

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 8 October 1980

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

HEALTH: MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Amendment: Petition

MR HODGE (Melville) [2.18 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition from 1 600 citizens which reads as follows—

To the Hon. The Speaker, Members of Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Western Australia, in the Parliament Assembled.

We the undersigned support the Citizens' Committee on Human Rights in their campaign to introduce and effect the Citizens' Committee on Human Rights proposed amendments to the W.A. Mental Health Act 1962-1976.

- (1) Drafted on the basis of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- (2) Encompassing safeguards in all types of psychosurgery and Electro-convulsive Therapy (shock treatment) through informed patient consent and the establishment of the Mental Health Review Tribunal which must also approve of patient treatment.

Your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray that this humble petition be acceded to: I have certified that the petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 24.)

BILLS (4): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Amendment Bill.

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

2. Western Australian Marine Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Rushton (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

3. Recordings of Proceedings Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Deputy Premier), and read a first time.

4. Housing Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Laurance (Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing), and read a first time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr Blaikie, leave of absence for six weeks granted to Mr Shalders (Murray) on the ground of urgent public business.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: ART GALLERY

Public Inquiry: Motion

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.25 p.m.]: Let me say at the outset that this is a motion which I move without any pleasure at all. I am moving it because of what has occurred in the Western Australian Art Gallery over the last three years, and to a lesser extent because of the distress this has caused throughout the community, and particularly to those people who have some interest in Western Australia having a fine Art Gallery and in using the very expensive facilities which have been provided by Government funds—your funds and mine, Mr Speaker—in the area between James Street and the railway line.

It is no pleasure for me or the Opposition to see the continual troubles experienced by the Art Gallery and the way in which the people who use the gallery have found themselves split in their attitudes and loyalties between what appears to be feuding groups. It is no pleasure to see the way in which facilities may be misused in the long term. This is having a detrimental effect throughout the Western Australian cultural community.

The motivation I had in bringing this motion forward today was quite specifically to do with the rearrangements which are being made in the Art Gallery at the present time in regard to the abolition of the position of deputy director and the restructuring which is being done to get rid of the current deputy director, Mr Lou Klepac. I have had this motion on the notice paper since the opening of this Parliament; however, I have not proceeded with it during private members' business days although I would have been prepared to produce for the House the material I have because I believe an investigation should have been made into what has been happening in the Art Gallery.

I was prepared to postpone discussions because I had hopes that some of the initiatives which

were taking place outside the House would have resulted in the matter being settled before it was necessary to debate it in this House. If such a solution had been reached, I would not have proceeded with this motion.

The Opposition is sincere when it says that it is seeking a settlement of the problems which are wracking the Art Gallery and which have been occurring for the last few years. If the situation could have been sorted out outside this House, it would have been the best thing which could happen.

However, it seems that that is not the case and, therefore, I have little option but to proceed with my motion. Before I outline what seem to me to be the essential problems of the Art Gallery and what areas should be inquired into, I would like to dwell on the end result, and the last link in the chain of circumstances which have led to the current state of affairs; and that is, what has happened to the deputy director, Mr Lou Klepac. I would like to refer to how Mr Klepac's services have been terminated and the misleading statements which have been made, particularly by the Minister for Cultural Affairs.

I intend to be harsh in my comments about the Minister for Cultural Affairs, but I will say that, in the first instance, he did stay out of the developing problems of the Art Gallery. One could perhaps say unkindly that if he had had at least some behind-the-scenes harsh words with members of the Art Gallery Board, then the problems may have been solved. At least, in the early stages, he seemed to be prepared to keep out of the public debate about the issue.

Far too soon, we saw the quintessential action which all his front bench ministerial colleagues take when any section of a Government department is under attack. The Minister leapt to the defence of his department, which was an unfortunate action. We on this side of the House do not hold the Minister for Cultural Affairs responsible for the deficiencies of the Art Gallery Board. The board's deficiencies are their own. The present Minister for Cultural Affairs did not appoint the members of the board; therefore, it would be difficult for him to dispense with the services of several members if he wished to do so.

There is no need for a Minister to leap to the defence of a department or board unless he feels that their actions are correct. It should be possible for the Minister to look at the situation closely to see what the difficulties are and to sort out the problem without involving others, or without leaping to the department's defence as has happened in this case.

There is a proposed restructuring—although more than a proposal now—of the Art Gallery Board whereby the hierarchy in the two top positions—the director and the deputy director—are to be split into three positions. The position of deputy director is to be abolished and it will be replaced by two assistant directors, one to be in charge of administrative matters, and the other to be in charge of curatorial matters.

The replacements for the position of Deputy Director of the Art Gallery Board are at a lower level than the position of deputy director, and the salaries will be some \$2 300 less. Because each position will be equivalent to that of another person, they will not have the same status as the deputy director had; the status will be somewhat less than that of the deputy director.

This restructuring took place some months before the director signed a letter stating that the board had decided the position of deputy director would terminate on 24 November. In the restructuring Mr Klepac was, in the words of the Minister, notified that he could apply for the lower down, curatorial position. He was told he could apply for that post and take his chance with other applicants. Since that time the Minister has tried to lead the people of Western Australia to believe that Mr Klepac virtually has been offered the lower position of assistant director, curatorial. The position was to be downgraded a little by some \$2 300, and it was to be downgraded in status because another person would be appointed at the equally lower down level. The Minister has managed to give the public the impression that Mr Klepac has been told, virtually, the position is his if he wants it.

Because that ministerial statement was most misleading, I will read to the House the letter which Mr Klepac actually received from the Director of the Art Gallery Board telling him that his contract was to be terminated. This letter is important. It was typed on 1 May, but not delivered to Mr Klepac until some days later, so the date was changed to 6 May. It reads—

You will be aware that the contract by which you are employed as Deputy Director expires on 24 November 1980.

Arising from the transfer to the new building and the consequent expansion of the activities of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the staffing organization has been revised by the Art Gallery Board, with advice from the Public Service Board.

This revision requires replacement of the position of Deputy Director by that of Assistant Director (Curatorial). The relevant

organization chart and duty statement is enclosed for your information.

Accordingly, on 24 April last the Art Gallery Board resolved that your present contract of employment as Deputy Director will not be extended beyond its present term (ie) after 24 November 1980. Thereafter, the position of Assistant Director (Curatorial) will be implemented. The Board wishes to assure you that your application for this post will be considered fully with any other suitable responses to public advertisements.

To say that Mr Klepac had been invited to apply for the job with the implication that he was certain to get it, simply is not in accordance with the letter written to Mr Klepac from the Director of the Art Gallery Board. The key phrase is—

... your application for this post will be considered fully with any other suitable responses to public advertisements.

The letter was not even an invitation to apply. It told Mr Klepac that if he wanted to apply his application would be considered along with everybody else's. That is not even an invitation to apply; much short of a proposition that he would be given the position if he applied for it.

The Art Gallery Board—and probably the Minister—made the assumption that the downgrading of the position and the loss of status associated with it would mean that Mr Klepac would not apply for the lower down position. That, in fact, was a miscalculation by the board and by the Minister because, in fact, Mr Klepac has applied for the position. He has stated publicly that he has not yet been offered an interview for the position.

The Minister made a tactical error last week when he told the *Daily News* it was a great pity that Mr Klepac had not applied for the position because the lower down position was the sort which would suit Mr Klepac. He would not have the administration problems, and he was much better suited to the curatorial position. He said the deficiency of \$2 300 in salary could be made up in other ways.

The statement by the Minister prompted me to leap to my feet and ask a question without notice. I asked the Minister whether he would give a guarantee that Mr Klepac, if he applied for the job, would, in fact, get it. I am surprised Mr Klepac has not already been given the job if the Minister's statements are anywhere near accurate. The Minister was not able to answer my question without notice. In fact, the Minister is becoming notorious for not being able to answer my questions, and in asking me to put them on

the notice paper. I think that on four or five occasions within the last few weeks I have been asked to put questions without notice on the notice paper.

I did place my question on the notice paper, but because of the present situation under which questions do not come up until after I have moved this motion I do not have the relevant information.

Mr Grayden: I will tell you the result if that is what you want.

Mr PEARCE: I was about to ask the Minister whether he could provide the information.

Mr Grayden: The answer is that you will have to wait until the Art Gallery Board meets on the 17th, when it will interview all applicants.

Mr PEARCE: The answer is that the Minister will not give a guarantee.

Mr Grayden: Under no circumstances at all, so base your speech on that information.

Mr B. T. Burke: A job for Mr Fabulous!

Mr PEARCE: That statement by the Minister bears out the sheer hypocrisy of the Minister. He wept crocodile tears when he said that Mr Klepac had not applied. He said the job would have suited Mr Klepac down to the ground.

Mr Grayden: You are making it difficult for Mr Klepac; you are aware of that?

Mr Davies: Can it be any worse than the way you are handling it?

Mr PEARCE: No-one has any illusion about Mr Klepac's chances of being appointed by the board, by the Minister, or by anybody else. If it was intended to appoint Mr Klepac to the lower down position this matter would not have been going on for the last six months. Weeping crocodile tears here about the damage which might be done to Mr Klepac's chances by our raising this matter, is not fooling us.

Mr Grayden: The action was based on the best possible advice.

Mr B. T. Burke: The National Country Party cannot even run a grocery business.

Mr PEARCE: What best possible advice? The board is composed of a lot of meddlers who could not run Mr Fabulous foods. The board should not be handling an institution essential to the cultural life of the people of Western Australia. After listening to some of the utterances, I say the best advice is sheer nonsense.

Mr Grayden: We will find out about that later.

Mr PEARCE: When the Minister speaks, I will be very surprised if what he says is relevant to the question. If the Minister makes a speech that is

relevant to the debate, it will be a refreshing change of policy from his normal attitude in the four years I have been here.

Mr Grayden: Four years too long.

Mr PEARCE: The chances of Mr Klepac being appointed to the lower down position are not very good. I have raised this matter by way of a motion because of the hypocrisy of both the Minister and the board. They have cried crocodile tears over the fact that Mr Klepac, supposedly, had not applied for the position, and had not used the avenues available to him to have his application accepted. That is sheer hypocrisy which I find to be galling and appalling. A group of people is very determined to get rid of Mr Klepac. One would have expected the board to have the decency and the honesty to state what it intended to do, and to give its reasons. Everyone would then know where he stood. To use a roundabout way to get rid of a man, while trying to pretend a job was available for him, shows a lack of decency.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you aware that Mr Klepac has been applying, for some years, for jobs in the Eastern States?

Mr B. T. Burke: That is the order boy from the grocery chain.

Mr PEARCE: I truly fail to see the relevance of the interjection from the Minister. The Minister is making the point that this is not a new manifestation and something which has occurred recently. Is that what the Minister is suggesting?

Mr P. V. Jones: I am saying it runs back over some years. I am trying to make the point, too, that Mr Klepac in fact has been applying for jobs in the Eastern States for some time.

Mr PEARCE: So what?

Mr P. V. Jones: As long as you are aware of that.

Mr PEARCE: I am astounded. Is it a case of appointees to semi-Government positions not being allowed to apply for other jobs? Is that what the Minister is trying to tell the House? It has no relevance at all. If it is a fact that Mr Klepac is applying for jobs in the Eastern States—I have no knowledge whether or not that is true—I imagine it is because of what has been done to him. If the board has gone to the trouble of reorganising the structure of the Art Gallery, to get rid of Mr Klepac because he is applying for jobs in the Eastern States, that should be made clear.

The former Minister for Cultural Affairs doubtless had a finger in the pie when the first cherries were being put into the oven. I am

inclined to believe he has even greater culpability in this matter than the present Minister for Cultural Affairs.

The thrust of our call for an inquiry is directed quite specifically against the Art Gallery Board, because that is the group of people who have made these deplorable decisions, who have been unable to sort out the long series of struggles, battles, and dissatisfactions which have arisen in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and who have settled on the policy described by the former Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales of replacing directors who are professionals with people of mediocrity who will be subservient to the board, thus holding down the professional staff. It is unfortunate that these events have found their way to Western Australia. The fundamental point we make in moving the motion is that we have in the Art Gallery Board of Western Australia a group of people who are far exceeding the brief the Government gives them when it appoints them to their positions.

We all understand the way in which people are appointed to Government boards and bodies, such as the Art Gallery Board, the Museum Board, the Karrakatta Cemetery Board, and the whole range of boards and instrumentalities. The people appointed are in charge of groups of professional people. For instance, the boards of the colleges of advanced education, and the Murdoch University Senate fall into the category of Government-appointed groups of people who are really amateurs, but who are given a supervisory role over the institutions.

The Art Gallery Board seems to be an outstanding example of the obverse situation. Other board members understand they are to meet once a month, to make essential policy decisions under the guidance of the Minister, in some cases to ensure things are done properly in the institution, to sort out squabbles and other matters which the director of the institution cannot handle himself, and generally to have a supervisory function. That is all.

It is not the job of the board members to try to take over the running of the institution on a day-to-day basis from the professional staff, but that is exactly what is happening at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, where the members of the board are so taken with their own artistic expertise that they believe they can do a better job than the professional officers. Unfortunately, the money they are playing with is not their own money, but the money of the taxpayers of Western Australia.

This is where the Minister has been such a failure. When these problems build up with Government-appointed boards, it is the Minister's job to step in and sort them out. Rather than do that, the Minister for Cultural Affairs has been the most vocal supporter of the Art Gallery Board.

