Watt: The line has not been closed.

Mr McIVER: One of the points on which the Minister seemed to harp was that buses consume less fuel than that consumed by trains.

Mr Rushton: That is so.

Mr McIVER: That may be so when the comparison is made between brand new line buses and old railcars constructed in 1945. That is the comparison he is making.

Mr Rushton: No, we are not.

Mr McIVER: If we consider the world scene and listen to the experts and the economists—not the Minister—we realise that the situation is the reverse.

We have had three types of railcars in this State. The AGDs were constructed in 1954 and the HDHs in 1955. They were the old railcars which served the country areas. Of course when they were withdrawn from country centres they were converted for suburban use. The most modern railcars are the ADKs constructed in 1968. They are the only three types we have on the suburban rail system. It is ridiculous for the Minister to use as an argument the fact that buses use less fuel than is used by trains, because he is comparing the use of brand new buses and old diesel engines. Of course the new buses will use less fuel.

Many people have been disadvantaged as a result of the discontinuance of the Fremantle-Perth rail service. I would like to read a letter from a spokesman of disabled people. Many of these people have been disadvantaged as a result of the withdrawal of the service. However, the Opposition was always told that these people would be catered for. I will read the letter in its entirety to indicate how well they have been catered for. It reads as follows—

The loss of the Perth to Fremantle Railway passenger train service means the loss of independence of thousands of disabled people.

The Government have overlooked the needs of the disabled people who rely on the Railway line service for their independence.

Mr Rushton The Transport Minister has said that the various organizations, institutions, Hospitals and Hostels, can handle the transport situation for the disabled people, but the disabled association buses can only cope with a small amount of people, because they only have a small number of buses. They cannot be expected to act as public transport throughout the metropolitan area, Fremantle to Midland, Armadale to Fremantle.

Westrail passenger service had catered the needs for the whole of the disabled community and it was the only time that the disabled was able to mix with able bodied citizens and we were happy to be part of the community, also the trains allows us to take our families out shopping, entertainment etc. The closure of the passenger service has

caused considerable disadvantages to the disabled people.

Now the disabled people are forced to use association buses and they have to be helped in, and the same applies when we use voluntary transport which only takes us to hospital and back home, with these services we cannot take our families with us because they only cater for the disabled.

Disabled people are forced to use taxis which they cannot afford to use because they are found to be very expensive. Disabled people are either on pension or sickness benefits (to name a few) they have to rely on other alternatives like asking their family or relations, neighbours or friends to take them to Sheltered Workshops, Hospitals, shopping and everyday business and also to go to places of employment outside the work force.

Some people say why can't we use MTT bus service transport, they don't realize of our various disabilities, some of us cannot use the transport, the disadvantages are people who are maimed and limbless, The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic (people in wheelchairs) the blind, the deaf and the mentally handicapped. Wheelchairs create another problem especially when you are in one, when you can't embark or disembark on MTT Buses are designed to cater for the able body citizens.

There are disabled people who have communication problems because they the deaf and especially mentally handicapped who have got speech problems because they cannot think or identify streets etc., they are more easily to be lost.

Blind people was able to count how many train stations to their destination. BUT MTT buses do not stop at each bus stop. So they have to rely on other people, to make sure they get to their right bus stop. If the Blind people miss their stop they could find themselves lost.

I am not trying to insult the handicapped or any of their families by saying these things that I had said in my Report. It is the only way that the community can find out the everyday problems we face with Public Transport.

I would ask all those concerned people who are fighting to have the Perth to Fremantle service retained, please remember us and bring our plight to the forefront in your campaign.

That is signed by a Barry Allan Warrington who is the official spokesman for these people. He is conducting a campaign on their behalf not only in connection with their embarking and alighting from public transport, but also in connection with their access to and from office buildings. It is necessary for them to have easy exit from buildings, particularly in the case of fire or any other emergency. He is the spokesman for these people.

Mr Rushton: How is he the spokesman for them? I have official letters which are not his, and he was at each meeting. He was at the march through Perth, I understand.

Mr McIVER: He could be recently appointed. I do not know. However, we can see by this letter that these people are having problems.

Mr Rushton: You want to get the information from the legitimate people.

Mr McIVER: Surely no-one would make capital out of the disabled.

A Government member: You are trying to do so.

Mr McIVER: I am raising the matter because I am concerned and because it is my duty to raise it.

Mr Rushton: You are using it out of context.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The interjections are far too frequent. I ask the Minister to restrain himself. The member for Avon.

Mr Skidmore: To "train" himself or to "restrain" himself?

Mr Watt: The point you made about the public buildings is quite right. Something is being done about it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McIVER: We have heard a great deal about the money which will be saved as a result of buses instead of trains being used. I have noticed that during peak periods the buses are full, but for the rest of the day they are always half empty. Also, the other day an announcement was made about the deficit with regard to public transport. I understand that later this month the Minister will release comparable figures. Now the Minister is abolishing conductors on buses in an effort to improve the economy of the operation.

Mr Rushton: What would you do?

Mr McIVER: It is what the Minister is endeavouring to do.

Mr Rushton: You do not have any proposal at all.

Mr McIVER: The Government will come at anything at all to try to justify its action in discontinuing the train service.

Mr Rushton: They are not very economic.

Mr McIVER: We are always hearing about the shortage of money. This year the Government will receive \$2 million in Federal grants for use on bus service improvements to the Perth-Fremantle corridor, the south-east corridor project, carparks at railway stations, fare collection system improvements, and the acquisition of 15 buses. The proposal contains nothing about the purchase of new railcars for the suburban system.

Mr Rushton: Why not look at the full programme? That is only part of it.

Mr McIVER: In a letter, Mr Nixon indicated that \$131 000 is a carryover for the unspent allocation for 1978-79. Why was that not spent?

Mr Rushton: You are a nut!

Mr McIVER: A letter from the Federal Minister indicates that this amount will be received.

Mr Skidmore: Maybe the Federal Minister has not told our Minister.

Mr Rushton: We need more from that source.

Mr McIVER: Consider the wastage when the money is received.

Mr Rushton: Where is the wastage?

Mr McIVER: I will tell the Minister of a principal item on which money was wasted. Only comparatively recently the Government purchased N-class locomotives which were a complete failure. It was not very long before four of them blew up. They are unserviceable and are completely ruined.

Mr Rushton: You are wrong again.

Mr McIVER: I am not wrong. The Minister is right off.

Mr Rushton: You are wrong again, according to my advice.

Mr McIVER: Is not a survey being conducted in connection with the discontinuance of the bus service between Armadale, Mundijong, and Byford?

Mr Rushton: What are you talking about now?

Mr McIVER: The Minister is the person responsible and he should be in full possession of the facts. Is there not a survey being conducted with regard to the passengers utilising the service between Byford and Armadale? Is the Minister denying that?

Mr Rushton: To do what?

Mr McIVER: Is not a survey being conducted concerning the number of passengers utilising the Armadale-Byford bus service?

Mr Rushton: There is no special survey being conducted.

Mr McIVER: The Minister had better check because the drivers are doing the survey every day, and when questioned they said, "This bus service could be removed." The Minister had better have a talk to his department.

Mr Old: The drivers would be the ones to know!

Mr Rushton: It is an embarrassment to you that we are doing so much on that run.

Mr McIVER: I also understand that strong submissions have been made by business enterprises in connection with the construction of a complex where the Armadale railway station now stands. At what is the member for Murdoch laughing?

Mr MacKinnon: You!

Mr McIVER: We can see what is happening with the new bus station at Kenwick. What will happen with the other eight miles of line between Armadale and Kenwick? Will they be kept open? Will the Minister tell the Parliament that those eight miles will remain and that the bus service from Byford to Armadale will remain?

Mr Rushton: I can tell you this: the Armadale station will have an additional facility this year—it is in the Budget—and the Armadale station will have a carpark and buses from the south will come in and the rail service will continue.

Mr McIVER: And the bus service will continue to Byford?

Mr Rushton: That is certain.

Mr McIVER: As long as the Minister gives that undertaking, it is okay. However, he has given undertakings in the past. The Fremantle-Perth Railway line was not supposed to be closed either.

Mr Rushton: You want to mislead the people.

Mr Sodeman: You are being provocative.

Mr McIVER: If the Minister gives that undertaking, that is all right. I am sure that the people who are concerned about this matter will be relieved.

Mr Rushton: Also, the train service will extend from Armadale to Mundijong when it is viable for it to do so.

Mr McIVER: That is interesting because I would like to refer to an article in *The Australian* on the 15th October. It is relevant, and I am pleased the Minister has said the line will be

extended. The article is headed, "Get back on the rails", and reads as follows—

The remarkable success of the new eastern suburbs railway link in Sydney carries a message for all Australian governments and transport authorities. After three months of operation (and 100 years of talk and construction!) the railway is carrying 300 000 passengers a week—25 to 30 per cent more than predicted.

Mr MacKinnon: How many does the Fremantle-Perth line carry?