The problem goes back at least several years, but it first came to the attention of the Opposition in 1977 during the months when the Art Gallery Board was trying to find a replacement director and appointed to the position of Acting Director of the Art Gallery Mr Bert Whittle, who had been acting director up to that time. We had talks with the people concerned at the time to discover the problems which were building up. The main basis for the dissatisfaction during 1977 and thereafter was that the then Art Gallery Board—a slightly different group from the present incumbents—was trying to operate the gallery by taking over the role of director.

Members of the board would go down to the Art Gallery and, instead of seeing the acting director or holding their monthly meetings to issue policy statements, would not only go to the acting director with directions to staff members, but also would go lower down in the chain and tell the staff what they should be doing, demanding to see correspondence and working like an octopus board with its tentacles extending into every aspect of day-to-day administration.

The then acting director (Mr Whittle) objected on professional grounds to the board's operating in this way. A long series of struggles ensued and the board refused to appoint Mr Whittle to the position of director of the gallery, although he had been acting director for some time. When the person the board appointed to the position of director—a man from the United States—accepted one day and sent a telegram the next day saying he would not take the job, rather than go back to Mr Whittle the board was prepared to go right outside and appoint someone from the Public Service as director; and Mr Whittle quite properly resigned.

During the period when there was no permanent director, Mr Klepac held the position of deputy director on an acting basis. It was only when this long series of disputes was sorted out that Mr Klepac, who had proved himself in the acting position, was appointed on a full-time basis. But it is quite clear from the talks I have had with a large range of people that the board appointed Mr Klepac to the position of deputy director very reluctantly, because Mr Klepac had clearly demonstrated his professional competence to do the job.

It seems to be endemic in art gallery boards in Western Australia and elsewhere that because art is such a subjective thing everyone thinks he is an expert, and members of the board pride themselves on being experts in the field. When we consider some of the world tripping done by members of the board and the extent to which they have taken it on themselves single-handed to choose works for the gallery, in some cases buying without authority, we will see how their expertise is prized. It is not surprising that the board would seek to downgrade the role of people on the professional artistic side and seek to replace them with people who are purely administrators.

My proposition is that is not a role which the Art Gallery Board was ever intended to have. It was operating in a way which was never intended by any Government or Parliament prior to the current one, and by superseding highly qualified and very talented professional officers the board is effectively downgrading the artistic work which is available to the Western Australian community. I suppose to many of us who go to art galleries and do not know a good painting from a bad painting, but who know what we like, it would not matter whether the Art Gallery contained prints, paintings of flowers, or more substantial works. If we accept mediocrity in the Art Gallery or in any other level of cultural life in Western Australia, we are downgrading ourselves in the eyes of the world and lessening our chances of aspiring to some excellence in these fields.

It is our opinion that if we have public participation in these cultural fields, then our participation should be as excellent as possible—if I can use the word "excellent" in that slightly ungrammatical way. We should aim for the highest possible standards, and not settle for less than that.

From the large range of letters I have received from around Australia, I have satisfied myself that Mr Klepac is highly thought of in the Australian—and to some extent the overseas—art world, and is considered to be one of the two or three top professional art people in Australia. He has something of an international reputation, and that is something that cannot be said for any other professional officer at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. In fact, it is something that can be said of very few professional officers in art galleries around the rest of the continent. So it seems passing strange that he should be the person that the Art Gallery Board is determined to get rid of. To you and I, Mr Speaker, from the outside, that would appear strange.

But if one looks at the situation from the point of view of the board, one can see why he would be

the outstanding candidate at the Art Gallery to get the boot. There would be no point in the board's seeking to dismiss him if he were a mediocrity, if he were a "Yes" man who would do what the board told him and who would defer to the artistic aspirations of the members of the board. That type of officer would be no threat or challenge to the aspirations of the members of the Art Gallery Board. It is only if one is a top professional that one is kicked out. That is a very sad state of affairs, and one the Government ought not to countenance.

That is the basic proposition I am putting to the House, and the reason we are seeking an inquiry into the structure of the Art Gallery Board. The restructuring that is proposed is a deliberate attempt to get rid of one person, and that attempt is certainly not in the best interests of the gallery or its administration. In fact, the new structure fits in well with Parkinson's Law of the way bureaucracies are put together and bureaucrats multiply. Certainly the restructured board will conform with this model. I think members can see that the restructuring of the administration illustrates a lack of inventiveness and creativity. In putting together a new Art Gallery structure, at least we should do something with a little bit of flair rather than picking on a bureaucratic cliché now 40 years out of date.

When we look at some of the individuals of which the board is composed and the day-to-day roles they are playing, we start to see why good professional officers are being disposed of.

I have asked quite a few questions about Art Gallery Board members tripping overseas, and a month or so ago I received an answer to one of my questions from the Minister. In the last couple of years, \$14 000 was spent by two Art Gallery Board members on overseas travel on behalf of the board, and something like \$42 000 had been expended by these gentlemen in purchasing works of art for the gallery without the approval of the gallery or of anybody else, and I will refer to the two members who were involved in this tripping.

In 1977 Mr Mark Saunders was paid between \$3 000 and \$4 000 for his overseas tripping. Mr Saunders, so the Minister told us, was sent on an overseas tour to arrange exhibitions and to make contacts for the gallery at the time the gallery did not have a professional director. It is of course untrue to say the gallery did not have a professional director then. What it did not have was a professional director on a full-time appointment.

The Art Gallery did have an acting director (Mr Whittle), and this gentleman was very

competent to do the overseas work of the gallery—arranging exhibitions and entering into contracts to acquire works of art. But no, Mr Saunders went overseas tripping and nose-poking—if I can put it that way—into these matters. These were jobs outside the scope of any of the members of the board. However, Mr Saunders' tripping was far exceeded by the peregrinations of Dr D. Zink who took himself overseas on several occasions according to the Minister. On one of these occasions he received at least \$7 000 for his expenses, and in the course of that trip he purchased for the Art Gallery works of art, without the authority of the board, to the tune of \$45 000.

In reply to a subsidiary question, the Minister indicated to me that Dr Zink had purchased these works of art for \$45 000 with his own money on behalf of the board. When he came back, he offered to let the Art Gallery Board buy the paintings for the amount he paid for them. He explained there had not been time to go through the bureaucratic processes to purchase these works of art. Subsequently the Art Gallery exercised its option on the \$45 000-worth of art work Dr Zink had purchased. The Minister quite gratuitously gave me a little broadside when he said I had made scurrilous allegations about Dr Zink and that I had claimed he was misusing Art Gallery money. The point I was making in asking that question had nothing to do with that matter. My concern was whether this is the way to run an art gallery where a member of a board can take himself on a world tour and while overseas purchase four works of art worth \$45 000 on behalf of the Art Gallery, and when he arrives back, have his purchases validated *post facto* by the Art Gallery Board, and also receive \$7 000 for his overseas expenses.

What sort of way is that to run an art gallery? Why do we have professional members at the Art Gallery if board members are to take individual initiative? Is this the sort of action we like to see taken by members of the board? If members of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board were to take themselves overseas to purchase headstones, incense to burn, or gas to be used in the crematorium, would we expect the administration of the Karrakatta Cemetery to pay that person for the articles purchased, and then to reimburse them for expenses at the same time? In fundamental terms that is what we are looking at here. We must remember also the sort of expertise required even to identify a decent work of art, and certainly we start to wonder what is happening at the Art Gallery when at least two of the board members have been acting in this way,

and doing, on a day-to-day basis, the job that should be done by a professional officer.

Members can appreciate the very difficult position in which Dr Zink put the board when he turned up, on his own initiative, and offered the board these works of art. Suppose Mr Klepac had been foolish enough to do those things. One cannot but feel that the board would have felt strongly about the matter and terminated his contract on the spot. However, when a small group such as the members who make up this board is involved, and one of its own members takes such action, the board has very little option but to validate, after the fact, the actions taken.

I mention in passing that both Mr Saunders and Dr Zink had their expenses for their trips validated well after they returned from those trips. Certainly this is not proper administrative practice. One can imagine if I were to take myself around the world and expect, after the event, to have my expense money reimbursed to me it would be a most unusual state of affairs.

An excellent reason for calling for an inquiry into the Art Gallery is that quite clearly the board is not doing the job in the way it should. Certainly it is interfering in the activities of the Art Gallery, and board members are taking themselves around the world in an endeavour to give themselves status and stature. If the board members want to undertake such duties on a full-time basis, they should study, obtain jobs, and work their way up through the system so that they have the expertise to cope. I have very little confidence in the expertise of the members of the board even to be able to recognise a reasonable work of art. Board members do not have sufficient time to spend on artistic matters, and they do not have the necessary background of experience. This was never more clearly illustrated than in the case of the offer of the painting *The Sleeping Diana*, a painting allegedly by Van Dyck to the Art Gallery, a painting which turned out not to be by Van Dyck at all but rather to have been painted at a much later stage by a painter whom we might say is anonymous.

The Sleeping Diana by Mr Anonymous was almost accepted by the Art Gallery Board, against advice from at least one of its professional officers that the painting was likely to be a fake.

Mr H. D. Evans: Was it Mr Anonymous or Mr Fabulous?

Mr PEARCE: In this case it was Mr Anonymous. Of course, one might wonder why anybody would go to the trouble of forging a painting and offering to give it to the Western Australian Art Gallery free of charge, but the

answer simply is that it might have been free to the gallery, but it was not going to be free to Mr Ledwijn, the art dealer whose address I now know only too well—and it is not where he used to live. He offered this fake painting to the Art Gallery on the understanding that the money to pay for it would be raised elsewhere; that is to say, the money with which to pay for the painting would be raised from business and other sources and the Art Gallery would get it free.

I suppose the Art Gallery Board, looking at a free Van Dyck painting, must have been fairly impressed and likely to accept the offer. In fact, the board very nearly did accept the offer, and it was only the last minute ruckus that enabled the members of the board to get out of the deal, if not with their reputations completely intact, at least without appearing too tattered in the view of the public. Just imagine what sort of laughing stock the Art Gallery Board would have been made throughout the world if it had a free fake Van Dyck painting on its walls. Just imagine how annoyed and upset would have been the businessmen who were to contribute to the cost of the painting.

It is no way to run an art gallery to have someone else making art acquisitions and offering to give them to the gallery, even if the acquisitions do turn out to be genuine. Dr Zink's *modus operandi* is to go overseas, buy art, and then come back and offer it to the Art Gallery; and very often he raised the money for its purchase, because if the Minister is to be believed in respect of his answer to a question, Dr Zink has done a lot of fund-raising to finance the purchases he has made on behalf of the Art Gallery. I am not alleging any impropriety in respect of that, although I find it a little strange that the Zink Foundation—and this was news to me; I did not know about it until the Minister mentioned it in this House to try to get himself off the hook—is in fact financed totally from contributions made by Dr Zink. That seems a rather strange way to run a foundation. I do not know what sort of taxation or other financial advantages he may get from this foundation. There may well be none; he may purely be a philanthropist, and the interests of the Art Gallery may be to the fore in his heart.

However, whether that is true or whether Dr Zink is in fact a wealthy philanthropist who is doing a lot for the Art Gallery Board, or is simply a very clever tax avoider—and I am certainly not alleging that he is—is totally irrelevant. Whichever of those things he is, he is not the sort of person who ought to be on the Art Gallery Board or, indeed, on the board of any other Government instrumentality, when he operates in

that way. That is no way for the Art Gallery to be run, and his are not the sort of activities that members of boards should take upon themselves. If the individual board members who make up the 200 or more statutory and semi-Government authorities in this State, such as the Art Gallery Board, were to desport themselves in this way there would be chaos and the Government would have no control over anything. Considering the very large sums of money made available to the Art Gallery Board—this year it is receiving an increase in funds of 30 per cent—I think it must be said that the Minister is not doing his job properly in safeguarding the public investment in this respect.

I will conclude my speech on this motion by briefly summarising the essential points that the Opposition sees as requiring to be investigated in respect of the Art Gallery Board. The first point is quite simple: Is there a struggle for power occurring between members of the Art Gallery Board and the professional staff which has led to the result whereby the Art Gallery Board is seeking to dispose of by sacking, in the case of Mr Klepac, or in the case of three or four other very talented and respected officials, to dispose of them by forcing them to resign? That is the first thing an investigation would need to establish.

The second point is this: Is the proposed restructuring of the Art Gallery at all valid in any terms other than in terms of a desire to get rid of one person? The third and most crucial point is this: Are members of the Art Gallery Board far exceeding their brief in the way they are operating on the board? That is, are they incurring expenditure on behalf of the Art Gallery? Are they undertaking world tours and otherwise doing the job which should be done by the gallery's professional officers, people who are much more qualified and experienced to be doing it? As a result of those activities, are the people of Western Australia getting an Art Gallery which is much inferior to what they might expect when one considers the money that is being spent on it, and the quality of the staff we have been able to attract to it so far?