Mr McIVER: What does it matter if it carries only four people? It is a service to the people. The member for Murdoch should go up to the sixth floor at Westrail Centre among the brains trust which is cutting out all the services. To continue—

Extensions will cost many millions of dollars—but can the NSW Government afford not to do it? Can other governments afford not to extend and improve public transport? The answer is: No. The flurry over petrol supplies has died for the moment but the crunch is coming. And even if an alternative motor fuel is produced, a solution to choked roads will not be provided at a cost lower than that for building new railways and providing better public transport.

More than anything, it has shown that people will use public transport if it is efficient, clean and fast.

I have said that in this House on many occasions. The article continues—

Trains powered by electricity (generated by plentiful coal) provide that sort of service best. Extension of such services must be given top priority by our transport planners.

In particular, the WA Government should look closely at the success of Sydney's new railway and think again about the closure of the Perth-Fremantle passenger link. Not to consider seriously its electrification and renaissance as the major transporter between the two cities would seem to be unwisely stubborn.

The Government must make a start on electrification.

Mr Rushton: It is going to.

Mr McIVER: When?

Mr Rushton: When it is viable to do so.

Mr McIVER: What does that mean? That means nothing.

Mr Rushton: It could mean something to you if you think about it.

Mr McIVER: Here is another headline in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* of the 22nd October, "Rail electrification best way to cut fuel needs". The article says—

Mainline rail electrification has also been canvassed by the WA Premier, Sir Charles Court.

I would at least like to see plans drawn up.

Mr Rushton: We are planning for electrification of the freight services, what is more.

Mr McIVER: Planning and words are great but there has been no allocation of money for it. That is what builds it: money. The Government has wasted \$80 million in procrastination about the situation in Collie and installing the oil-fired units. It could have built a fleet of railcars with the cost of the oil-fired furnaces. It is all right to sit back and snigger and be a big knowledge box.

Mr MacKinnon: You have to face up to where we are going to get the money.

Mr McIVER: A Government should not just waste \$80 million.

Mr Pearce: The Public Accounts Committee should have been picking up things like that.

Mr McIVER: The Minister continually says the Government is not allowing the railways to run down, but the traffic section has to be reduced by 620 jobs. It will affect 620 men.

Mr Rushton: What is this related to?

Mr McIVER: The instruction is that 620 jobs in Westrail must disappear.

Mr Rushton: What policy change is that related to?

Mr McIVER: The Minister's officers have been instructed to do it.

Mr Rushton: By whom?

Mr McIVER: In addition, the night and afternoon station masters on the great southern line will be removed. There will be fully operating staff stations on that section of line and those men will be removed. We can imagine the chaos that will cause to people who have lived there with their families for many years. Their jobs will disappear.

Let us have a look at the Pioneer buses. Not satisfied with freezer traffic, the Pioneer bus from here to Newman takes passengers to Wubin, Dalwallinu, and Meekatharra. Pioneer is also making a request for an extension of its service. We know also that a Pioneer service departs Esperance on a Saturday evening at 9.00 o'clock,

arrives at Albany at 4.15 a.m. on Sunday, and departs from Albany on Sunday at 8.00 p.m. for Norseman at a single fare of \$27.70.

Here is the thin edge of the wedge. These private concerns will compete with the road bus services of Westrail. This should not be allowed to happen because it will increase the deficit. They are the three areas I have highlighted in relation to allowing this valuable instrumentality to run down. We can imagine what will happen when the number of staff on the great southern is reduced. When the farmer wants to order wagons nobody will be in attendance in the afternoon. When we consider the service they are receiving, it is no wonder farmers want to cart everything by trucks. The men who are being withdrawn from these areas should be given a course in marketing and be attached to the commercial section to go out and sell rail.

Mr Rushton: Don't you think Westrail does that now?

Mr McIVER: These men are station masters at the moment.

Mr Rushton: The marketing section is being extended.

Mr McIVER: Yes, I know, and it is a good step forward. But the Minister should start removing some of the so-called economy experts on the sixth floor who are on a salary of \$26 000 a year. Never mind about starting at the bottom; start at the top. Westrail is so top heavy that those people will fall out of the window.

Mr Rushton: How many do you suggest we should remove?

Mr McIVER: The Government should start looking at the top; never mind about the bottom. With the increases in the cost of fuel something will have to be done about it before very long. More and more reliance will be placed on rail in this State. Western Australia is the most backward State of Australia in the allocation of money for railways.

While I am on the subject of transport, I think it is time the Government came to grips with the freight rates in the transport industry. We know some of the major reasons for the present situation, and we know why subcontractors and owner-drivers are going bankrupt. No matter what we do, we will always have people who undercut. However, there are too many operators in the industry. It will probably be said this is a socialistic viewpoint but entry into this industry must be controlled as quickly as possible.

Mr Rushton: How would you do it?



Mr McIVER: I have only 20 minutes left. I will run the Minister's portfolio if he likes. Control of entry into the industry is what is required and what the industry wants. When a person purchases a rig costing \$130 000 with all the glamour, it is not long before he is in financial difficulties. I understand that in a few weeks' time we will have the biggest blockade of trucks we have ever seen, right here at Parliament House. The owner-drivers say it is useless talking to the Minister and they cannot get replies to correspondence.

Mr Rushton: You are being inaccurate again.

Mr McIVER: Why are they ringing me and asking me to try to bring some pressure to bear? They say they cannot get anywhere with the Minister, and nothing is done.

Mr Rushton: They were with me two days ago, so that statement is totally untrue.

Mr McIVER: They must be telling me lies or telling me things which are not factual. It would be far better if they got into the companies as drivers so that they could all be covered under one award. The other day a driver returned from Melbourne with a profit of \$15. That is what he made for the trip. He showed me the figures and they were authentic. That is ridiculous. No industry can continue like that. I take the Government to task for this situation.

We have seen many Press releases by the Minister in relation to parallel air services and fares to the Eastern States. I have never come across so much hypocrisy.

Mr Rushton: You were kind enough to support me the other day on your talk-back programme. You said I was doing a good job and I thought that was very kind of you.

Mr McIVER: That is so, but the Government has a very short memory. The Western Australian Government has complained that the Fraser Government is showing little interest in the State's airline needs. This Government has a tendency to put all the blame on the Federal Government. The Minister for Transport recently called on the Federal Government to face up to the realities of air travel costs to and from Western Australia and to take immediate steps to end the disadvantages of what he called unfairly inflated fares.

What the Minister forgot to say was that not so long ago the people of Western Australia were disadvantaged by having only one airline north of the 26th parallel. In 1974 the Court Government was quite happy to give moral support to Ansett which was then engaged in a legal battle to prevent TAA starting operations on the Perth-

Port Hedland-Darwin route. The Government did everything possible to stop the entry of TAA, but it tried to tell the people of Western Australia it was concerned about the inflated fares of the major airlines of this country.

A Royal Commission set up by the Court Government found that TAA should not be given intrastate rights and that there should be another review three years later. That review has not taken place despite the obvious opportunities it offers to examine thoroughly the adequacy and pricing of Western Australian air services.

Mr Sodeman: What was the date of that?

Mr McIVER: This came out at the seminar last week, so it is only a week old.

In 1974 there were cries of doom from MacRobertson Miller Airlines that there would be a great loss of service to the north-west if TAA were allowed to enter the Perth-Port Hedland-Darwin service. TAA, as we know, finally won its battle after 3½ years and started its service at the end of 1977. Throughout the period, however, Western Australians were denied access to TAA's cheaper economy fares on the Perth-Port Hedland-Darwin service.

That is the point I am making. The Minister carps about the Federal Government not doing anything about the fares, yet the Court Government did everything in its power to prevent TAA operating in Western Australia to give cheaper air fares to the people in the north of the State.

Mr Rushton: Don't you think we should ensure services to the north?

Sir Charles Court: Don't you think we should ensure proper services to the north?

Mr McIVER: Does the Premier say TAA does not give proper service?

Sir Charles Court: TAA is not servicing the north. Every time it comes in with another plane it is another nail in the coffin of the service to the north.

Mr McIVER: A small company—Avoir Pty. Ltd.—is providing a good service from Geraldton to Perth.

Mr Rushton: On a charter basis.

Mr McIVER: The service also runs planes to the south coast and Kalgoorlie, but it is not allowed to take passengers to Kalgoorlie.

Mr Laurance: Of course not.

Sir Charles Court: Once again you do not understand transport services. The first thing is to have a stable service.

Mr Jamieson: What do you call a stable service?

Sir Charles Court: The moment TAA went into the Darwin to Perth route, it meant a deterioration of service.

Mr McIVER: It is a very complex situation indeed, and one that cannot be solved by Press releases. This industry must be efficient and safe—once we depart from that concept we are in trouble. Many aircraft carry hundreds of passengers. This Government has done everything possible—to my mind because of the great friendship it has with Mr Ansett—to prevent the people of Western Australia from obtaining cheaper fares.

Mr Rushton: That is not a very creditable statement.

Mr McIVER: I know the Minister does not like it.

Sir Charles Court: You study the services and the impact of the TAA entry on the run to Darwin.

Mr McIVER: I am glad the Premier raised that point, because it is very difficult for an Opposition member to obtain copies of these reports.

Sir Charles Court: No it is not.

Mr McIVER: Yes it is.

Sir Charles Court: You talk to anybody in the north.

Mr McIVER: My colleague, the Federal shadow Minister for Transport, cannot obtain a copy of this report. I have been trying for months to obtain a copy.

Sir Charles Court: He wants to kill the internal services in our State; we want to preserve them.

Mr Skidmore: That is not the only thing that could be killed around here.

Mr McIVER: It is all very well for the Treasurer to say that we should study these reports but if they are not made available to us, how can we obtain the information?

Mr Jamieson: They don't get it themselves.

Sir Charles Court: We did this by ourselves when we were in Opposition and we made our own assessment that it would be bad for the people in the north. It may be all right for the people in Darwin, but we are more concerned about the people in the Pilbara, the Gascoyne, and the Murchison.

Mr Jamieson: The "Yes-men" for Mr Ansett do not bother to ask for any detail of his financial arrangement.

Mr McIVER: I want to come back to the purchase of the railcars. The Government made a tremendous blunder when it purchased the "N"-class locomotives. They have never been serviceable, and I am trying to be as constructive as possible in my comments.

Mr Rushton: Will you apologise when you are found to be incorrect?

Mr McIVER: I know I am right. I ask the Minister to look at the questions I have asked in this place over the last six months. These locomotives have hardly done a day's service without breaking down in one way or another. The engines of some of the locomotives blew up, and in one case the electrical wiring caught fire. Four of them are out of service at the moment, and I ask the Minister whether that statement is right or wrong?

Mr Rushton: Wrong.

Mr McIVER: Was there or was there not an electrical failure in one of these locomotives?

Mr Rushton: That was not the answer I was given to my query when I was at Forrestfield the other week.

Mr Jamieson: What was your query?

Mr McIVER: The Government made an economic blunder, and one which cost the State millions of dollars. Certainly we will not get value out of these locomotives. I have spoken to the men who drive them, and they should know how they are operating. One driver was taken to hospital when he became ill because of the gasses entering the cabin, and he was off work for four days. Do you think, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Government should be purchasing this type of locomotive for its every-day purposes? These are the locomotives it purchased to cart the wood chips and for the bloc trains. It was a shocking blunder.

Mr Rushton: Where were they built?

Mr McIVER: They were built by the same company from which the Labor Government purchased the LSGs.

Mr Rushton: They were built in Western Australia. You are attacking your own Westrail people who made the recommendations.

Mr McIVER: I am not concerned about that; they made a mistake. I do not want to see a repetition of that mistake. I want to see public money spent wisely. The Westrail administrators will have to face up to the fact that they made a blue, just as the Minister has to face up to this fact sometimes.

Mr Rushton: You would buy them from Japan or America, would you?

Mr Davies: Who is making this speech?

Mr McIVER: The Government should have done everything possible to ensure that we received value for money.

Mr Rushton: Haven't you any faith in the Westrail administration?

Mr McIVER: Let us just consider the carriages at Forrestfield at the moment. The "AY" carriages were constructed in 1924; rebuilt in 1945 on underframes constructed in 1895 and 1896. The "AYE" carriages were reconstructed in 1955 on underframes constructed originally in 1885 and 1889. A Government member interjected and commented about people travelling on the trains, but is it any wonder there was a drop in the patronage on suburban railway lines when we were asking people to travel in carriages such as these?

Mr Rushton: Are you telling me you have no confidence in the Westrail administration?

Mr McIVER: I am not talking about that, I am talking about the money that this Government has squandered.

Mr Rushton: You are talking about the advisers to the Government.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister is squirming now.

Mr McIVER: We have also seen a downgrading of our State Shipping Service. I asked some questions in the House the other night about the transporting of huge quantities of materials to the north. I understand these materials are for the State Housing Commission complex in the Pilbara. The materials are being sent by road, but what was wrong with sending them north on the State Shipping Service?

Mr Rushton: You would have noticed the improvement in the SSS performance wouldn't you?

Mr McIVER: I would not say that sending these materials by road is improving the service.

Mr Rushton: Haven't you looked at the figures?

Mr Jamieson: Figures are all you ever look at.

Mr Skidmore: I think we should have two *Hansard* reporters—one to report the member for Avon and one to report the Minister.

Mr Crane: And another one to report your interjections.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Swan has made a considerable number of interjections while not sitting in his seat. If he wants to continue to interject, he should return to his own seat.

Mr McIVER: In reply to the questions I asked the other day the Minister told me that he had held discussions about reducing the stevedoring staff. It seems that a private firm has been approached to handle the stevedoring activities on the Fremantle wharf, so everything is not happy in that department.

I will come back to my main argument about the State Shipping Service. Surely the Government should send its own materials by sea rather than paying the very high road costs which apply north of the 26th parallel. I emphasise that point very strongly.

Mr Rushton: I answered your point the other day.

Mr Sodeman: How do you equate that remark with your comments when you are pushing for higher rates for the owner-drivers?

Mr McIVER: That is a different situation altogether. I am talking about Government materials which are necessary to build houses in the Pilbara.

Mr Sodeman: What Government material are you talking about?

Mr McIVER: I am talking about materials to build SHC homes.

Mr Sodeman: They are built by private contractors.

Mr McIVER: I am talking about Government materials.

Mr Sodeman: The houses are built by private contractors.

Mr McIVER: I can remember just a few years ago I visited Broome, and there on the wharf were some air-conditioners for use by the Education Department. These air-conditioners had been sent by road, and as the hauliers did not know where to take them, they were dumped on the wharf.

Mr Sodeman: What does that prove?

Mr McIVER: It proves that the State Shipping Service should have been used.

Mr Sodeman: Rubbish!

Mr McIVER: It is of no use the member for Pilbara arguing with me, I am used to arguing with men—not boys.

Mr Sodeman: You are arguing against yourself.

Mr McIVER: It is quite apparent that all is not well on the transport scene. It is all very well for the Minister to say that the Government is doing this and doing that, but we are going backwards.

Mr Rushton: You have not proved we are going backwards.

Mr McIVER: Now is the time to make a start on electrification. Also, we must do something about the fuel situation. The other night the member for South Perth spoke about developing fuel from coal and so on. We have thousands of tonnes of coal at Collie which we could utilise.

A few weeks ago I attended a symposium organised by General Motors-Holden on this subject. Experts from America lectured on the subject of fuel, and these gentlemen believe that we should do something immediately—not in 10 years' time. The Department of Industrial Development has an establishment where grain alcohol was produced during the war years. No maintenance has been carried out on this factory for many years; it has been allowed to run down. However, this is the ideal place to start. Rather than criticising everyone, the departmental heads should be looking at the situation. The two vital aspects of transport as far as Western Australia is concerned are the preservation of fuel and the manufacture of fuel from oil. In order to preserve fuel we must commence the electrification of our transport system.

Mr Rushton: It is certainly being examined.

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [5.11 p.m]: I wish to make a few comments this afternoon, although not necessarily believing that action will be taken in respect of them. I want to begin by continuing the saga of Jervoise Bay for a moment or two. Those members who were attentive when I spoke in this House a few weeks ago will remember that I attempted to make a case for the preservation of the Jervoise Bay reserve. I said that if the area was to be taken away, the Government should give an undertaking to return it to the local authority which in turn would return it for community use if it was not utilized as planned. I attempted to point out that at least in part an answer given to me by the Minister did not indicate that the site could be used.

On that occasion I suggested that the sleeves for the North-West Shelf Project could not be constructed there because each sleeve will weigh over 40 000 tonnes and be over 300 feet in length, and it would require large towing components of over 0.5 million tonnes. I said that there was no way at all these sleeves could be developed in the Jervoise Bay area, but on that occasion I conceded there was an opportunity for the modules to be built there. In fact in his answer the Minister said that jackets and modules would be built there.

I have had an opportunity since that time to follow up this matter, and I found that the modules for Bass Strait are not constructed in Victoria where there is quite a large fabricating

industry, but they are in fact constructed in Newcastle. A very large firm in that city has some expertise in this field and it has been able to tender competitively for these modules for the oil rigs.

The modules are constructed on specially built barges. These are towed to Bass Strait, and as the barges are "one use only" barges, they are dismantled.

I understand from some inquiries I have made that Woodside-Burmah has been in touch already with the company concerned, Eglo Engineering of Newcastle. This firm is working very hard at the moment, anticipating that it will gain the contract to build the modules. Although there is no written contract as yet, this company believes it will get the job. The Government should be able to indicate whether this is so, and if it is, it cuts the answer given by the Government down to nothing. We were told that jackets and modules would be constructed in this area, but it appears this is not so.

Mr Mensaros: Why do you say this—just because you asked a firm in Newcastle about it? Surely they would take the best offer?

Mr TAYLOR: The Minister has made the point that surely the company will take the best offer. Of course the company will take the best offer. I want to take this a little further: the company will take the best offer on the jackets, because these can be prefabricated more cheaply elsewhere.

Mr Mensaros: There has never been much hope for the jackets.

Mr TAYLOR: Then it should not have been mentioned in the Minister's answer.

Mr Mensaros: They are the biggest jackets in the world.

Mr TAYLOR: If the Minister is not happy with that, he should check with his department. As I tried to point out on another occasion, nothing is sure in relation to this. The Minister will have to check with some of his departmental officers who have unreal preconceptions about that.