I will end by quoting from a book written by Hal Missingham, a very much respected former Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. He retired from that position after fighting long battles, remarkably similar to the ones being fought here. Mr Missingham was moved to make a brief comment about the way in which relationships between art gallery professional staffs and art gallery boards were developing. The quotation consists of only one

paragraph and I hope you will bear with me, Mr Speaker. It is as follows—

Not only the question of the relationship between trustees and Government needs review and reappraisal, that between trustees and professional staff also needs close attention. Trustees, unless there is some urgent policy matter requiring a decision, attend meetings once a month when they consider the business paper drawn up for them by the director and his staff. Although as a body trustees cannot be expected to be as knowledgeable about the multifarious and ever changing aspects of art as their professional advisers there has always been a tendency for them to become far too involved in aesthetic judgements where they should more properly confine themselves to matters of policy determination. It is unfortunate but in the field of the visual arts everyone considers himself an expert. Like any other profession it requires a lifetime of concentrated study for anyone to become knowledgeable and humble in it. Boards of Trustees hardly qualify for this exercise.

The SPEAKER: Before the member concludes his speech, may I point out that as I understand the situation he has not yet moved the motion.

Mr PEARCE: I have not quite finished yet, Mr Speaker, and I will do that before I conclude.

The SPEAKER: We do not want any arguments.

Mr PEARCE: I thank you for drawing my attention to that matter.

The quotation I have just read summarises the crux of what this debate is about. There is a struggle in the Art Gallery between the board and the professional staff about who has the professional knowledge. There is no doubt in the minds of members of the Opposition that the people who have the knowledge are those who have been hired to have it; and if bad decisions have been made in respect of hiring, then the board is culpable because the board does the hiring.

The members of the board should restrict themselves to matters of policy. As an analogy, suppose the board of the Royal Perth Hospital did not confine itself to matters of administration and policy-making, but actually attended the hospital individually day by day, went into the wards, and conducted operations. If that were to happen we would have a situation similar to what is transpiring in the affairs of the Art Gallery at the present time. If I were appointed to the board of the Royal Perth Hospital and therefore presumed

I was qualified to operate on people at the hospital as a result of my appointment, we would have a situation something like that which applies in respect of the Art Gallery; because the people who have been appointed to the Art Gallery Board think they have become instant directors and have instant knowledge, qualifications, experience, and expertise in respect of art matters by virtue of the fact that they have been appointed to the board.

Appointments made by this Government mean very little, as you very well know, Mr Speaker. I am not referring to you personally. However, the sort of people this Government appoints to positions of considerable importance shows how much regard the Government has for the positions. The Government has shown how little regard it has for its Ministry in this respect. If it has so little regard in respect of appointments to the Ministry, how much less regard has it in respect of appointments to a board such as the Art Gallery Board, which is so much further down the scale of Government affairs?

We are not satisfied with the way the Art Gallery Board is operating. I have already made it clear that if no action is taken by this Government in respect of the board and its activities, then the next Labor Government—which will be the next Government—will take such action. Therefore, the members of the Art Gallery Board, if they do not get their act together in the next two years, had better start watching the polls with the same desperation that members of the Fraser Government are watching them now.

The SPEAKER: You still have not moved the motion.

Mr Sibson: Time on!

Mr PEARCE: I move—

That this House calls on the Government to conduct a public inquiry into the structure and administration of the W.A. Art Gallery.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mr Speaker, I formally second the motion.

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth—Minister for Cultural Affairs) [3.10 p.m.]: May I first describe the speech by the member for Gosnells as being capricious and niggardly. This will become readily apparent as I inform members of the facts. The member for Gosnells has made the position of Mr Klepac in the Art Gallery quite intolerable. He has also put the board in a most invidious position.

The board will meet on the 17th of this month to consider applications for the position of

Assistant Director (Curatorial). I understand Mr Klepac has actually applied for the appointment.

How the board can tolerate a situation where its reputation is being besmirched virtually daily by members of its staff, I do not know. I would have thought the best thing for Mr Klepac to do would be to remain absolutely silent and allow his undoubted merits to speak for themselves. The obligation of the board is to maintain harmony in the Art Gallery.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia is beautiful by any world standards, and it is run by a board comprising very competent and responsible citizens. It is a policy of the Government to appoint boards of this kind and then to leave the administration of the particular area to the board. It would be intolerable were Governments to interfere in the internal administration of institutions such as the Art Gallery.

The member for Gosnells has given the impression that the restructuring of the Art Gallery is due to a desire on the part of the board to dispose of the services of Mr Klepac. Nothing could be further from the truth. The activities of the Art Gallery have expanded rapidly over the last few years, as I will indicate later, and it has become necessary to restructure its administration to ensure the money made available to the board is spent wisely.

At the moment, Mr Klepac is Deputy Director of the Art Gallery. He has never claimed to be an administrator; his forte is in the art sector of the gallery's work. However, the member for Gosnells gave the impression Mr Klepac was eminently qualified to be an administrator. That is not so.

Due to the increased work load of the Art Gallery, the board decided to abolish the position of deputy director and create two new positions of assistant directors, one to take charge of administration, and one to control the art activities of the gallery. What is objectionable about that? It is in line with modern thinking in respect of the running of art galleries.

How then can the member for Gosnells criticise a move of this kind, when it has the support of the Art Gallery Board and also of the Public Service Board and the previous Minister for Cultural Affairs? How can he justify his accusation that the board is restructuring the administration of the Art Gallery simply to dispose of the services of Mr Klepac?

Mr Klepac went to the Art Gallery on a contract. His contract shortly will expire and it is up to him to establish his credentials if he desires to continue to work for the Art Gallery. As the

former Minister mentioned earlier, Mr Klepac has made a number of attempts to obtain employment in other States. Therefore, it is not as though he has his mind set on remaining in Western Australia. It is as simple as that.

I wish now to relate to members some of the facts surrounding this issue, because there has been so much criticism of the Art Gallery that it has been brought into disrepute; it has been a most unfortunate episode for the Art Gallery of Western Australia. In the light of the type of criticism we have been hearing, it is important I relate at least some of the facts in order that they might be recorded.

I was also horrified to hear the member for Gosnells make a personal attack on Dr Zink. His criticism was pernicious in the extreme; it was completely unjustified. His statement was an assortment of untruths and vituperation. His criticism was absolutely intolerable, bearing in mind he was referring to a highly reputable member of the Art Gallery Board who is providing a service to art in Western Australia. For this man to be subjected to criticism which is patently false to my mind is something this Parliament should not tolerate. We should demand an apology from the member for Gosnells.

What are the credentials of Dr Zink, the man the member for Gosnells vilified? Firstly, he held a most responsible position at the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

Mr Pearce: Give us a rundown on his career at WAIT. This should be interesting.

Mr GRAYDEN: He held a very responsible position indeed.

Mr Pearce: What position was that?

Mr GRAYDEN: If I recall correctly, he was in administration.

Mr Pearce: No, he was not in administration at all.

Mr GRAYDEN: Let us have a look at the individual who has been criticised by the member for Gosnells.

Mr Pearce: What position did he hold?

Mr GRAYDEN: I have told the member for Gosnells.

Mr Pearce: No you have not; you have told us he held an important position. I am now asking you to tell us what position he held.

Mr GRAYDEN: He was in administration; it is as simple as that. You will get the answer shortly when I refer to documents in my possession.

Mr Barnett: This is a typical ploy on your part to avoid answering a question. What is the answer? What position did he hold?

Mr GRAYDEN: I have given members the answer: He held a very responsible position at WAIT.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are far too many interjections. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the member for Gosnells, when speaking to his motion, was heard in virtual silence. I ask members to extend that same courtesy to the Minister for Cultural Affairs, to enable him to reply without undue interference.

Mr GRAYDEN: First of all, let us examine Dr Zink's monetary contribution to the Art Gallery.

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance. I intend to request that all documents quoted by the Minister be tabled. Could you indicate whether I should stand at the end of the Minister's speech and ask that all documents referred to be tabled, or should I stand each time the Minister quotes from a document? Should it be a running thing, that all documents quoted from be tabled?

Mr O'Connor: We have a running thing from your mouth.

Mr Watt: He is a running thing.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Gosnells wants a particular document tabled, he should rise on a point of order when the document is quoted. Then, at the conclusion of the Minister's speech, and if I have indicated that certain documents should be tabled, I will call upon the Minister for Cultural Affairs to table those documents.

Mr PEARCE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I ask that the document from which the Minister for Cultural Affairs is about to quote be tabled at the conclusion of his remarks.

Debate Resumed

Mr GRAYDEN: I shall be happy to comply with the honourable member's request Mr Speaker. Firstly, however, I intend to read this document to the member for Gosnells. The member for Gosnells vilified Dr Zink and described him as a possible tax avoider. Could anything be more scurrilous than that? Dr Zink is a man who has held a responsible position in Western Australia. He reached retirement age and then was appointed to the Art Gallery Board. After considerable service on the board, he has been subjected to a scurrilous attack of this kind.

Mr H. D. Evans: What was that position you were telling us about?

Mr GRAYDEN: Let us consider what Dr. Zink has done. Last year, his monetary contribution to the gallery amounted to \$8 000. That is for the year 1979.

Mr B. T. Burke: Financial year, or calendar year?

Mr GRAYDEN: The financial year 1979. In the financial year 1980, Dr Zink gave \$75 000 to the Art Gallery.

Mr Barnett: Does this make him honest?

Mr B. T. Burke: Al Capone used to give away apples on the streets of Chicago.

Mr GRAYDEN: In 1979 Dr Zink gave \$8 000 to the Art Gallery, and this year he gave \$75 000. Beyond that, Dr Zink devotes his time to travelling around the world, obtaining donations for the WA Art Gallery.

Mr Pearce: That is one of the things we object to.

Mr GRAYDEN: The donations to the Art Gallery total in the vicinity of \$3 million. That is money not provided by the Government of Western Australia, but obtained from private people as a consequence of the activities of people like Dr Zink who, today, is being vilified in this Parliament.

Let us look at the further activities of Dr Zink. He has been personally responsible for procuring gifts from the business community totalling \$70 200 this year. He simply goes around of his own volition, at his own expense, soliciting gifts of this kind for the Art Gallery. He has been successful this year to the extent of \$70 200. In addition to that, he gave \$75 000 of his own money to the gallery, and last year he gave \$8 000.

Mr Barnett: Father Christmas!

Mr GRAYDEN: This is Dr Zink. He has gone overseas; and if he has seen an absolute bargain, he has bought it with his own money and has not charged any interest, or anything like that. He has simply offered it to the gallery. Over the months, with the experts at the gallery—

Mr B. T. Burke: What bargains has he bought?

Mr GRAYDEN: Just a second.

Mr B. T. Burke: Tell us what bargains he has bought.

Mr GRAYDEN: The gallery experts have had a look at the works and then made a decision to buy the article or not to buy it. If they have decided to buy it, Dr Zink has obtained public sponsors to purchase it for the Art Gallery.

Mr B. T. Burke: What bargains has he bought?

Mr GRAYDEN: There was some criticism of Dr Zink for having his expenses reimbursed when he went on two trips overseas at the request of the Art Gallery; but the money was money he himself had donated to the gallery. That is where the money came from, and yet he is subjected to this sort of criticism. In January 1980, Dr Zink—

Mr B. T. Burke: What bargains did he buy?

Mr GRAYDEN: Dr Zink's principal activities on the part of the gallery have consisted of two representations overseas, and the soliciting of financial support from various organisations. These are the trips to which the member for Gosnells referred.

In August 1979, Dr Zink visited the curator of Baron Thyssen's gallery in Lugano, Switzerland, at the request of the board to discuss the financial arrangements for bringing the Thyssen exhibition to Perth. Members may recall that was the basis of the opening exhibition at the Art Gallery. He also went to Rome to examine a sculpture by Martini which was under consideration, and which was subsequently acquired by the gallery with contributions by the Art Gallery Society. Dr Zink received no reimbursement for the expenses he incurred in this undertaking.

In January 1980, Dr Zink made a trip to Europe and New York during which he established, for the gallery, the availability of works of art, and comparative prices. At that time, some 40 works were presented to the deputy chairman for review and recommendation. Of those, eight items were purchased ultimately on what was considered to be a more favourable basis than would have been possible if his trip had not been undertaken. These works included two Lipchitz sculptures, an Archipenko, a Greco, a Laurens, a Vogel, and a Severini painting—all important additions to the collection. One work by Leger was approved of but not acquired because of its prior sale. So it goes on. These are the activities—

Mr Pearce: Are the names getting too long?

Mr GRAYDEN: There are so many of his accomplishments that I will not waste the time of the House unduly in reading them.

Mr B. T. Burke: What bargains did he buy?

Mr Barnett: What position does this fellow claim to hold in the whole spectrum?

Mr GRAYDEN: Dr Zink is a member of the Art Gallery Board; and he has devoted his time—

Mr Pearce: He is an ordinary member of the board, but he is running the gallery as if he were the director.

Mr GRAYDEN: He has been soliciting gifts for the board. I understand that the gifts that have been made to the board at one time and another total in excess of \$3 million.

Mr Barnett: Surely someone on the board should not be running around doing things like that.

Mr GRAYDEN: The Government is not in a position to make available gifts of this magnitude. We have an ambition in respect of the WA Art Gallery. We want to see Perth setting an example as far as art is concerned for the other capital cities of Australia. Edinburgh in Scotland is noted throughout Europe for its sculptures, for its paintings, and for various other forms of art. We want to emulate Edinburgh. We want to see Perth in the same position in relation to the other capital cities of Australia as Edinburgh is to the rest of Scotland, England, and Europe.

Mr Barnett: We have emulated Loch Ness. We have our own monster!