To follow through with that question, it appears almost 100 per cent sure that when tenders are called for the modules, they will be done by a firm which is already building them in Newcastle. I do not mean the residential sections, which I understand may be done in Geraldton; I mean the sections that contain all of the instruments and the technical equipment which are necessary for the platform. Such things are already available in Newcastle. The firm there is able to gear up. It has been constructing such modules already. Its

tender price will have only the additional component of towage. It is likely to be more competitive than a firm which would have to gear up here.

To emphasise the point, I want to allude to an interjection which came at the time I was discussing the jackets and the modules. The interjection was that there will be other marine equipment. I took that to mean other marine vessels.

I was at the launching of three trawlers at Australian Shipbuilding Industries (WA) Pty. Ltd. in Jervoise Bay some weeks ago. One of the principals of the firm, Mr Dick Verboon, gave a resume of the project. It is a remarkable project. Twelve very large trawlers are being constructed here for a consortium of Western Australian companies. That is to be commended.

The point made by Mr Verboon is one that should be known to anyone who has been associated with this field. It is that the firm was able to obtain the contract only because 12 ships were involved. If there had been only one, the company would not have been able to tender competitively because of the gearing up required for one ship only. The costs of templates and the planning necessary would have made it prohibitive. Therefore, the firm needed an order for 12 ships at least to make it competitive.

That work is being carried out at Jervoise Bay within 50 metres of the reserve that has now been confiscated. That is a firm which has done a magnificent job in establishing a small construction industry here. Mr Verboon said there was no way that a single, one-off vessel, could have been tendered for competitively in that area.

I refer to all of the development that took place in the north some years ago. Ports were constructed from Wyndham down through Port Hedland, Dampier, and Roebourne, with extensions at Carnarvon. Most of the off-shore marine work was done by private companies which tendered for the jobs. It was not the principal companies which were constructing the ports. It was groups like P. & O., Smitt Lloyd, Sedco, and a local firm called Lombardo which carried out certain maritime functions. There seems to be no doubt that the same thing will apply with the North-West Shelf—that the contract will go to a marine group which will undertake to carry out the servicing.

The same thing will happen with the North-West Shelf as happened with the development of the iron ore industry in the north. The companies involved will be brought in from outside. They will be firms which are already doing the same

sort of thing elsewhere, and which exist by moving from project to project. It will not be by new construction of ships but with existing ships brought in from outside.

I should have put this next comment in context by mentioning it earlier. I will mention now that my remarks could be interpreted as "knocking". This seems to be the theme which came out in the speech by the member for Gascoyne this evening. It is indicated that members on this side persist in knocking projects. I have made certain comments that would appear to dampen enthusiasm about whether we will obtain certain types of work. However, I would remind the House that during my last speech I said the Government should be commended for attempting to cater for certain types of work. I said that the Government would be condemned if it did not have these service areas available. If that were so, the Government could be condemned rightly.

If I concede that point I think the Minister will concede that if the land at Jervoise Bay is not used for the purpose for which it was set aside, it should revert to its former status. It should be able to return to its former use.

I follow that by a comment which flows from it. It is with respect to the Premier's recent utterances, repeated by the member for Gascoyne, as regards alleged knocking of the North-West Shelf project. It is suggested that the Opposition is not in favour of the project, or that it is equivocating, or that it takes a different stance on it. It is said that makes it difficult for the project managers to decide whether the State is stable, or whether the Government is likely to be stable enough to ensure that the project continues.

It is the rôle of an Opposition, whether on the question of bauxite, uranium, or the North-West Shelf project, to test the Government. I indicated in the speech I made the other day that the Government's actions should be tested. I want to follow that by making a further point. I believe in our system, when Governments take action with respect to matters like education, health, roads, and planning, Oppositions have the right and the obligation to test the Government's actions. I concede that when major decisions are made by Parliaments or by Governments, the Opposition could cause damage by taking its traditional role of testing too far. The ultimate example of this is when a war occurs. That is obviously not the time for an Opposition to start testing the Government on why it has made its decision.

In the last war I would say that the Prime Minister of Great Britain would have been more than happy to have had, as his deputy in a coalition Government, the leader of the

Opposition party, who would help to keep the home front going while the Prime Minister pursued the requirements of war. That is the ultimate.

I wonder whether a project of the size of the North-West Shelf would not be worthy of some intermediary consideration. I wonder whether it is not in the interests of the State, if not completely in the interests of the Government, for there to be a little frankness on the part of the Government towards the Leader of the Opposition, at least. Maybe then there would not be so much testing. Maybe then remarks would not be made, because the remarks are usually made when one does not know the answer. The larger the question mark, the more one tends to pursue it.

I say it is right for the Opposition to test the Government in almost every action; but I am not sure it is right when it comes to a very large undertaking by the Government. I wonder whether the development of the iron ore industry in the north would have been better if that had not been the case. Certainly, with respect to the North-West Shelf project, could not the Leader of the Opposition know a little more? Could there not be more sharing of information with, at least, the Leader of the Opposition? In my experience, the three Leaders of the Opposition whom I have known—the Hon. John Tonkin, the member for Welshpool, and the member for Victoria Park—have never betrayed confidences.

It would seem that there could be real value in talks at this stage particularly if, as the Premier has indicated in some of his remarks, there will be some doubt about whether the project continues. The last thing one would want would be for a development of this size to fail for some reason or other and that a political dogfight should ensue as to who was to blame. Members can rest assured it would ensue. Both sides would attempt to pass the blame somewhere else; and the State as a whole may lose.

It would be far preferable for at least some of the Government's decisions to be conveyed to the Opposition, so that the Opposition could be more "responsible". I use the word in quotation marks in framing this. Oppositions should be responsible in examining what may be, and saying whether there is a role for them to play in what is potentially a major factor, both in energy resources and labour resources within the State.

In relation to the North-West Shelf project, I understand that either Sam's Creek or John's Creek is to be used as the port. There seems to be some real confusion.

Mr Jamieson: John's Creek was originally, but it is Sam's Creek now.

Mr TAYLOR: If it is to be in John's Creek, my point has been answered. I will revert to discussing Jervoise Bay.

There are four major groups at Jervoise Bay which are just existing at the moment, not knowing what their future may be. Those groups are the Cockburn Power Boat Association, the Underwater Explorers' Club, the Tiger Go Kart Club, and the Cockburn Sailing Club. Some of these groups are not large by metropolitan standards, but they are important community groups. At the moment, all they know is that they will be required to move from Jervoise Bay.

I have attempted, by questioning in this House, to discover more details. I am unable to receive any answer at all. We now have the situation where these clubs are letting their equipment run down; they are letting their facilities deteriorate. They are not sure whether it is worth while adding an extra coat of paint, or repairing a road.

The Government has indicated that it will meet the cost, or a large proportion of the cost, of re-establishment somewhere else. However, is the sum from the Government likely to cover the facilities as they are, or will it be for the facilities as they would have been if they had not been under a cloud for some years?

The Underwater Explorers' Club is to move away from the bay altogether, one understands. The Cockburn Power Boat Club has been told that it will be moving fairly shortly; but nonetheless it is moving to an area owned by the Commonwealth and which, on information given in a question, will not be purchased for something like two years.

In all fairness, the Government ought to be in a position to say, "This is going to happen roughly at this time", or "It is not going to happen until that time." It should be able to indicate what proportion of the cost of removal it will meet. The groups should know whether they have to gear up to develop credit facilities that may be needed in 12 months or two years' time, or what the situation will be. The Government says it will meet the expenses. That seems to imply it will meet all the expenses. Something needs to be done now for these clubs.

I want to spend a word or two on unemployed people in the Cockburn-Rockingham-Mandurah area. It is well known; it has been mentioned in this place before; and the Minister would be aware of the high percentage of unemployed people in the region. I am repeating earlier speeches in saying that the Minister would also be aware that the Kwinana-Rockingham area has earlier been stimulated by Governments

themselves. That applies particularly to Kwinana. It was established by Government for purposes of Government; and it was funded by Government. As it has reached a certain stage, the Government appears to have stepped away from it.

The situation has been left in a great degree of uncertainty. I have some figures which are not completely up to date, but they relate to unemployment in the Kwinana-Rockingham area this year. A total of 842 adults and 731 young people were unemployed. That gives a figure of 1 600 people unemployed in a small community. At that time eight vacancies were advertised in the area, therefore, there was a ratio of one vacancy to 200 registered unemployed. Those figures do not include women or other people who may not have registered.

It is apparent that there is a real case for Government intervention in the area. Development there has been sponsored and supported by the Government. The growth of the regional centre at Rockingham has been supported by the Government. It has a responsibility to see that it continues to develop and that its efforts do not lead to suffering on the part of people who were encouraged to move into the area.

Over 800 students a year leave the various schools in the area. Therefore, it can be seen that in about two months' time the unemployment figure will rise from 1 600 to 2 400 as a result of students leaving school. If eight vacancies still exist, the ratio of unemployed to advertised job vacancies will be 300 to one.

I have the figures for school attendances from year one to year 12. If there is no increase in population, for the next 12 years 800 students a year will be released from the schools into the work force. The industries in Kwinana have been established for only a few years. They have a particularly stable work force and it is also a relatively young work force, similar to that in the north-west. The men and women who hold jobs in the area at the moment will retain them for another 20 or 30 years. The Kwinana community has been in existence for only 20 or 25 years. These people will continue to hold their jobs, but children will be leaving school and more people are being attracted to the area because of cheap housing lots and its situation in relation to Cockburn Sound.

Over the next 12 years, without an increase in population, a further 800 people will be applying for jobs each year. Adequate vacancies are not available and no further jobs will be provided by the industries established already in the area. Alcoa is expanding elsewhere. The nickel industry

is depressed. The oil refinery will not need to take on further workers, because it has an adequate work force. No future expansion can be seen in the existing industries.

However, developers continue to promote the area and over 1 000 homes have been constructed each year for the past four or five years. Less than a quarter of those homes have been built in Kwinana, but a total of 1 000 homes is being constructed annually in the region. Young people are coming down to the area in order to live in pleasant, unpolluted surroundings. They may already have jobs there, so they move from the metropolitan area of Perth in order to live closer to their work. The region is continuing to grow and has a young population.

Over the next few years the occupants of the 1 000 homes which are being constructed annually will produce more than 2.5 thousand children, that is in excess of the 800 children who will be leaving school each year over the next 12 years. The more homes built each year the greater are the problems which will be experienced in a few years' time.

It is true that a considerable number of people have left Kwinana because of the lack of opportunities for young people. I should like to perform a statistical study to ascertain how many people have left the area to return to Europe and the United Kingdom. Of the young people who live in the town of Kwinana, more were born overseas than in Australia. I obtained this information from the Bureau of Statistics. These people have been attracted because the Government offered them a secure future; however, they have been disappointed.

Certainly for the people who have jobs the area is attractive, but there is no prospect of work on the horizon for their families. If this area formed part of the metropolitan area they would have a greater chance of obtaining employment, but it is some distance from Perth and the transport service between Kwinana and the metropolitan area is pitiful. Therefore, the chances of these young people obtaining work are not good.

Previously there was a considerable waiting list of people seeking SHC apartments. However, there is now a total of 150 empty apartments in Kwinana. Many other apartments are occupied by people who came from outside the area, because they could obtain empty accommodation only in Kwinana. I am referring to widows, single parent families, and the like. They are only too happy to accept accommodation in the area. If this were not the case, the number of empty apartments would be much greater.

Something needs to be done in the area. There is an abundance of Government-owned land. I do not believe the Minister necessarily shares the attitude of his officers, but it is his responsibility. His officers seem to regard the Kwinana area as being suitable for heavy extractive and obnoxious industries only. They believe it is a good idea to have a compartmentalised area on a plan so that a certain amount of land is held in abeyance in case it is necessary to establish a particular type of industry there. The Government should be aware of the needs of the work force in the area.

Canning Vale was the last industrial area to be developed. If I read the literature correctly, Midland will be the next Government-sponsored industrial area to be developed. However, it is necessary to attract industry to the Rockingham-Kwinana area. The Government has an obligation to do this. Members on both sides of the House, especially Government members, like to take the credit when an industry is established successfully. It is necessary for cheap land to be made available in the area so that industry is attracted to it. This will provide incentive for business. It would be a great boost to the region if an officer of the Department of Industrial Development spent some time in the area actively attempting to attract industry there.

Some time ago I referred to the rapid growth of the northern corridor as a result of the establishment of an industrial estate. It was almost half full before it was opened. Industry wanted to go there. It was a good industrial estate; it was situated close to an area of development and a ready market was available close by. Small enterprise was attracted there. This industrial estate was not promoted by the Government, but industry wanted to go there.

The Government owns land and housing at Kwinana and it controls the Acts of Parliament which relate to major companies in the area. Therefore, it has a real obligation to try to encourage development in the area in order to alleviate the unemployment problem.

I have made the point that 1 600 people are unemployed and there were eight advertised job vacancies; that is, one job vacancy for every 200 people unemployed. Each year the work force will be increased by 800, regardless of the increase in population. The situation will get worse as more new homes are built.

I would like to touch on one or two other matters which are perhaps not quite as important as the one to which I have referred already. I should like the Minister for Transport to take action with respect to the bus transfer station at

Kwinana. On my way to Parliament today I passed it and saw five taxis parked there. Sometimes there are up to eight taxis there. The bus transfer station is out in the open; very little shelter is provided. It serves people travelling on the main Rockingham-Fremantle run. On hot days or in mid-winter the shelter provided is totally inadequate. The lack of toilet facilities is, however, the biggest problem. People who arrive at the bus transfer station when it is wet, cold, or extremely hot have to put up with the discomfort whilst waiting for their connections. Otherwise they must take a taxi. In a community such as Kwinana the people who normally use the bus transfer station are pensioners, young wives, or others travelling to Fremantle to do their shopping. In desperation they tend to travel the 1½ to two kilometre distance to the townsite by taxi, because of the very poor facilities provided at the transfer station.

The area surrounding the bus station is used extensively as a toilet, because no toilet facilities are provided. I am mentioning this matter, because I have referred to it over a period of two or three years. I have approached the local authority and have made representations by letter to the MTT. Invariably the answer given is that vandals will destroy the facilities as soon as they are built. I concede that is a possibility. Vandalism is a problem elsewhere. However, what is one to do when the MTT decides, for its own convenience, that it will no longer route buses through the Kwinana townsite, but instead constructs a bus transfer station on open land? In Armadale such a facility is provided near the railway station and in some of the northern suburbs the bus transfer stations are located at shopping centres. Little shelter is provided at the bus transfer station at Kwinana and there are no toilets, allegedly because vandals may destroy them.

I suggest the Minister should accompany me on a walk through the bush in the area surrounding the bus station. I will show him reasons that toilets should be provided.

Mr Jamieson: He would have to watch where he put his feet.

Mr Rushton: Would you include this information in a formal letter to me in order that it may be considered?

Mr TAYLOR: I would be more than happy to do so. I have raised the matter by way of questions and I have written at least three times to the MTT, but I always receive the same answer. The situation should not be left as it is.

Mr Rushton: I suggest the member formalise the matter in writing and we will see what the shire and the MTT have to say.



Mr TAYLOR: The next matter is not within the Government's province, but I should like to point out that Telecom has refused to install a telephone at the bus transfer station. This means that early in the morning, late at night, and at times when people are distressed or have a great deal of luggage to carry, they cannot telephone their homes to obtain assistance. The reason that a telephone has not been provided is that, once again, vandals may destroy it. That is not an adequate answer.

I would like to comment briefly on another matter in relation to transport. It appears from the Minister's last interjection that he is in a co-operative mood and he might feel inclined to look at this matter. It concerns the junction of Wattleup Road with Stock Road. No provision is made in the Budget this year for work to be carried out in that locality. Wattleup is a small community. The only major entry into the town is a continuation of Stock Road which is in fact Rockingham Road. This means that people who want to travel to Perth and Fremantle must go south across one road and move across a 50 metre median strip in order to go north. The reverse situation applies to people coming from the south. They have to perform "U" turns to get to their homes. It is a dangerous situation. I should like the Minister to review the matter.

Mr Rushton: What about the one to the south? Is there a shopping centre there?

Mr TAYLOR: There is no way of getting across without going through the entrance to a service station. One has to drive through the service station driveway in order to make a proper approach onto the main highway leading south.

Mr Rushton: If the member submits that to me in a formal manner I will see what can be done.

Mr TAYLOR: I am delighted with the response from the Minister.

Mr Jamieson: Try him on the Perth-Fremantle railway line. You might have some luck.

Mr Rushton: You have done that already.

Mr TAYLOR: I want to raise another point. This matter has been examined by some professional groups employed by the Government. I do not intend to name them. Those who are involved in what might be called "social engineering", which concerns examining communities and their development, are becoming increasingly aware of the problem created by obnoxious industries in the Cockburn area which preclude people in eastern regions having access to the sound.

This is the section from South Fremantle beach past the railway marshalling yards, certainly through the Robb Jetty area to Anchorage Butchers. This section near the marshalling sheds leads on to an excellent beach area approach to Cockburn Sound. The sand is white and the water is particularly clear. The MRPA plan has extended the southern corridor and there has been considerable development in the Spearwood area and more particularly through to the Bibra South area. It even extends to the area near Forrest Road in the electorate of the member for Murdoch. This area stretches through to Leeming and to Bullcreek and Bateman where the population is rapidly expanding. The people there have access to the corridor through to Coogee Beach only at the present time.

The Government has an arrangement for the Commonwealth to purchase Woodman Point in two years' time. This will make a tremendous difference. There are a number of new houses in the area, but as the area develops with new housing and needs, I am not sure how it will manage.

There is thus an elongated area along the coast which has obnoxious industry and this will be a focal point of attack by local government authorities and planners in the future as a barrier to recreational use of the sound. It would seem that something needs to be done there. Perhaps a similar action as was taken some years ago during the time of the Brand Government and continued by the former Deputy Premier in the Labor Government (Herb Graham) with respect to industry at Blackwall Reach, needs to be taken whereby industry is given, say, 10, 15, or 20 years to move out. It could be that industry would need some Government assistance and maybe the Government should look at new areas for these industries to re-establish and assist them with the building of roads that may be needed.