Mr GRAYDEN: We can do that if we exploit to the maximum the readiness of the business community to make gifts of art to the Art Gallery in Western Australia. We are not procuring works with taxpayers' money. What we are doing is having people like Dr Zink seeking contributions. We are doing it in respect of paintings; we are doing it in respect of sculpture. We want sculptures of great significance to come to Western Australia in order that overseas visitors and interstate visitors will visit Western Australia, because we will be setting an example to the other capital cities of Australia. This is what we are doing at the Art Gallery with our present board and with people like Dr Zink.

Mr Pearce: And Bohdan Ledwiji!

Mr GRAYDEN: This is being done at no expense to the Government or to the taxpayers. This sort of work is being hindered by the type of criticism we hear from the member for Gosnells, and the carping criticism that we have had from various individuals who, for some extraordinary reason, are trying to thwart the board in its attempt to restructure the administration in an effort to ensure that the money is spent as effectively as possible. Surely the latter is a laudable objective.

This year the gallery will have in excess of \$3 million to spend. Much of that money will come from the State Government, but other money will be provided in the form of various grants. There is a responsibility on the board to spend that money wisely. The money would not be coming from the Government or from other sources if the Government did not have the utmost faith in the

integrity and the capability of members of the board. The Government does not have that type of confidence in people without administrative ability.

Unfortunately, Mr Klepac—and this is not decrying him in any way—is not an administrator. He could not satisfy the Government were he in charge of the administration of the Art Gallery. Let me give one example. Mr Klepac had the task at one stage—

Mr Pearce: I ask that the document from which the Minister is quoting be tabled.

The SPEAKER: I do ask the Minister for Cultural Affairs to table the document at the conclusion of his speech.

Mr GRAYDEN: Certainly. Let us consider the matter raised by the member for Gosnells. He said this is a great ploy to change the structure of the administration, the sole purpose of which is to be rid of Mr Lou Klepac. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr Pearce: But you will not appoint him.

Mr GRAYDEN: Members should listen to this example, and tell me whether they would like Mr Klepac to be in charge of the \$3 million of which we have been speaking. I shall quote as follows—

When given the sole management of an exhibition on Walter Sickert in 1979, Mr Klepac's first estimate of cost—\$10,000, was accepted by the board. Successively, these expenses rose to \$39 304 and the final cost to the Art Gallery was \$30 429.

Mr Pearce: Have a talk with the Minister for Health about the Royal Perth Hospital if you want to know anything about inflation.

Mr GRAYDEN: I point out that that is after the gallery had taken off the money for brochures and so on which had been sold. The actual cost of the exhibition run by Mr Klepac was \$30 429 and the exhibition attracted 2 877 visitors. For every person who went to see that exhibition, the taxpayers of Western Australia were charged over \$10 a head. What sort of administration is that? To continue quoting—

On several previous occasions, the board has found the final cost of production of exhibition catalogues far in excess of its originally agreed allocations.

I shall put this document on the seat next to me as the member for Gosnells will want to see it.

I emphasise that when the Government makes available a huge amount of money to the Art Gallery—well over \$2 million—when other money is forthcoming to the gallery by way of

grants, etc., and when the total amount of money available to the gallery to spend on art for the benefit of people in Western Australia is in excess of \$3 million, members can be absolutely sure that the State Government is going to require that the money be spent effectively.

The Government endorsed the restructuring of the Art Gallery Board solely for that reason. If the board is to spend huge amounts of money in this way it is far more efficient to have two assistant directors, one in charge of administration and one in charge of curatorial matters. Money would be spent infinitely more effectively and the person in charge of the curatorial section will be completely free to concentrate on art matters.

The member for Gosnells has criticised this arrangement, but he is overlooking the fact that this is the most modern thinking in respect of the structure of art galleries. I have a document here which will substantiate that point, which I believe is very important.

Mr Pearce: Mr Speaker, I ask that the Minister table the paper from which he is quoting.

The SPEAKER: I ask that the Minister table the paper at the conclusion of his speech.

Mr GRAYDEN: The Art Gallery of New South Wales is, I think, the biggest in Australia. If it is not, it would be on a par with the Art Gallery in Melbourne. However, it has progressed notably in the last few years. At the moment, the Director of the New South Wales Art Gallery is Mr Edmund Capon, and I want to assure the member for Gosnells that of all directors of art galleries in Australia, this man would probably be held in the highest esteem, both in Australia and internationally. He is highly regarded internationally.

Mr Capon wrote to Mr Frank Ellis, the director of our gallery, on 28 May, and I shall quote the relevant portion of that letter. I hope the member for Gosnells will listen to this—listen with bated breath. I quote as follows—

..... your re-organisation of the top administration concurs completely with my plans for the gallery in the future. Many thanks for keeping me informed.

The letter was written after Mr Capon had heard of the proposed restructuring of our Art Gallery. So we can expect that the New South Wales Art Gallery, under the direction of its internationally acclaimed director, will adopt the structure we are about to have in Western Australia and to which the Opposition is so strenuously opposed.

I think this is a tremendous compliment to Western Australia. We are to be in the forefront of all art galleries in Australia with respect to the structure of galleries. I add that the same type of administration is quite common overseas.

There are lots of other issues which are very important and one relates to the performance of the gallery since its opening in October 1979. The quotes I shall give from this document will illustrate the necessity for the appointments about which we are speaking.

Mr Pearce: Mr Speaker, I ask that the Minister table the document from which he is quoting.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to table the document at the conclusion of his speech.

Mr GRAYDEN: I shall quote as follows—

In November 1978, 37 people were employed at the Art Gallery. By July 1980 the number had increased to 69. This is matched by services to the public by this "people's gallery". In 1978, 11 special exhibitions were shown. In 1980, already 35 feature exhibitions have been presented, in addition to display of the Art Gallery's own collections, which are growing at an unprecedented rate with enlarged funding by the Western Australian Government and, in particular, substantial donations from individuals and companies in Australia and overseas, making our Art Gallery the envy of the rest of Australia.

That is an extraordinary thing. No other art gallery in Australia is benefiting from such donations from the public and business organisations within the country to the extent that ours is. This speaks volumes for the management of the Art Gallery. I place this document on the heap I have next to me.

It has been suggested that our Art Gallery is declining in the development of its services to the public.

Mr Pearce: I ask that the Minister table this document as well. He may as well hand in his whole speech and I could read it quietly afterwards and save the time of the House.

The SPEAKER: I ask that the Minister table the document at the conclusion of his speech.

Mr GRAYDEN: I quote as follows—

Attendances are many times higher than at any previous time. Perth is receiving more exhibitions of greater quality and variety than ever before.

I mention that art works valued at over \$3 million have been provided by sponsors from Western Australia and overseas. To continue—

These developments have not been due to any individual staff member and doubtless they will continue as part of the policy of the Western Australian Government and the Art Gallery Board to provide the very best opportunities for Western Australians to enjoy art.

The Art Gallery has a very big staff and I can assure the member that the success of the gallery is not due to one member of the staff only. It is due to the efforts of the whole board and to all members of the staff of the gallery. For the benefit of the member for Gosnells, I shall put that document on the heap.

Sir Charles Court: Do you have a Senate voting paper there?

Mr Harman: He would not know how to fill it in.

Mr GRAYDEN: I should like to give precise details of attendances at the gallery. The State Government made—

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: I ask that the Minister table the document from which he is quoting. I ask for your guidance, Sir, in relation to members reading their speeches. It seems to me the Minister is reading his speech. He quotes from one document and then from another using only a few of his own words in between.

The SPEAKER: Order! At least two members of the House do not need to read their speeches; one is the member for Gosnells and the other is the Minister for Cultural Affairs. I certainly do not accept the Minister for Cultural Affairs is reading his speech. He is quoting from the documents which are available to him.

It is within the right of the member for Gosnells to ask that such documents be tabled. I have indicated I will accede to that request. The Minister has happily gone along with the request to date and I do not anticipate there will be any problems.

Debate Resumed

Mr GRAYDEN: In view of the criticism made by the member for Gosnells, it is important that the figures quoted are accurate. For that reason, I have referred to documents for some of the figures. The attendance at the Museum is a matter which is relevant to the debate.

Mr Pearce: The attendance at the Art Gallery would be a little more relevant.

Mr GRAYDEN: It is interesting to note the number of visitors to the Art Gallery has increased from 73 728 in 1978-79 to 210 842 in 1979-80. Those figures do not include the high proportion of residents in country areas who have seen the exhibitions the Art Gallery has presented in the last 12 months in 41 towns outside Perth.

Those figures also do not take into consideration approximately 3 000 students who view the Art Gallery exhibitions which tour metropolitan colleges and schools each month. Those figures are of great consequence.

I have a great deal of information which I could use to refute the statements made by the member for Gosnells. As I said at the outset of my remarks, the member's speech was capricious and niggardly. His criticism of Dr Zink was pernicious. It horrifies me to have to sit in this House and listen to such comments being made by the member for Gosnells and directed at an individual who has done a great deal for art in Western Australia.

The member's speech was a collection of untruths and vituperation. I was most disappointed in the performance of the member for Gosnells. I hope he will accept the figures I have given. If he does, he will recognise the incredible way in which attendances at the Art Gallery have increased from approximately 73 000 in 1978-79 to approximately 210 000 in 1979-80.

I hope the member will accept the other figures I have given in respect of the additional 3 000 students a month who have seen the Art Gallery exhibitions in metropolitan colleges and schools. I hope the member will accept also the fact that the Art Gallery has presented exhibitions in 41 towns outside Perth in the last 12 months.

In view of the way in which the activities of the Art Gallery have increased over the last few years, it is absolutely imperative the restructuring which has been the subject of so much criticism should take place. It is imperative this occur in order that we spend the money available to the Art Gallery as effectively as possible.

As far as Mr Klepac is concerned, along with every other applicant for the position, he has had the opportunity to apply and all applications will be considered on 17 October. I want to assure the member for Gosnells that is a matter for the Art Gallery Board.

The campaign of vilification which has been mounted against the board has prejudiced greatly the position of Mr Klepac. This is most unfortunate. I cannot understand why members of the community have been trying to engender this

sort of hatred of the board. I cannot understand why people have attempted to discredit the work of the board in the mistaken belief they will prevent the restructuring of which we have spoken.

I cannot understand the mentality of anyone who mounts a campaign such as that, which is directed against one's employers. That is in fact what has occurred. This campaign is directed against the board and it has been aided and abetted by the member for Gosnells. Instead of helping the situation, the member for Gosnells has aggravated it. I believe he has made the position of Mr Klepac virtually impossible.

Before I conclude I should point out there is scope for action which will ensure the Art Gallery Board has the wholehearted support of every section of the community and that is the objective towards which we are working. We have an Art Gallery in this State which is the envy of other States. It is a beautiful gallery when compared with any other gallery in the world. This has resulted from the efforts of the board. Donations to the Art Gallery are being made at an unprecedented rate both by members of the public and business organisations. We have a beautiful building and a wonderful art collection. We are going out of our way to ensure Perth provides an example of what can be achieved in the field of art to all the other capital cities of Australia.

We are achieving our aim most effectively. We have a happy situation and we want to ensure the board has the wholehearted support of every section of the community.

I understand one of the members of the board will be retiring soon, because he has been transferred overseas. This will provide an opportunity to include as a board member a practising artist who is associated with the group which, at the present time, feels it does not have sufficient say in the management of the Art Gallery. We are giving consideration to this matter. It has been put to the board which appears to be anxious that it have this type of representation. However, it must be recognised that we have some very reputable people on the board at the present time and these people are versed in art. The sole reason for the inclusion of an artist on the board would be to ensure the Art Gallery has the support of every section of the community.

We in Western Australia are extremely fortunate to have our Art Gallery and Art Gallery Board. We are extremely fortunate to have our art collection and the future looks bright indeed, but the one thing which will hinder us in moving

towards our objective to ensure that Perth sets an example to other capital cities of Australia is the type of criticism which comes from a small group of dissenters as well as the type of criticism which has been displayed by the member for Gosnells.

The statements made by the member for Gosnells have no place in a Parliament and have no place in a democracy. If anything is calculated to prevent people going out of their way to work for the good of the community then it is statements such as we have heard from the member for Gosnells. I reject out of hand the nonsense which is contained in the motion of the member for Gosnells which reads—

That this House calls on the Government to conduct a public inquiry into the structure and administration of the W.A. Art Gallery.

Gracious me, we have all heard the saying "When you are on a good thing, stick to it." When we have a board which is responsible and is made up of reputable and capable citizens of the State, when we have a board which has managed to persuade the public and business institutions to donate \$3 million-worth of art, when we have 210 000 people passing through this gallery in comparison with the 73 000 in a short period before, when we see that the activities of the Art Gallery have been spread across Western Australia, would we seriously be thinking in terms of inquiring into the structure of that organisation and inquiring into its administration? I reject the motion out of hand.

Tabling of Documents

Mr PEARCE: I ask that the documents referred to be tabled.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Cultural Affairs to make available to the attendant the documents to which I referred during his speech. The documents will be placed on the Table of the House for the balance of the day's sitting for the information of members.

Debate Resumed

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [3.52 p.m.]: I do not think there would be many people who would accuse the Minister for Cultural Affairs of being remarkably in contact with his portfolio, especially when we consider that the last 10 minutes of his speech contained statements indicating that a tremendous situation existed at the Art Gallery and that its joy and happiness was spreading throughout the community. Those statements show how little the Minister has to do with his department.

If the Minister is being honest when he says those things to the Parliament he should consider that since 1977 there has been a forced departure from the gallery—by forced or unhappy resignation—of almost all the art professional staff the gallery has employed. Eighty per cent of the art professional staff have resigned since 1977. Like Lou Klepac, they have been forced out and all of them have indicated their displeasure about the unhappy circumstances which have prevailed at the gallery. The Minister may be able to claim that all this unhappiness is due to those people and not to the board. The Minister may be able to put forward the proposition that it is not the board's fault, but to ignore the fact that this situation exists demonstrates how little competence the Minister has.

Mr Grayden: There are about four dissenters on the staff.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister speaks about the staff of the Museum as being the 67 people employed there. I am speaking of the professional staff who are hired because of their expertise, experience, and qualifications on artistic matters. I am not talking about the gardeners, cleaners, and attendants who make up the bulk of the 67 staff members.

Whenever the Minister speaks about the Art Gallery in terms of administration and its objectives he always uses the old "bums on seats" approach to entertainment matters which I think economists may adopt, but artists certainly do not. The Minister always speaks about the economics of the Art Gallery, but we are talking about artistic matters. That is the difference between the Opposition's approach to the matter and the Government's approach.

The Minister's approach is that it would not matter if there were rude drawings on the walls or pornographic photographs to ensure the attendance at the Art Gallery increases from 210 000 to 550 000 because then it would be able to employ another 50 staff and it would consider the gallery to be more successful. I reject totally and completely the Minister's approach to the Art Gallery. The important aspect about the Art Gallery in Western Australia is the quality of the artistic work that is being shown there and the extent to which the quality of that artistic work is affected and is reflected in the community in general.

Mr Trethowan: What a terrible elitist view.

Mr PEARCE: I am surprised to hear a Liberal accuse anybody of having an elitist view. If he thinks that an Art Gallery ought not to be concerned about the quality of its art then he does

not understand the purpose of an art gallery. I certainly do not have the view that the attitude I expressed is an elitist one. I have always supported programmes which have been involved in raising the standard of the community. I am involved in a programme to raise the standard significantly in the next week or so.

To claim that to have a mediocre art gallery demonstrates something good—as the member for east Melville seems to be saying—is fine if mediocrity is what one requires. Perhaps his party could run that policy at the next election, saying "We want a mediocre art gallery". They certainly could stand on their record with regard to that. If the member for East Melville is explaining Government policy I would be happy to quote him at the next election.

I have quite consistently made the point in this debate that the best thing for the artistic world in Australia is to have expert professional people on the staff of art galleries. However, because of the unhappy situation at the Art Gallery, and because of the level of denigration of the expertise and qualifications and experience of the professionals, and because of the activity of individuals on the Art Gallery Board, many have left the gallery.

The Minister has attempted to justify the part played by Dr Zink. That demonstrates that the Minister has not listened to the debate. I was not at all concerned with the financial problems or otherwise of Dr Zink. Dr Zink may be nothing but a philanthropist paying large amounts of money into the Art Gallery. I am not saying that this is the case or otherwise, because I am not in a position to do so.

Mr Clarko: You cast a smear on him.

Mr PEARCE: I have not. That is absolute rubbish!

Mr Clarko: You did just a minute ago. You said, "I am not saying that—"

Mr PEARCE: The member for Karrinyup does not understand what is going on.

He has demonstrated a clear consistency in that regard. The member is wasting our time. However, I will say for the fourth time and for the benefit of the member for Karrinyup: I have no idea of Dr Zink's financial interest in the gallery and I am not concerned with that. I am not concerned whether he is losing thousands of dollars or gaining thousands of dollars. I am not concerned about that. I am concerned about the way he is operating as a member of the Art Gallery Board when he is tripping around the world and buying art works. I am equally concerned about the activity of Mr Saunders and

any other board members who may be doing this as well.

That is not the way the Art Gallery Board members ought to be behaving. That is not the way the Art Gallery ought to be operating. The Minister has said that if the Art Gallery Board wants somebody to go overseas to negotiate purchases, exhibitions, or financial contracts, they send Dr Zink. He is a member of the board and someone whose art qualifications are unknown to this House. He may have no art qualifications at all. How would he know a bargain? Was it Dr Zink who negotiated for *The Sleeping Diana*? Was it Dr Zink who obtained the free Van Dyck? If it was not Dr Zink which member of the board, in fact, found that bargain for the Art Gallery? A free Van Dyck! Except, it was not a bargain because it was not in fact a Van Dyck. In fact, free it was but it was overpriced. The free gift of that painting, if it had been hanging in our Art Gallery, would have denigrated Western Australian art in the eyes of every artist and every art-conscious person in the world because we would have had displayed an example of the stupidity of our Art Gallery Board. It would have indicated that the members of our board could not tell the difference between a genuine painting and a fake.

Then, incredibly, the board referred the matter to the police to see whether or not the painting was real. There are people who are well versed in art in the gallery and who are in a far better position than the police—Mr Klepac for one—to discover whether a painting is authentic or a fake. But the board brought the matter to the notice of the police. That is no way to run an art gallery.

The Minister has put forward no defence at all in the terms of the motion I have moved. The things he said are exactly the things to which we object. The Minister came here with a document given to him by the director or the Art Gallery. He read from that document, irrespective of what I had said and irrespective of the thrust of this move by the Opposition. What the Minister read out to us backed up everything I said, and which we already knew. It was no defence.

In answer to the points I made, the Minister said that members of the Art Gallery Board should receive overseas junkets. He said the members should travel on behalf of the board, despite their lack of experience and lack of qualifications. Those people, who have not had a lifetime of experience in art, ought not to have the responsibility of acquiring works of art or arranging exhibitions.

The Minister did not mention the exhibition which almost came here from the United States. That exhibition turned out to be composed largely of fakes. First we had the fake Van Dyck, and then we almost had an exhibition composed largely of fakes. The latter exhibition was cancelled, apparently, on the grounds that when some of the paintings were returned from an exhibition in South America they were damaged and the woman who owned them was not prepared to send them here. That exhibition almost came here but it was cancelled by accident, and not by design. Members sitting behind the Minister probably are not aware of that situation. In fact, it is probable that the Minister is not aware either. But, these things almost have happened because of the efforts of our board members when negotiating exhibitions. A fake Van Dyck was brought here, and we almost had another exhibition of fakes organised by board members. Those actions have been the responsibility of the board, and that is not the way to run an art gallery. It may be a way to provide half a dozen art amateurs with kicks, but it does not give us a reputable art gallery.

We have a beautiful building; indeed, I concede we have that. However, the quality of our art is not up to standard.

Mr B. T. Burke: Labor built the building, too.

Mr PEARCE: The running of an art gallery is a highly sophisticated operation requiring expert people. If necessary, we should have people from overseas who are experts in their particular field. Our Art Gallery Board members do not have this expertise or experience. The Minister, in defence of the board, did not attempt to say that the board members had the necessary experience. The Minister did not say that the people who are sent overseas to negotiate exhibitions, and to buy works of art, and who enter into negotiations to choose what we will see have any artistic qualification whatsoever.

In all the documents which the Minister was able to produce, relating to the members of the board, there was no suggestion that any one of those members was particularly qualified in the art field. None of them are qualified to do the job which they are sent around the world to do at great expense to the State. We ought to be sending our art professionals to do that work.

Coming back to the economics of the Art Gallery, it was a little hard to believe that the position would be made better by the employment of additional people, and the creation of a new position—at whatever it pays—of an administrator. The new bureaucratic structure

will cost more than the old structure. The irony of the situation is that the new structure is working already. As the Minister would be aware, the new administrative position was filled earlier this year.

At the moment we have a new person doing the administration job, Mr Klepac is doing the artistic job, while the director is doing the director's job. We could have what the Minister wants without changing the structure as it presently exists.

We have no hope of stopping what has occurred, and we have no hope of attracting the vote of Government back-benchers in support of this motion. However, it was important for us to expose to the people of Western Australia what is going on at the Art Gallery.

The Minister asked whether we were seeking to hinder the operations of the Art Gallery Board as it presently exists. I give an undertaking that we will do more than hinder its work as soon as we get the opportunity; we will terminate the work of the board. We will bring in people who can achieve the sort of harmony necessary between the administration staff and the artistic community of Western Australia. We will restore the harmony and artistic requirements necessary for an art gallery board to function well.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 19

Mr Barnett	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr McIver
Mr Bryce	Mr Parker
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr Tonkin
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Bateman
Mr Harman	

Noes 28

Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Sir Charles Court	Mr Nanovich
Mr Cowan	Mr O'Connor
Mrs Craig	Mr Old
Mr Crane	Mr Rushton
Dr Dadour	Mr Sibson
Mr Grayden	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Young
Mr McPharlin	Mr Blaikie

(Teller)

Pairs

Noes

Mr Jamieson	Mr Shalders
Mr T. H. Jones	Mr Coyne
Mr Grill	Mr Sodeman

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

RAILWAYS: FREMANTLE-PERTH

Reinstatement of Passenger Service: Motion

MR McIVER (Avon) [4.11 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, the Perth-Fremantle rail service should be reinstated by 31st December 1980. The reinstatement of the service is justified on the following grounds:—

1. public opinion strongly supports the reopening;
2. the inconvenience suffered by the general public as a result of the closure, especially aged persons, mothers with young families and handicapped people.

Right at the outset I say that the sole reason for closing the Fremantle-Perth railway service was to build up the services on the Armadale-Perth section, and nothing more.

Although the discussions on the Fremantle-Perth railway service had been taking place since 1970, the argument in relation to the economics of the service put forward by the Government at the time of the closure of the line was nothing but utter humbug and rubbish, and the people of Western Australia have been deceived by figures.

I have no intention of reiterating what I said in strongly opposing the closure of the service when the matter came before the Parliament. In moving the motion now before the House I intend to demonstrate clearly to the Parliament and the people of Western Australia the necessity for the service to be reintroduced.

One of the reasons I gave when I opposed the closure of the line last year was the effect it would have on handicapped people in the Perth-Fremantle region. What I said on that occasion proved to be absolutely correct. Already the life style of these people has been drastically affected. Since the line was closed I have received many letters from handicapped people.

Mr Young: Can you tell us how many?

Mr McIVER: I do not have all of them with me.

Mr Young: Can you hazard a guess as to how many?

Mr McIVER: I would say 20. The Minister can peruse the file.

Mr Young: I bet it would be closer to three.

Mr McIVER: The Minister can have the file.

One of the spokesmen for the handicapped is Barry Warrington, who has been striving valiantly

to put forward his case as a disabled person and bring to attention the disadvantages he has suffered since the service was closed. He has written to me and to the Friends of the Railways, who have maintained a vigorous campaign since the closure and have not given up the fight.

Mr Nanovich: Do you reckon that advertisement in yesterday's paper had anything to do with the Perth-Fremantle railway?

Mr McIVER: I cannot see the relevance of the interjection.

Mr Davies: What advertisement are you talking about?

Mr Nanovich: The one in yesterday's paper inserted by the Friends of the Railways. Did you see it?

Mr McIVER: That was in relation to a march tonight by about 2 000 people.

Mr Nanovich: Who put the advertisement in the paper?

Mr McIVER: I do not know. How would I know? I certainly did not, and the Labor Party would not have that much money.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McIVER: I would like to read a letter which was published in the *Daily News* of 15 January 1980—only a few months after the closure of the railway in September last year—which explains in short terms the plight of handicapped people. The letter says—

I have written this letter, as an elected spokesman for the disabled, to try to enlist the support of those who may be able to help us in our problem.

Briefly, difficulties have been added to the burdens we already carry, by the removal of the Perth-Fremantle railway service.

We have lost our independence. The trains allowed us to mix with able-bodied citizens and we were happy to be part of the community.

And the trains allowed us to take our families out.

The Linc buses are not satisfactory because of embarking and disembarking.

Some of the problems we face:

We like to be part of the community, go shopping, attend business appointments, go with our families to places of entertainment, attend sheltered workshops, go to hospitals and dental appointments and so on.

This now means calling on our friends or relations, neighbours or voluntary transport services. Taxis are very expensive, and most of us are on disabled pensions or sickness benefits.

Maimed and limbless people, paraplegic and quadruplegic (people in wheelchairs) the deaf, the mentally handicapped, and those who have communication problems, all suffer.

The blind used to be able to count train stops to get off at the right place; the Line buses do not stop at every bus top.

As part of their training, handicapped people are instructed how to alight from trains—not buses.

Mr Rushton: The point is that the linc bus stops like a train at a set point for a set time, so that proposition is destroyed.

Mr McIVER: But the buses are sometimes well behind schedule, which makes it very difficult for handicapped people to gauge them. I will produce evidence to substantiate that point.

Mr Sodeman: That has nothing to do with picking the right stop.

Mr McIVER: To continue—

We know there are many volunteers only too willing to help us, but we still like to be as independent as possible, and not to have to rely on others.

In any case there are insufficient vehicles available.

The Bureau of Statistics of WA gives the number of handicapped people in the statistical area in Perth (covering 26 local government areas)—at June 30, 1976—as 41 302.

The Minister for Health interjected a little while ago to ask how many letters had I received. It would not matter if I had received one million letters. This letter, which appeared in the *Daily News*, summed up the situation very simply, and it highlighted—

Mr Young: So one person speaks for all the handicapped?