Something needs to be done, and done fairly quickly because the corridor is expanding. The Government is pushing this expansion and it would seem more than appropriate to give the people confidence to move to residential land in the area by putting forward a report which would say that within 10, 15, or 20 years the Government expects these industries to move from the area. It should say that the coastline will become available at some time.

If the Government has its way with the deviation of Cockburn Road up along the ridge—that is, the section south of Woodman Point—then the section I am referring to would be the only section completely open to the public. The Government should be prepared to say what is going to happen with the sound.

However, the most important point that I have raised is the unemployment in the Kwinana-Rockingham area. There is a great need for something to be done in this area because the problem is multiplying year by year. I would also like the Government to review the future of Jervoise Bay in the light of the lack of adequate answers from the Minister.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Grewar.

**FIRE BRIGADES ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL**

*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

**QUESTIONS**

Questions were taken at this stage.

*House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Services: Disconnection and Restriction*

2015. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) How many water meters have been disconnected since the 1st January, 1979 until now, for non-payment of accounts?
- (2) Are there special arrangements that people suffering from financial difficulties can make with the Water Board to prevent their water being cut off?
- (3) In view of the Chairman of the Water Board's statement in the *Weekend News* dated the 27th October, that water restrictions were now in use, and not a complete cut-off of the water meter, is the Minister aware that a possibly dangerous risk of explosions exists as regards some types of hot water systems, which rely on the water main pressure, if they are not kept under a regulated pressure?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), will the Minister ensure that before the water is placed on a restrictive rate, hot water systems are checked before such measures are taken?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 3 058 disconnected from 1.1.79 to 10.9.79  
1 638 restricted from 11.9.79 to 30.10.79.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) As a precautionary measure against the rare possibility, people should switch off the power to such a hot water system and advice will be given to this effect.
- (4) No.

### HEALTH: MENTAL

#### *Hospitals: Government Employees Promotions Appeal Board*

2038. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 1552 of the 20th September, 1979, are not mental health hospital, public hospitals?

- (2) If "Yes", is it not a fact that the Promotions Appeal Board has jurisdiction in respect of the staff of mental health hospitals?

- (3) If "Yes", should he not now rephrase his answer to question 1552(3)?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No. Mental health hospitals are approved hospitals under the Mental Health Act and are not public hospitals subject to the Hospitals Act.
- (2) Mental Health Services hospitals differ from public hospitals in that they form part of the Mental Health Services, which is an established department under the Public Service Act.

As Mental Health Services is a "department" within the meaning of that term under the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act wages employees do have a right of appeal in respect of wages staff vacancies.

The right of appeal for wages staff such as psychiatric nurses does not extend to salaried staff vacancies under the Public Service Act.

- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).

### HOSPITALS

#### *Employees*

2039. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Why does the Government consider "that boards of management through their administrations should be able to staff public hospitals to provide an uninterrupted standard of patient care at a high level without the delays in appointments which are inherent in an appeals system" whilst at the same time allowing appeals to occur in mental health hospitals thereby interrupting the standard of patient care in those hospitals?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Mental Health Services hospitals differ from public hospitals in that they form part of the Mental Health Services, which is an established department under the Public Service Act.

As Mental Health Services is a "department" within the meaning of that term under the Government

Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act wages employees do have a right of appeal in respect of wages staff vacancies.

The right of appeal for wages staff such as psychiatric nurses does not extend to salaried staff vacancies under the Public Service Act.

The promotions appeal system causes delays in filling positions such as psychiatric nurses and thus presents problems in staffing. The Government does not care for this sort of staffing problem to be spread through the public hospitals system on a much wider scale.

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### *Kennedy Range and Binthalya Station*

2040. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

(1) Further to the Environmental Protection Authority recommendations concerning proposals for a national park in the Kennedy Range area that were endorsed by Cabinet on the 9th February, 1976—

(a) has the Environmental Protection Authority examined the rationale for the boundaries of the proposed national park devised by the Conservation Through Reserves Committee at fig. 9.13 of the committee's report of 1974;

(b) is it a fact that these largely follow fence lines, as it thought little opportunity was then available to obtain adjoining land that was not rough range country?

(2) In view of the facts that—

(a) the State Government has recently purchased the whole of Binthalya station, including the homestead;

(b) the homestead would economically make a suitable ranger's headquarters and is located some distance from the range itself;

(c) there is no conservation reserve in the pastoral inland of systems 9 and 10;

(d) the argument at page 10-6 of the Conservation Through Reserves Committee report (Central Murchison) for the need to have "bench mark" reference areas, a concept that is elsewhere advocated by the Environmental Protection Authority,

does the Environmental Protection Authority intend to review its earlier recommendation to the Government before the "surplus" land is alienated for other purposes?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) (a) Yes, during preparation of the first Red Book.

(b) Yes. I refer the honourable member to fig. 9-13 of the EPA's Red Book and page 9.33 of the Conservation Through Reserves Committee report.

(2) The incorporation of part of Binthalya Station into the Kennedy Range National Park is under consideration. The "surplus" land, if any, is likely to be too small for the purpose of a "benchmark" reference area. The EPA does not intend to review its earlier recommendation.

## LAND

### *Reserves*

2041. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

(1) Further to the Environmental Protection Authority recommendations that were endorsed by Cabinet on the 9th February, 1976—what is the present classification of Reserve No. 29457 at Wolf Creek?

(2) What progress has been made in declaring the vacant Crown land in the Carnarvon Range area as Class "A" Reserve to be vested jointly in the WA Wildlife Authority and the WA Museum?

(3) What progress has been made in declaring the following areas Class "A" Reserves for the Conservation of Flora and Fauna and vesting them in the WA Wildlife Authority—

(a) Lake Throssell-Yeo Lake;

(b) Neale Junction area;

(c) Plumridge Lakes area?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Class "A".
- (2) When consultation between the Departments of Mines and Conservation and Environment concerning mining tenements are resolved appropriate reservation and vesting will be implemented.
- (3) (a) to (c) Environmental Protection Authority recommendation in respect of (b) and (c) have been implemented and in regard to (a) action is proceeding.

### MINING ACT

#### *Proclamation and Regulations*

2042. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) When will the regulations of the new Mining Act be available for scrutiny by the industry, as promised by him, before they are proclaimed?
- (2) Has the Government yet set a date for proclaiming the new Mining Act?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Drafting of the regulations is progressing but it is not yet known when they will be completed and available to the industry and the public generally.
- (2) No.

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Services: Disconnection*

2043. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is there any requirement for the Metropolitan Water Board to issue an account or notice of any kind before cutting off a domestic or other water supply because of non-payment of rates?
- (2) What charge is made to disconnect and reinstate a water service?
- (3) What water supply (if any) is given to people who for good reason are unable to pay their water account?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Accounts are issued in accordance with by-laws 253 and 261.
- (2) \$15.
- (3) See answer to question 1511 (2) of the 19th September, 1979.

### UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS, 1980

#### *Australian Invitation*

2044. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Does the Attorney General know why the Commonwealth has cancelled the Australian invitation to host the 1980 Sixth United Nations congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders?
- (2) If so, will the Attorney General now advise the Parliament of the reasons?
- (3) What are the implications for Western Australian participation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) It is understood that the Commonwealth Government reviewed the planning that had been conducted with the United Nations Secretariat in relation to holding the congress in Australia. Having considered all the circumstances, the Government concluded that it would not be practicable for it to host the congress.
- (3) Originally a paper was to have been prepared in Western Australia for delivery at the congress. However, these arrangements were changed prior to the Commonwealth decision. So far as it is known, no other arrangements had been made in regard to local participation prior to the Commonwealth decision.

### RAILWAYS

#### *Land: Parking Areas*

2045. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would he advise how much land is leased by Westrail to private contractors for parking purposes in the metropolitan area?
- (2) What is the annual income derived from the leased land?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) 47 564 square metres.
- (2) \$104 343 for lease rentals and in respect of three leases, there is an additional payment based on a percentage of gross revenue.

**HOUSING: BUILDING SOCIETIES***Perth Building Society*

2046. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware the Perth Building Society has now placed a \$15 per year bookkeeping charge on its contracts with customers?
- (2) If "Yes"—
  - (a) What is the Government's policy in respect of this action by the society; and
  - (b) What action is available to him in the matter?
- (3) If it is irregular, will he endeavour to have the matter investigated?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) Permanent building societies charges are monitored by the Government. Most societies have been charging members a bookkeeping fee on loans for some years. The Government has previously examined this type of charge and considers it to be a reasonable fee to cover administrative costs.
- (3) and (4) Answered by (2).

**LAND***Undivided Share Schemes*

2047. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Have the companies—
  - (a) Australian Land Titles of Los Angeles;
  - (b) Safeguard Industries Inc.; and
  - (c) Morlan International Inc. of Pennsylvania,
 paid out compensation to people who bought undivided shares in land near Geraldton?
- (2) Is there any evidence of further schemes of this nature being set up in Western Australia?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) This information is not known.
- (2) Not so far as the Attorney General is aware.