Mr McIVER: This person was chosen as the spokesman.

Mr Young: By whom?

Mr McIVER: By this body.

Mr Rushton: That is not so—for the Labor Party.

Mr McIVER: This person was nominated by the handicapped people of Western Australia.

Mr Young: But which ones? Unless it is the Para-Quad Association.

Mr McIVER: The picture unfolds in the letter. It is very detrimental to these people to close down the railway service. The Minister is trying to introduce a red herring, and I will not fall for that one. The letter describes the difficulties faced by the handicapped since the service was withdrawn.

Mr Sodeman: A shallow argument.

Mr McIVER: I chose that letter because I feel it sums up the difficulties facing handicapped people.

Mr Young: What is the name of the person?

Mr Sodeman: Give us his name.

Mr McIVER: I hope the Government will take this matter seriously. Next year, 1981, is the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Point of Order

Mr SODEMAN: I rise on a point of order, Sir. It is a little hard to interject across the Chamber, but we have asked the member to tell us who wrote the letter. I wonder whether the member could table the letter from which he is quoting?

Mr Davies: A little one-upmanship!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is quoting from some papers. If those papers are not part of his personal notes for his speech—if they are part of a separate document—I ask him to table the document.

Mr McIVER: Certainly, Sir. I have no hesitation in tabling the document, but it is not a document; it is a letter written to the *Daily News*.

Debate Resumed

Mr Young: Can you tell us the name of the writer of the letter?

Mr McIVER: Yes, I thought I had already named him. It is Barry Alan Warrington of Subiaco.

Mr Young: I thought that was a letter written to you.

Mr McIVER: The Minister should listen. I even gave the date.

Mr Young: Did you not quote an original letter written to you?

Mr McIVER: I said I had received this letter.

Mr Young: So there is only one bloke so far?

Mr McIVER: I said that he was the spokesman. The date is 15 January.

Mr Young: He is the only person up to date known to have corresponded on this matter. I wondered whether you had another letter.

Mr McIVER: I have here a Press photograph which appeared under the heading, "Mr Warrington negotiates steps". This gentleman cannot manage the steps on the new buses.

Mr Young: So it is three letters from the one bloke?

Mr McIVER: That is only one facet of the problem. I referred to the handicapped people and the difficulties they have boarding buses, whether they are linc buses or the regular MTT buses.

I mentioned that 1981 will be the International Year of Disabled Persons. I have here a list of the projects being organised by the Western Australian Committee of the International Year of Disabled Persons as at 15 September 1980. I do not want to bore the House with the whole list, but I would like to point out that it will be a very interesting year. Many functions are being organised. Certainly I hope the Government will have some compassion. I hope it will put people before dollars and cents. The Government could contribute to this year in no better way than reopening the Fremantle-Perth service. That would be a very fine gesture, indeed, and it would be appreciated by thousands of other Western Australians.

Mr Herzfeld: In your estimation, how many handicapped people are involved?

An Opposition member: Oh, ignore the fool.

Mr McIVER: The honourable member should read this in *Hansard* because I have already given the figures. There are thousands in Western Australia.

Mr Young: Thousands of handicapped people using the Perth-Fremantle railway line?

Mr McIVER: No, I said in Western Australia.

Mr Sibson: How do country people get to travel on this line?

Mr Davies: About 8 per cent of the population have a permanent disability; you should know that.

Mr McIVER: I now intend to quote from a document, and for the benefit of the member for Pilbara, certainly I will table it. I have here the report of the first handicapped persons' conference held in Sydney on 17 May 1980. Part of it reads as follows—

The former President of the United States, Gerald Ford once said: "Government exists to ensure all citizens equal opportunity to live their own lives according to their own lights

and abilities, not plan and control their lives as Government thinks best."

This is what the Government is trying to do; it is trying to govern their lives. The report continues—

Perhaps the greatest single barrier to equal opportunity facing disabled citizens is the inequitable transport system which unjustifiably prevails throughout this wealthy land. Discrimination in this area promote other forms of discrimination. It denies equality in employment, education, recreation, and human relationships.

These are very relevant points indeed. One of the important items to be debated next year is the encouragement of study and research projects designed to facilitate the participation of disabled people in daily life, for example, by improving their access to public buildings and transport systems.

Mr Young: Quite right, too, but does the report differentiate between trains and buses?

Mr McIVER: It simply refers to transport systems.

Mr Young: Fair enough.

Mr McIVER: The closure of the suburban railway service to Fremantle has affected not only the lifestyle of physically handicapped people, but also it has affected the lifestyle of the people of Fremantle and surrounding areas. The Minister for Health is very keen that I should read out letters and so I would like to refer to this one—and it is not signed "your dad"!

Mr Sodeman: Or "split pin" either!

Mr McIVER: This is a letter written to the Friends of the Railways. The first part of the letter congratulates the FOR for the stand it is taking.

Mr Rushton: Are you speaking for the Labor Party or for the FOR?

Mr McIVER: I am speaking as the member for Avon and as the Opposition spokesman on transport. My purpose is to highlight the ridiculous situation applying today in our public transport system. I am pointing out how the Government has erred in removing the Fremantle-Perth rail service.

Mr Nanovich: It was a correct decision.

Mr McIVER: The letter states as follows—

Your Newsletter much appreciated by this family. It is very heartening to know you people are still active, as this topic is an everyday subject in this household. Being a cripple on a crutch and 72 years of age and

seriously disadvantaged. Twice I have been thrown almost the length of a bus and badly shaken. Points we would like to stress are:—

High steps on Bus. Tension and frightful jarring impact on an old frame. Lack of continuity of service say, Midland Armadale Service time 4 minutes to connect, is such, on alighting at Perth a whistle is heard and train departs. Just why cannot Midland train depart from the entrance, the rails are there and Fremantle passengers must hike another 50 yds. Also on return to Perth it is necessary to race at top speed across (Wellington St.) 6 (six) lanes of traffic to connect a horror Bus.

That is how this person describes it—a "horror bus". The letter continues—

The 760 (Linc) has added in a large way to congestion on the highway and made Fremantle a Bus choked Port and a City very hazardous to pedestrians.

I could not agree with him more on that. The letter continues—

If Rushton is so obsessed with them, then put the flaming things on the rail where they belong. There are a big section of disadvantaged people both young and old who are now house-bound even the old chap with the violin has given it away and wheelchairs are not on.

That is a very important point. The letter continues—

Our observation we estimate the Mosman Service must be losing 1 Million Annually. Buses are best to be used as feeders West and East of line. The congestion in 10 years time is very difficult to visualize but horrible to contemplate.

I do not wish simply to be derogatory about the Government; I intend to offer some constructive criticism. I have already indicated to members the disadvantaged situation in which handicapped people have been placed. The Government intends next year to spend several million dollars on new buses. Why cannot some of this money go towards the purchase of new railcars? Why cannot the buses be designed to suit the special needs of these people? Why cannot the bus schedules be so organised as to allow people to feed into the rail service, as is done in the case of Midland, Bassendean, and Bayswater?

Mr Rushton: When I reply I will tell you about what is being done.

Mr McIVER: I am very pleased we agree on something.

I have already referred to the disadvantaged situation faced by people in Fremantle as a result of the rail closure. Perhaps members opposite think I am over-dramatising the situation. If that is the case, let them talk to the business people in close proximity to the Perth Railway Station and ask them how sales have been since the service was withdrawn. Those people will soon tell members that sales have been down.

I refer members to an advertising sticker displayed on nearly every shop window in Fremantle. I suppose the Labor Party once again will get the blame. The sticker states as follows—

Friends of the Railways MARCH to
Parliament House
Wednesday, October 8th
"To Bring Back the Fremantle Trains"
Assemble Perth Esplanade 6.00 p.m.
A Band will lead the March.

In small print, it states as follows—

The March has Police approval.

Mr Rushton: Signed "John Dawkins"?

Mr McIVER: What a lot of rot! The Minister should be practical and face up to reality for once. These signs are everywhere in Fremantle. They are even on the Myer store window. Does the Minister believe John Dawkins has so much influence in Fremantle that he can influence those sorts of people? The people of Fremantle, irrespective of their views on other matters, are united in the common aim of having the rail service restored. I would say that probably three quarters of these people do not support the philosophy of the Labor Party. The Minister should try to understand that point, otherwise we will not get anywhere.

Mr Parker: The Fremantle Chamber of Commerce has reiterated this aim several times.

Mr McIVER: No doubt the member for Fremantle will endorse my remarks when he enters the debate.

The linc buses and other buses are creating a traffic hazard in Fremantle. I should like to read to the House a letter on this very subject written to me by the proprietor of a business house in Fremantle. It states as follows—

Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to the traffic congestion in the Fremantle area since the closure of the railway line.

I would also like to make mention of the chaotic transport from Perth to Fremantle

last Saturday (13/9/1980) taking some forty-five minutes to travel from Perth to Loch Street Claremont.

This comes back to my point about scheduling. The letter continues—

This was due to the congestion in the Subiaco area created by buses leaving the football ground thus proving the only successful way to transport the mass is by rail.

Hoping that commonsense will prevail and the reopening of the rail line in the near future will be seen.

Irrespective of what the MTT may say to the contrary, there was a great deal of congestion at Subiaco this year, while last year the situation can only be described as chaotic. I know of people in the Fremantle area who took two hours to travel from the Subiaco football ground to their homes because the traffic choked the surrounding streets.

Mr Rushton: Two hours! Did they walk?

Mr MacKinnon: They must have gone via the Subiaco Hotel.

Mr McIVER: That is a facetious interjection. Not all people drive Mercedes, like the Minister.

Mr MacKinnon: It would not have taken them two hours.

Mr McIVER: Does the honourable member believe I am lying to the House?

Mr MacKinnon: Yes, because it could not have taken them two hours.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr McIVER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask that that be withdrawn.

Mr Young: He did not say anything.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It is difficult for me to determine whether I should direct that the honourable member should withdraw. If the member for Murdoch had said the member for Avon was lying, there is no question that I would have asked him to withdraw. However, the member for Avon posed the question to the member for Murdoch, and the member for Murdoch did not actually use the word "lying". I cannot totally accept therefore that the incident was unparliamentary and accordingly I do not intend to direct the member for Murdoch to withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr McIVER: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, I suppose it is my own fault for trying to deal with illiterates.

Mr Rushton: Are you referring to grand final day?

Mr McIVER: No, but it was during the final round.

Mr E. T. Evans: It was after a scratch match! When do you think it was?

Mr Rushton: Can you remember the actual day?

Mr McIVER: The traffic congestion occurred after one of the semi finals. As the Minister knows, the WAFL put up a very strong case to have the train service reinstated for the final round because it knew, as everybody knows, that the only way to move a large mass of people through the suburban area is by rail.

If one ever travels to Perth from Armadale or Midland via the suburban rail service—particularly the express service—one will see cars and buses bumper to bumper simply crawling along, whereas with modern signalling, trains have free access to their destinations.

I can assure the Minister that when the Fremantle-Perth rail service was operating—even allowing for the old, rundown railcars which were allowed to deteriorate due to the sheer neglect of this Government—the trains were very seldom late. Even when taking into consideration the number of stops between Fremantle and Midland, the service was classified as one of the fastest in the world.

Mr Sibson: That was because nobody was getting on the trains. It could not help but be on time.

Mr Rushton: How many rail carriages were ordered during the three years of the Tonkin Government?

Mr McIVER: The Minister has only to peruse *Hansard* to realise I castigated the Tonkin Government many times for its neglect in that regard. On this point I am certainly in agreement with the Minister. But successive Governments have not paid enough attention to our transport situation, particularly our suburban rail services.

The Tonkin Government certainly did not withdraw the Fremantle-Perth railway service!

Mr Rushton: It introduced a Bill.

Mr McIVER: Do not let us accept that red herring; it has nothing to do with the situation. The Minister would realise the Bill related to a survey.

Mr Rushton: A Bill went through Parliament.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr Sibson interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! I called for order on more than one occasion yet the member for Bunbury chose to ignore me. I make it very clear to him he should cease to interject in such a fashion.

Mr Sibson: I apologise.

Mr McIVER: It is relevant to highlight the situation of the Royal Show. The Royal Agricultural Society is a non-political body but, by jove, would it not love to see the reintroduction of that service. There are a lot of people from country areas who said to me they would not be going to the show because of the parking situation at the Claremont Showgrounds. Previously, they were able to leave their cars at the Midland station and buy a ticket for the journey and give them admittance to the show. It was one purchase. It was a great advantage to country people with young families.

I know the patronage for the Royal Show this year was good, but it would have been even greater had the suburban rail service between Perth and Fremantle still existed. It is disgraceful the way the MTT advertises for people to patronise the bus services without any reference whatsoever to rail. Here we have the body responsible for the suburban rail services in Western Australia promoting the idea of people catching buses. The bus services have never worked properly since the suburban transport service was handed over to the MTT. The service was handed over to the MTT in the hope there would be an integration of services, but the integration is as far away as we are from London. There has been no attempt to integrate the services.

I have here a copy of *The West Australian* of Friday 19 September and there is a full-page advertisement inserted by the MTT indicating that, "We make it easier for you to travel to the Royal Show." Such an advertisement would cost several hundred dollars to insert. All members would know from their own advertising before election times how much it costs to insert just a small advertisement. Again, the MTT is advertising buses with no mention made of trains.