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT***Edible Oil Refinery*

2048. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Further to question 2368 of the 15th November, 1978 relevant to the establishment of an edible oil refinery, will he provide details of the submissions made by Bunbury Foods Pty. Ltd. to the Government concerning the establishment and funding of an edible oil refinery venture at Bunbury?
- (2) Will he also provide details of a feasibility study of the project by the Government, if one was held?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) A detailed feasibility study including sales projections, cash flow forecasts and working capital requirements was submitted to the Department of Industrial Development by Bunbury Foods Pty. Ltd. Details of these submissions are confidential.
- (2) The department considered the submissions by Bunbury Foods Pty. Ltd. to be sufficiently detailed to reach a decision meriting Government support. Some studies were instituted by the department to satisfy the Government as to the viability of the project and these also are confidential.

**WATER SUPPLIES***Rates: Country*

2049. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Why has it been necessary to change the rating system for domestic water supply to country towns for any property over 2 500 square metres?
- (2) What additional finance is it anticipated that will be derived from the change in rating?
- (3) In view of the fact that many of the properties concerned have had services long since amortized would the Government consider doubling the size of domestic properties on which the minimum fixed charges could apply?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Until October, 1974, there was no maximum rate for domestic water rates. All domestic properties, irrespective of size, were rated according to valuation. Since then, it has been shown that departmental costs for the maintenance of water mains and servicing of meters, including meter reading, are considerably increased by the presence of those blocks which are much larger than normal townsite domestic lots. Because of these additional costs, it was decided that the maximum domestic rate concession should no longer be extended to these properties.
- (2) and (3) The Government is at present giving consideration to a proposal which could limit the increases which some ratepayers are facing. A decision will be announced soon.

## HOSPITALS: AMBULANCES

### Wanneroo

2050. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) (a) With reference to question 1917 (3)(a) of the 24th October, 1979, as it is not the responsibility of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union to decide the needs of the public with regard to ambulance services, who is responsible for these decisions; and  
(b) why were they made?
- (2) Why is the present situation at Wanneroo allowed to continue?
- (3) (a) Will he ensure that those responsible carry out their duties; or  
(b) if not, will he replace them with someone who will?
- (4) Is he or the authorities aware that the ambulance at Wanneroo manned by the voluntary association was heavily subsidised by local service clubs and the Wanneroo community?
- (5) Is it a fact that the Miscellaneous Workers' Union is endeavouring to have the ambulance removed and taken out of service?
- (6) Is he aware that the professional van at Frederick Street, Wanneroo is called into the city on work, thus leaving Wanneroo without the service of an ambulance while further duties in the city are delegated to that van?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) (a) The St. John Ambulance Association.  
(b) This question should have been directed to the Miscellaneous Workers' Union as the decision was made by it. However, the association considers that the decision was made by the union in the light of a number of factors.  
The ambulance section of the health industry is at present undergoing change. There is a certain amount of conflict between paid, highly skilled ambulance officers and volunteers. Generally, the paid ambulance officers are helpful to volunteers. However, sometimes the clash of interests results in union involvement.  
The association recognises the problem and discussion and negotiations continue between the parties. At no time has the public been placed at risk.
- (2) The situation continues because at no time is the public at risk and the association is endeavouring to resolve the problem by negotiation with the union and thus avoid a situation of confrontation.
- (3) (a) I believe that the association provides an efficient ambulance service and always places its priorities on patient care.  
(b) I will again remind the honourable member that I have no control over the operations of the association. However, through my close contact with the association I have every confidence that those responsible are carrying out their duties.
- (4) I am aware of the valuable contributions made by local service clubs and the Wanneroo community towards the cost of the ambulance. Two-thirds of the cost of a van is subsidised by the Government and the Lotteries Commission and one-third by local effort.
- (5) The association is unable to answer this question. However, it has contacted the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, which has stated that it is not its policy to have the ambulance removed and taken out of service.

- (6) Wanneroo is no different from any other part of the metropolitan area. The movement of all ambulances remains flexible. They are continuously on the move and by means of the two-way radio can be redirected as needs dictate. All areas of the metropolitan environs are placed at a slightly higher risk when a van moves out of a specified area. In order to minimise response time, the closest van is always dispatched to a call.

### RAILWAYS

#### *Diesel Fuel: Customs Duty and Excise*

2051. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is Westrail granted any exemptions from payment of—
  - (a) customs duty;
  - (b) customs excise;
  - (c) State fuel tax for the diesel fuels it uses?
- (2) If so, can details be given?
- (3) In each of the last three years, what were the volumes of distillate and fuel oils used by Westrail?
- (4) What is the estimated cost to Westrail this financial year of the new State fuel levy?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) No.  
The answer to (1) is literally correct. However, Westrail does not pay customs excise on diesel fuels used in other than road vehicles—for example, trains—because it is not required to do so under the relevant Act. It is therefore not granted exemptions.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) The total volumes of fuel and oils used by Westrail, including rail and road operations, plant and equipment, workshops buildings etc. were as follows—

	1976-77	1977-78	*1978-79
	mill. litres	mill. litres	mill. litres
Distillate.....	68.4	66.5	65.0
Other .....	3.7	3.9	4.0

\*Estimate only.

- (4) \$120 000.

### TRADE UNIONS

#### *Non-members: Payments to Charitable Organisations*

2052. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What number of persons have opted to pay their union fees to charitable institutions rather than to a union?
- (2) What is the amount of money being paid to charitable institutions or organisations by persons opting to pay their union fees to such bodies?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 1 547 persons currently holding new or renewed exemption certificates from union membership issued between the 1st November, 1978, and the 31st October, 1979, have opted to pay the equivalent of union fees to charitable organisations.
- (2) \$67 293 was paid on their behalf to charitable organisations between the 1st November, 1978, and the 31st October, 1979.

### QUARTER HORSE RACING

#### *Legislation*

2053. Mr STEPHENS, to the Chief Secretary:

Does the Government intend to introduce legislation, this session, to permit and control quarter horse racing?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

The Government has received representations which are under investigation but no decision as to possible future legislation has been made.

### WATER SUPPLIES: CATCHMENT AREAS

#### *Land Clearing: Prosecutions*

2054. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is it fact that the Government is preparing to prosecute land holders for clearing infringements under the Country Areas Water Supply Act?



(2) Who are the farmers concerned?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes, consideration is being given to prosecution in accordance with part IIA, section 12B of the Country Areas Water Supply Act, 1947-1978.
- (2) This information cannot be released at present.

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The proposal submitted by the Stirling City Council is being evaluated by the Main Roads Department. A decision can be expected within two weeks.

## TOWN PLANNING

### MRPA: Annual Report

## WATER SUPPLIES: CATCHMENT AREAS

### Land Clearing: Denmark, Kent, and Warren Rivers

2055. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) With regard to the Denmark, Warren and Kent catchment areas, respectively, how many licences to clear have been refused and how many hectares are involved?
- (2) In each area how much is involved in compensation, either paid or under consideration?
- (3) How many hectares have been purchased outright and at what cost?
- (4) Does the Government prefer resumption to compensation?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

	Denmark	Warren	Kent
(1) Refusals	9	45	43
Hectares involved	671	6 118	5 995
(2)	Nil	\$230 500	\$209 330
(3)	Nil	2 612	2 658
		hectares	hectares
		\$609 500	\$559 610

- (4) Each case is treated on its merits. Where properties are acquired in lieu of compensation, the arrangements are negotiated. The process of resumption has not been utilised.

## ROAD

### The Strand-Surrey Street Intersection

2056. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Transport:

When may the City of Stirling expect to receive a reply from the Main Roads Department to its proposals for road treatments at the intersection of The Strand and Surrey Street, Dianella, to be funded under the 1979-80 programme for minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements?

2057. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) What was the cost involved in producing the report 79 of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority?
- (2) How does this cost compare with that of producing the 1978 report?
- (3) How many copies of the report have been printed?

Mr Young (for Mrs CRAIG) replied:

- (1) \$12 250.
- (2) Very favourably; cost of production for 1978 report was \$12 138.
- (3) 2 000 copies each year.

## COURT

### Coroner's Court

2058. Mr WILSON, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) What restrictions, if any, may be placed on the reporting of hearings before the coroner's court?
- (2) If such restrictions may be applied, on what grounds may they be applied and by whom may such action be initiated?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) A coroner has a discretion to decide the extent of publicity of matters before the Coroner's Court. Whilst the court is ordinarily open to the public there could be matters of a personal or private nature, publication of which could be seen as undesirable.
- (2) Interested parties may apply to the coroner, or he may of his own volition restrict publication of material.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*Rates: Interim Rating*

2059. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is she aware of the financial hardships which have been imposed on local government authorities as a result of the recent withdrawal of interim rating provisions by amendments to the Local Government Act?
- (2) In particular, is she aware that during the 1979-80 financial year this will adversely affect the finances of the Shire of Wanneroo by approximately \$250 000 and, in essence, impose an extra 3.8 per cent on rate collections?
- (3) What consideration is she giving to the possibility of restoring *pro rata* rating on amended property valuation?