I shall quote now from the 28 September edition of *The Sunday Times* as follows—

Fancy a flight to Britain and a ride on a London double-decker bus? Sure you do. And if you will be travelling around Perth by

MTT bus this week that UK trip could be yours.

For all this week 6PR personalities will be hopping on and off Perth buses handing out tickets to passengers.

Passengers can also write their name and address or telephone number on their ticket and send it to 6PR.

The winning entry will be drawn next week and the lucky traveller will receive a return trip for two to London.

I do not object to that; but I do object to the MTT, which is responsible for the administration of Westrail's suburban services, advertising and promoting buses. This sort of thing has been going on for years. How can we attract people to our rail system and so improve its economics if we do not advertise the service? The Government is very vocal about this point. It says that insufficient people use trains. Of course this is the situation when there is no advertising of trains. Here we have a full-page advertisement by the MTT indicating it is running a trip to London, but no mention is made of rail services.

Mr Rushton: I can give you a little piece of satisfaction. It has been my request to the MTT that it should give rail full attention in its news releases.

Mr McIVER: It is about time. There is no question about it, irrespective of how long I speak in this Parliament today, it is the people outside who are looking for the reinstatement of the Fremantle-Perth rail service. Governments, people, organisations, Ministers and world leaders make mistakes; but if there was ever a blunder made of greater magnitude than the withdrawal of the Fremantle-Perth service, I could not imagine what it was. The arrogance shown by the Government will live for many years in the memory of the public.

Mr Rushton: It is not very arrogant to have a three-year trial.

Mr McIVER: The Minister would not allow the Friends of the Railways to have a sentimental journey on the day of the closure. However, that is irrelevant.

Why not give the people what they want? Is that not what government and democracy is all about? We had 80 per cent of the people in the metropolitan area wanting that rail service to continue. The Government had the biggest ever petition presented to this Parliament in that respect.

Mr Rushton: What about the people who live along the Fremantle-Perth railway?

Mr McIVER: I am pleased the Minister mentioned that. One of the reasons the Government gave for closing the line was the low density along its route. But what of the future?

Mr Rushton: There is still a low density. We cannot do anything until the shires make a decision to increase the density.

Mr McIVER: But the Minister for Local Government has made a decision and overruled the shires. She is not allowing high density development.

Mr Rushton: Cut it out.

Mr McIVER: Has the Minister made such a decision or not?

Mr Rushton: The reopening of the line is in the hands of the shires.

Mr McIVER: Did not the Minister for Local Government overrule the shires?

Mr Rushton: The shires are not putting forward propositions for rezoning.

Mr McIVER: Let us get down to the nitty-gritty. The Minister knows as well as I do that in five years' time the population of the area will probably have trebled. But where is the Government heading? It is heading backwards with respect to our transport system. It has withdrawn our rail service between Perth and Fremantle, and this has aggravated the situation.

I am a little bit ahead of myself, but let us consider the world oil situation and the conflict between Iraq and Iran. Leading economists of the world are indicating that there will be an oil shortage.

Mr Rushton: We are saving oil by having linc buses instead of trains.

Mr Nanovich: What are they doing currently in Singapore?

Mr McIVER: Overseas Governments are accepting the idea of electrification and are expanding their rail services. I would like the Minister to read the publication I have here to substantiate what I am saying. But we do not have to go overseas to find out what the situation is. The Eastern States' Governments are spending millions of dollars on their rail services, yet the Minister is quibbling about the loss of \$0.4 million a year. The Government can send a convoy to Noonkanbah irrespective of the cost to the taxpayers of Western Australia. There were no worries at all, yet the cry was, "the economy" when the Perth suburban service was considered, but nothing was done to improve it.

The Minister for Transport in this State is certainly out of touch with the realities of the

transport schemes in major countries of the world. I have a book which will improve his transport knowledge. The book is called *The Social Consequences of Rail Closures*. The copy I have is the only one available in Western Australia. This book was prepared by British Rail and it deals with the lines which have been closed. I will not bore the House with passages from the book, but I want the Minister to read it. I will pass it to him at the completion of my speech because it is very worth-while reading.

The essence of the book is the social implications for hundreds of families affected after railway lines were closed. The effects were amazing and I indicate to the House that the same situation is occurring in Fremantle. I gave the example of a 72-year-old person who has had to change his lifestyle and adapt himself to staying at home. When we closed the railway people did not travel on buses; they went back to motorcars. The volume of motor traffic from Fremantle to Perth has doubled.

Mr Rushton: That is not true.

Mr McIVER: The figures the Minister has given were ridiculous and I will prove that fact shortly. There is no use his trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Western Australia; those figures were incorrect.

I invite the Minister for Transport to read the book I have mentioned. I thought we were all supposed to be looking after people. We, as legislators, should have that aim as our prime objective. I thought that was why we were elected to this Parliament—to look after the welfare of the people we represent.

We are quibbling about a lousy million dollars which we are losing, yet the Government is wasting millions of dollars in other areas.

In my motion I am critical of the Government and the way in which it has wasted money. I am also critical of its attitude to the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line. The Government has not saved one cent since the line was closed.

Mr Rushton: It has saved \$500 000.

Mr McIVER: It might look good in figures—

Mr Rushton: Over \$2 million in capital. Whose figures are these?

Mr McIVER: I will lead up to that. There are a number of colleges in the Perth to Fremantle region, and during vacation the students travel to the Eastern States. In the past the principals of those colleges made block bookings to travel with Westrail.

Mr Rushton: You mean the Claremont ones?

Mr McIVER: Yes. Under the present system the bookings with Westrail are made through booking agents. The principals have said that that is just not on, so we have lost that travel. The students now travel by bus or air.

Mr Rushton: How could we lose them?

Mr McIVER: They would not book on the train.

Mr Rushton: Why don't they ring up to book?

Mr McIVER: One cannot do that. One has to go to the Westrail centre. One cannot travel free! These people do not have a "gold" pass.

The Fremantle ticket sales as at 30 June 1979 amounted to \$28 938. Interstate bookings amounted to \$108 149, so the total was \$137 087. For July and August travel to the country amounted to \$7 210; travel interstate totalled \$17 159, making a total of \$24 369.

The Cottesloe ticket sales as at 30 June 1979 amounted to \$211. That amount is understandable when we consider a small place like Cottesloe. The Claremont ticket sales to country destinations amounted to \$2 292, and in July/August, \$912. After 1 September, when the railway line closed, bookings were handed over to Quartermaine's. The sales up to July 1980 amounted to a total of \$1 874, and now the agents are in the hands of liquidators.

Mr Pearce: They were caught up with Moll.

Mr McIVER: I feel a little sorry for them. It is very important to note that a large amount of money has been lost. That aspect relates to my motion, especially when I say that it has affected the people in the area.

I would like to show the House a photo of the Midland terminal. The photo was taken on Wednesday, 17 September 1980 at 12.15 p.m. There are 366 cars parked at the station. I do not know whether or not the operation of buses feeding commuters to the trains was a viable one. On 18 September there were 109 cars parked at Bassendean station.

Mr Rushton: You are lauding the Government's action. We doubled the parking area at Midland.

Mr McIVER: Do not get excited. At Fremantle station at 11.15 a.m. on Friday, 19 September 1980, 17 cars were in the parking area, and outside the station in the bay was one lonely vehicle. The \$1.10 park-and-ride fare had been introduced. It could have been introduced when the train service was running to help the economy of that line, but the Government had to wait until the line had closed. On Wednesday, 17 September 1980 at 3.00 p.m. there were 17 cars at Fremantle

station and one bus. When the trains were in operation one could not get a bus within a bull's roar of Fremantle station.

Mr Rushton: I have been giving every attention to parking areas since I have been Minister for Transport.

Mr Harman: That is about all you have done—Minister for parking.

Mr Rushton: You are making my day.

Mr McIVER: Everything the Minister has done to save a few measly dollars has caused an injustice and not a saving to the people of the State.

I come now to the economic situation. I was very interested to read a letter to the Editor of *The West Australian* from the "Dr Goebbels" of the Liberal Party, one W. W. Mitchell.

Mr Rushton: Did "Dr Goebbels" sign that petition?

Mr McIVER: I would say the monetary assistance W. W. Mitchell has given to public transport in Western Australia would not buy a pie and sauce.

Mr Rushton: What is the date of that letter?

Mr McIVER: It is a letter published in *The West Australian* on Thursday, 3 January 1980, and this is what the mastermind has to say—

While Cottesloe MLA Bill Hassell shows understandable concern over a vote loss caused by the Fremantle rail issue, and while his ALP opponent Mr Rick Grounds (former Friends of the Railways leader) claims he got no FOR support, the real issue for taxpayers is whether fact or emotional fiction is going to guide the way our money is spent.

The worry is that if shallow thinking takes precedence over responsible policy we can resign ourselves to the useless squandering of hundreds of millions of dollars in the 80s.

The Government is already doing that. The letter goes on—

Taking the Perth-Fremantle rail issue as a single example of the potential for tax waste we should consider:

He wants to electrify the Kalgoorlie line, so he differs with the Premier. To continue—

During the 80s the line has no chance of winning more than the quarter-of-one per cent share of total passenger traffic it had when it closed.

How can he arrive at that figure? How would he know? He would know on the statistics the Minister had supplied.

Mr Rushton: I will tell you—

Mr McIVER: Just a moment. This is my motion. The letter continues—

Most travellers will continue to choose personal convenience rather than loyalty to railways.

People would use the railways if they had something decent to ride in, particularly in view of the cost of fuel today, which is still rising. It is said that by the end of January, if a Labor Government is not returned in Canberra, it could go to \$1 a litre; but fortunately Bill Hayden will look after that aspect. The letter goes on—

Depending on whether electrification took place or not, 99.75 per cent of taxpayers not using the line would be paying the privileged minority a \$2 or \$4 flagfall subsidy every time they stepped on a passenger train with their 40c ticket.

Railways had their day when everyone lived along the lines.

Of course, in years to come an increasing number of people will be living along the lines.

Mr Rushton: Not if the people along that corridor have their way.

Mr McIVER: To continue—

It was roads that enabled us to build the kind of city we have in Perth—with spacious suburbs rather than crowded tenements, or high-rise flats clustered in congestion around lines of public transport.

The car carries 90 per cent of Perth travellers, buses 8 per cent, taxis 1 per cent, and trains 1 per cent.

Surely we are not going to surrender our advantages by having ridiculously costly railways so load our taxes that we can't afford our cars or a satisfactory bus network.

I would say in a couple of years' time we will be glad to get onto a train because of the cost of fuel, licensing, insurance, and so on.

I strongly condemn W. W. Mitchell's attitude. No doubt he was prompted by the Government to put such utter rubbish to the people of Western Australia. Talking about economics, I want W. W. Mitchell to listen to this: the Kelmscott bus terminal cost \$722 000, and that was only the cost of construction. The Minister cannot supply the interest figures, but the interest rate on an SEC loan was 12½ per cent, so the interest on the bus terminal must be around that figure.

Mr Rushton: You would not have a bus terminal, a train terminal, or an integrated terminal.

Mr McIVER: Of course we would. I will come to that in a moment. Basically, the reason the Government gave for closing the Fremantle-Perth line was economics. To get some return for the money spent, we would need 656 passengers a day on six days a week for 15 years.

Mr Williams: At what cost per passenger?

Mr McIVER: The fare is 75c.

Mr Rushton: It is 55c.

Mr Nanovich: He said the cost, not the fare.

Mr Sibson: Fare is income and cost is outgoing. What is the cost?

Mr McIVER: Leaving aside the interest rate, we would need 656 passengers a day on six days a week for 15 years. A sum of \$3 million has been spent on the Bunbury wharf, and so far one ship has used it. What does W. W. Mitchell think about that?

Mr Sibson: The Labor Party had to wreck the first industry that came in there.

Mr McIVER: Expenditure on the Bunbury wharf amounted to \$3 million, yet the Government is quibbling over the loss of a few thousand dollars on the Fremantle-Perth railway line. As I said at the outset, that argument was a red herring because of the build-up of the Perth-Armadale corridor and the pressure put on the Government by the shires. Albany Highway was constructed for 35 000 cars a day but it carries in excess of 62 000 cars a day.

Mr Rushton: You have made my day again. That is why we should have a railway line.

Mr McIVER: But not at the expense of other people. The way of life of these people is changed to satisfy the people of Armadale.

Mr Spriggs interjected.

Mr McIVER: I am amazed at the interjections of back-benchers. They never make a speech or contribute anything to this place but just sit there and snipe at someone who is putting a case, as I have been asked to do by the majority of the people in this area, and as I feel I have a responsibility to do. And we have to listen to that sort of rubbish. I would not know how some members got into this place.

I have been referring to the money the Government has squandered. I mentioned the \$3 million spent at Bunbury for one ship. We have also the loss on ticket sales in the Perth-Fremantle area and the dissatisfaction of the business people who one would think would support the Government but who have been ridden over rough shod. The next instance is the withdrawal of the City Arcade ticket centre, which brought in \$2

million a year. In its wisdom, the Government will—

Mr Rushton: It is Westrail's wisdom.

Mr McIVER: Westrail cannot do it on its own. The Government must have agreed to it.

Mr Rushton: Westrail certainly has some administrative powers.