Mr Young (for Mrs CRAIG) replied:

- (1) The amendments referred to removed the previous power for a council that used annual values to make interim adjustments to rates when a property valuation increased or decreased because of building improvements or demolition.

My understanding is that there was no similar power to adjust rates where unimproved values were used. The amendment did not alter that situation.

I am not aware of any financial hardships to local authorities having arisen as a consequence of the amendments.

- (2) Information given to me by the Shire of Wanneroo indicates that it would be able to impose interim rates totalling approximately \$250 000, if it had the power to do so and that amount represented an extra 3.8 per cent on rate collections.
- (3) The question is based on the incorrect premise that the legislation previously conferred a general power to make *pro rata* rate adjustments. I believe that premise to be quite incorrect and this view is supported by Crown Law advice.

## FIRES

*Insurance Levy: Stamp Duty*

2060. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) With reference to the Stamp Act, is he aware that stamp duty of 5 per cent is charged on the total of the premiums and the fire levy?
- (2) Does the Act provide for the fire levy to be considered as part of the premium for the purpose of stamp duty payment?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) See answers to questions 1762 and 2184 of 1978.

## DRAINAGE

*Rates: East Bunbury*

2061. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) When were the properties in Bunbury now being re-rated for flood drainage provisions relieved of rating imposts?
- (2) How many properties are affected?
- (3) How much revenue is it anticipated will accrue to the Government from the rating of these properties?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Collection of rates was suspended in the rating years—

1st September, 1977 to 31st August, 1978

1st September, 1978 to 31st August, 1979.

- (2) 1 580.
- (3) \$20 143.

## DRAINAGE

*Rates: East Bunbury*

2062. Mr SIBSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) With respect to the East Bunbury drainage rate, on what date were the accounts sent out to ratepayers in the above area?
- (2) How many separate accounts were sent out?
- (3) Of those accounts sent out, what was the cost range, e.g., lowest/highest; of—
  - (a) houses;
  - (b) commercial;
  - (c) other?
- (4) What is the average cost of those accounts in the different categories?

- (5) To date how many of those accounts sent out have been paid?
- (6) To date what is the total amount of revenue derived from payment of those accounts?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Accounts were forwarded on the 18th, 19th and 22nd October.
- (2) 1 580.
- (3) (a) to (c) Because rating is based on unimproved values, separate categories of properties are not maintained. However, a perusal of the rating cards indicates the following—

	\$
Minimum rate for all categories	8.00
Highest property known to be domestic is	10.90
Highest property known to be commercial is	285.00
Highest property of all is vacant land	600.00

- (4) Because separate categories are not maintained, separate averages cannot be calculated.

	\$
The overall average rate per assessment is	12.75
The average rate for a normal domestic sized lot is about \$8.90 but many blocks of this size are vacant or used commercially.	

- (5) 172 paid to the 1st November.
- (6) Revenue to the 1st November—\$1 789.06.

#### MEAT: LAMB

##### *Marketing Board: Pricing Policy*

2063. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he aware that trade lambs, suitable for slaughter, are being purchased in Western Australia to be slaughtered in another State?

- (2) Would he ensure that the WA Lamb Marketing Board is made aware of this situation and adopts a pricing policy that gives advantage to Western Australian fat lamb producers and prevents interstate operators from getting cheap Western Australian supplies?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) I am informed that lambs have been purchased and consigned interstate for slaughter or to graziers.
- (2) The board is aware of this situation. Its pricing policy is designed to take into account its export commitments and the needs of the local market and not to react to short-term price movements in the Eastern States markets. The board considers that the application of this policy has benefited lamb producers in Western Australia.

#### RECREATION CENTRES

##### *Country: Funding*

2064. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many country recreation centres have been funded by using two-thirds Government, one-third local government financial assistance?
- (2) Where are these centres located?
- (3) In relation to (2), at what stage in the following categories are these centres—
  - (a) completed;
  - (b) under construction;
  - (c) approved;
  - (d) under consideration?
- (4) Would he advise the centres and the extent where assistance has been provided by the Education Department?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Two.
- (2) Carnarvon and Merredin.
- (3) (a) to (d) Both centres have been completed and a further three country centres are under consideration.
- (4) For Carnarvon, the Education Department contributed \$150 000 initially, and agreed to pay \$10 640 for the additional cost of the floor.

The costs for Merredin have not yet been finalised, however, the local authority agreed to contribute \$110 000, the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund an amount up to \$150 000, the balance being provided by the Education Department.

#### MEAT: LAMB

##### *Marketing Board: Employees*

2065. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many persons have been employed by the WA Lamb Marketing Board in each year since inception?
- (2) What has been the annual cost of salaries and wages in each year since inception?
- (3) What is the projected—
  - (a) number;
  - (b) cost,
 of employees during the 1979-80 financial year?

Mr OLD replied:

##### (1) Permanent Staff

1973-74	27
1974-75	27
1975-76	30
1976-77	30
1977-78	29
1978-79	28

##### (2) Annual Salaries and Wages

	\$
1973-74	181 100
1974-75	245 585
1975-76	281 489
1976-77	298 029
1977-78	360 688
1978-79	344 924

The above figures include wages paid to casual clerical staff engaged during the lamb season.

- (3) (a) 29 plus six casual staff engaged between August to December.
- (b) \$404 410.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

##### ENERGY: NUCLEAR

##### *Research Reactor*

1. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it correct that he has telegraphed the Prime Minister urging that a second nuclear reactor for research purposes be established in Western Australia?
- (2) If so, where will it be established in Western Australia?
- (3) Will it be sited near the proposed site for his nuclear power station or near Perth's universities?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) It is correct that I have sent a telegram to the Prime Minister inviting him to enter into discussions with the State about the location of a second or replacement nuclear research reactor in Western Australia. I was prompted to do so by virtue of the fact that the Labor Premier of New South Wales (Mr Wran) has done his best to stir up fears in the minds of people about a danger that does not exist.

Also, in view of the medical nature of the product of such a reactor, which Australia will have to import if Lucas Heights is not operating, it struck me it was time we had a second reactor in Australia to give us greater security. I could not see any reason that the reactor should not be on this side of the country rather than on the other side. Whether it is a replacement reactor or a second reactor, it does not matter; it would be welcome in either case.

So far as the location is concerned, this is one of the matters which would be subject to discussion between the Commonwealth and State Governments. I have asked the Prime Minister to indicate whether he would like discussions commenced at ministerial level or departmental level—whichever suits him best.

So far as the site is concerned, that is something that would have to be the subject of negotiation, bearing in mind that this is a nuclear research reactor with a very special medical product. It struck me it was not a bad thing to put in our claim. We hope to obtain the next one.

2066. *This question was postponed.*

## ENERGY: NUCLEAR

*Research Reactor*

## 2. Mr JAMIESON, to the Premier:

In view of the potential risks of nuclear reactors, as evidenced throughout the world and most recently at Lucas Heights, what basis does he have for wanting a nuclear power station and a nuclear research station in Perth, taking into account that nuclear power cannot be justified in Western Australia in terms of need, cost, or safety?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I wish only that time would permit me to give a complete and full answer for the next half hour on the various points that the member has raised. In view of the fact it is neither practical nor desirable to do so, I shall content myself with being brief.

First of all, there is no risk. I invite the member's attention to the fact that the safest method by far for power generation in the world today is nuclear. It has the best record till now and potentially in the future.

So far as our reasons for wanting to attract a nuclear power station here by 1995 and a nuclear research plant in the near future are concerned, modern technology is such that Western Australians have a right to participate in this technology—young scientists in particular—in this State. We believe that in meeting the needs of the nuclear research reactor the scientific knowledge that would be developed in this State, would be invaluable, including for the power plant that will be necessary by 1995 if we are to have a balanced availability of energy from a number of sources—not overlooking the fact that the nuclear research plant is for medical purposes.

If one does the calculations in relation to power needs of this State by 1995, it becomes quite obvious that not only do we need to develop the coal and its use on a basis which will give a long life to Collie, but also we need every form of energy we can amass, whether it be gas, oil, or nuclear. It is in that context that we have made the decision to go ahead.

## EDUCATION: TEACHERS

*Promotion by Merit*

## 3. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it true, as reported in the Press, that he or the department is considering expanding the "promotion by merit" system to teachers in State schools?
- (2) If so, is this reconsideration being carried out in consultation with the Teachers' Union?
- (3) Would he give an undertaking that no further expansion of this scheme will be made without obtaining the agreement of the Teachers' Union?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No. If I have understood the question correctly, the member is asking that no implementation of promotion by merit would be undertaken without the agreement of the Teachers' Union. He used the word "agreement". The answer to that would clearly be "No" because the Education Department runs the education system, not the Teachers' Union.

As I have already said publicly, we would be having discussions on the matter. Indeed, we have already invited some comment from the Teachers' Union. Yesterday I advised the president that I expected to have before me a recommendation, following which I would obtain comments from the union.

## DR BERNARD KESSELL

*Medibank Fraud*

## 4. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Medical Board considered the position of Dr Bernard Kessell?
- (2) If so, what decision has been reached?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) The Medical Board has made a decision, which it has not conveyed to me. I understand the decision will be gazetted in tomorrow's issue of the *Government Gazette*.