Mr McIVER: But it must have the Minister's sanction. Westrail could not do it without the Minister's blessing. The Government will lease the ticket centre to private enterprise and pay commission of 7c on every ticket. One does not have to be a great mathematician to work out what that will return to the person who operates the centre.

Mr Williams: Surely Westrail is astute enough to realise that 7c will be cheaper than what it costs Westrail to run it.

Mr McIVER: In other words, the member for Clontarf wants the \$2 million to go into the pocket of a private individual, not to Westrail.

Mr Williams: What you are talking about is politics. I am talking business. Which is cheaper and more efficient—to do it the way Westrail does it—

Mr B. T. Burke: Come on! Westrail runs a drycleaning business.

Mr McIVER: On 4 September the Minister answered a question I had asked, and *The West Australian* reported that Westrail was feeling the pinch. The report in *The West Australian* was—

Westrail was closing its City Arcade booking office because of higher rents and less interstate passenger business, the Minister for Transport Mr Rushton, told the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

The Westrail Centre and the Arcade station took bookings for interstate rail travel. More than 40 accredited travel agents in the metropolitan area took bookings for Westrail.

The closure of the arcade office would save Westrail about \$25 000 annually, Mr Rushton told Mr K. F. McIver (Lab., Avon).

I strongly dispute that, because those officers who have to be paid will not be dismissed; they will have to be relocated in other areas. Is the Government going to sack them?

Mr Rushton: I am saying they will be taken out of the system if they are superfluous.

Mr McIVER: But the Government intends to close the Perth centre and the office will be relocated at the Westrail centre.

Mr Rushton: Most individuals could be, but there are people leaving the system all the time.

Mr McIVER: The Government will still have to pay the wages, so how does the Minister justify the claim that he will save \$25 000?

Mr Rushton: Westrail has made out a case that it will save \$25 000.

Mr McIVER: Yes, a case which has been very strongly opposed by the Railway Officers' Union. The union has a case which is just as strong to say that saving will not be made.

Mr Rushton: Fair go! Westrail has to account for the funds it uses, and for the economy of the organisation.

Mr McIVER: I quote a letter as follows—

Hidden away on page 67 of the "West" of Thursday, 4th September is an article headed "Westrail feels pinch"—what a lot of "bunkum"!

Since August 1978 the W.A. Railway Officers' Union has been exchanging correspondence and attending deputations to Westrail and Mr Rushton in an endeavour to retain the City Arcade Booking Office, or some other City booking office (preferably at City Station), in order to save this \$2 000 000 plus business.

I come back to the point again that the Fremantle-Perth railway passenger service was closed for a lousy \$1 million.

Mr Rushton: Cut it out. We are saving \$25 000.

Sir Charles Court: People will still travel.

Mr McIVER: Not only that, but the loss on ticket sales and other items which I have highlighted will add to that cost.

Mr Williams: Could I ask—

Mr McIVER: No you cannot! I continue to quote as follows—

In 1978 the rent on this office was \$22 000 per annum and is now about \$25 000 according to Mr Rushton, but if the office were located in the City Station the rent would be nil and there would be less inconvenience to the public. It seems this sensible move is not to be.

If the Government is so concerned about the economics, why not put the ticket office at the city station and still retain ticket sales, because once it is sent out to the main centre, the sales will drop drastically?

Mr Williams: Could I ask you a question—

Mr McIVER: No. The letter continues—

We are told the office will have to be at the East Perth Terminal but it has already been proved that people will not travel out to the Westrail Centre at East Perth to make bookings. As a result, we have forty accredited Travel Agents selling rail tickets—and gaining 7 per cent commission at the same time—at the expense of the jobs of dedicated officers of Westrail.

Point of Order

Mr WILLIAMS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have asked the member for Avon a question regarding who is the originator of the letter he is reading, and he has refused to answer that question. Therefore I ask that he table the letter at the end of his speech.

Mr McIVER: She'll be on the heap!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Avon has indicated he will place the document on the Table of the House. He is, of course, not required to answer any questions posed to him in the House.

Debate Resumed

Mr McIVER: Of course I will give the name of the person who wrote the letter if the member for Clontarf will be patient. It continues—

Because it is easier, quicker, and a higher commission is paid on air travel it is only natural the agents will push this mode of transport. The result—and perhaps this is the intention of Mr Rushton—will be the eventual doing away with the country and interstate rail passenger services.

The strangest aspect of the whole issue is that the City Arcade office will be taken over and operated by an agent who does support rail and can still run at a profit.

Why is the Government so anti-rail?

That letter was written by the General Secretary of the WA Railway Officers' Union (Mr R. L. Robinson). Of course, what Mr Robinson is saying is absolutely correct, because when we consider the matter we find that modern travel agencies are computerised and one can make a booking for an airline in a matter of seconds. One can be told the number of the flight, the departure time, the destination arrival time, accommodation details, and the price all within a matter of seconds. However, the system of booking an interstate rail trip is so antiquated that not many people will be put on the *Indian Pacific* by travel agents. It is a matter of plain common sense that if we were in that job we

would do the same; we would rather press a few buttons and come up with the information than sit down and fill in about a dozen forms.

Let us be realistic. We will lose thousands of dollars on sales as a result of this decision to send the office out to the main Westrail centre. As the letter says, the rent in the city station is nil. The Minister has fallen over backwards to help the people who run the city station; and the space is available there. We have only to make use of that space and we will retain 90 per cent of the interstate bookings.

However, I suppose it does not make all that much difference because when one looks at the latest ATAC reports it seems the *Indian Pacific* is limited, anyhow, which means we will lose the only real service we have.

Mr Rushton: Would you like to indicate the date of that information?

Mr McIVER: Naturally, I do not have the information with me, but the Minister would have it. It is obvious to me that the writing is on the wall.

Mr Rushton: That is scaremongering again. Why not have regard for the fact that Westrail believes that it will be well in front as a result of closing that centre?

Mr McIVER: As I said earlier, people sometimes believe in their decisions to try to overcome mistakes. The Minister has made the mistake of closing the Fremantle-Perth suburban service. Who would know best in this situation: The people who have been doing these jobs for 25 or 30 years, or some accountant in Westrail who is working only with figures? If I had the Minister's job I know to whom I would be listening.

Mr Rushton: You would listen to the unions instead of the management.

Mr McIVER: I would not listen to the unions, but to the men who do the job every day and who have done it for years. I think their view should be considered, because they actually do the job, as distinct from some economists.

Mr Rushton: I have listened to the officers in the transport system and have acted on their advice.

Mr Skidmore: You certainly would not act on your own advice; you wouldn't have any.

Mr McIVER: The Minister earlier asked me whether I believed in bus terminals. Of course I do; it would be ridiculous and futile to say otherwise. However, I do not accept the building of a Taj Mahal at the expense of the taxpayers of Western Australia every time a bus station is

needed. Let us look at the latest developments in Queensland. I understand the Minister has been there because he came back here in January and said that State was waiting for finance to operate its system; but it was operating in November of the previous year. He could not have paid too much attention to what was going on while he was there.

First of all in Queensland there are modern trains which are similar to our suburban trains, but they are air-conditioned, beautiful trains—very surprising for old "Bjelke". Millions of dollars have been spent to expand the rail system in Queensland. I have here a picture of a modern bus complex. What more could one desire? The buses pull up at the station and people alight from the buses, travel through a tunnel, safe from the weather, and board trains. I would stake my reputation that that did not cost \$722 000—far from it.

So, Mr Speaker, the action of this Government in respect of the Fremantle-Perth suburban service must be deplored. The Government said it was closed on economic grounds, and I have touched only briefly on that because subsequent speakers will go into that complex situation at far greater depth than I can. Other speakers have a far greater knowledge of economics than I have, and when the debate is finished we will have clearly exposed the falseness of the Government's statements and the way in which it has deceived the people.

In conclusion, I know from experience that we do not have the numbers to carry this motion. But I say to each and every member opposite that I am disappointed by the facetious attitude that has been adopted by some members on such an important issue, because the majority of the people in this State want this suburban service reopened.

They want it reopened in order to bring back the lifestyle that people in that area once enjoyed before the Government closed the train service. They want the service reopened also to assist the overall transport situation in this State so that we can at least keep pace with other States in Australia and other countries in the world.

I know that in his reply the Minister will give a long discourse on costs, and on how much it will cost to reinstate this service. That will be the basis of his reply. However, I feel that is entirely irrelevant because even if it costs \$1 million to reopen the service, it is imperative that it be done. It is what the people want, and it can be done without loss of face.

I have not brought forward this motion for political reasons. One does not have to look hard for political matters with which to tackle this State Government. This is only one small facet of its operations, and the motion is certainly not politically motivated. I was asked to move it by many people, a lot of whom have supported the Liberal Party for years and years.

Sir Charles Court: I hope they still do.

Mr McIVER: That is in the past; they have come over to us now.

Sir Charles Court: Are you pleased with the advertisement about the big rally tonight with all the "Greenies" joining with the Friends of the Railways?

Mr Tonkin: Are you pleased about that?

Sir Charles Court: I want to know the comments of the member for Avon, because I cannot imagine that he is amused about it.

Several members interjected.

Mr McIVER: I think the Friends of the Railways have done a marvellous job. Many people who support the Liberal philosophy are in the group, and there are just as many Labor supporters in it. It is a non-political organisation.

Sir Charles Court: What, with Mr Grounds?

Mr McIVER: Well, I do not think he is in the FOR now.

Sir Charles Court: It is loaded to the teeth.

Mr McIVER: Mr Grounds was the endorsed Labor Party candidate for Cottesloe.

Mr MacKinnon: The unsuccessful candidate.

Mr McIVER: He nearly won it.

Mr MacKinnon: He was not within a bull's roar of winning it.

Mr McIVER: The Premier has always been one to want a fair go. Even the shire councils which have strongly supported the Premier for a long time want him to reinstate the Fremantle service. The Premier says the Friends of the Railways are all Labor Party people. Take Mr Darrold McCaskill, a former chief mechanical engineer of Westrail. Had he not been retired, he would have been the greatest person on earth as far as the Government is concerned, but now that he has retired and joined the FOR, in the eyes of the Government he knows nothing about transport.

Mr Rushton: His submission to the consultants was not received, and Westrail did not accept his point of view.

Mr McIVER: I have seen some of his submissions. They are very good and soundly based.

Mr Rushton: That is your opinion.

Mr McIVER: He is a man who has grown up in the service. He has advanced through the service. Not everyone becomes the chief mechanical engineer. Now he has joined the Friends of the Railways and he knows nothing, according to the Government.

Mr Williams: He is biased in his attitude.

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr McIVER: So I do not think that argument of the Premier's holds any water whatsoever.

Mr Williams: Yours does not either.

Mr McIVER: That would be the opinion of the member for Clontarf; but, like others, he has made only one or two speeches in his life, and they were by interjection.

Mr Williams: Come on! That is unreal.

Mr McIVER: It has given me a lot of pleasure this afternoon to speak on behalf of these people. Of course, when one is dealing with a Government like this one, it is like water off a duck's back. Nevertheless, the Parliament is the place to bring these matters forward.

I trust that somewhere over there, in the dim distance, there will be a couple of members with a balanced viewpoint who will join the Opposition when this motion is put later tonight. I trust they will support the motion. I trust that the Fremantle-Perth suburban service will be reinstated to the satisfaction of the people, and to the advancement of the State.

MR PARKER (Fremantle) [5.32 p.m.]: I wish to second the motion moved by the member for Avon. In doing so, I am confident that the motion moved by the member for Avon has the full support of the vast majority of people, if not everybody, in the Fremantle area and in my constituency.

In saying that, I am referring not only to those who support the Labor Party or whom one might expect to support the Labor Party such as the people who voted for me in the election in February this year, but also to those who normally support the Government. There is support for the reintroduction of the service, and last year there was opposition to its closure from the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, among others. The Fremantle Chamber of Commerce is not an organisation which even the members

opposite, who have become used to denigrating people and organisations, could describe as subversive. Certainly it is not an organisation which would be likely to support the Labor Party, or has indulged in support for the Labor Party. Indeed, one of its most highly regarded members who was recently made a life member, Mr Shilkin, was appointed by the Honorary Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce to his advisory committee on small business. Of course, it is the small businessmen who are represented principally on the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, either as members or as councillors. Mr Shilkin is a good example of such businessmen. I have a high regard for his ability and his perspicacity. It appears that the Honorary Minister holds him in high regard also. He was one of the members of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, which chamber is opposed to the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway line. As I say, that organisation continues to oppose the position adopted by the Government.

Mr Williams: That has nothing to do with the railway.

Mr PARKER: He is a man who is regarded by the Government as not being interested in parochial matters only.

Government members interjected.

Mr PARKER: It is legitimate for people to attempt to defend the businesses which they have fought to establish for many years. If that is not a legitimate activity for the Chamber of Commerce, I do not know what is. All interest groups seek to protect the interests of their members, otherwise there would be no reason for their existence.

All that aside, it is interesting to note that the closure of the railway was not supported by any organisation within the Fremantle area. Recently, when I was speaking on this matter at a public meeting in Fremantle, I was taken to task when I said that. There was a man in the audience who said, "Yes, there is an organisation in the Fremantle area which has supported the closure of the railway line." I interrupted my speech to ask him what that organisation was. It took him some time to answer; but eventually he decided he would reveal that the organisation of which he was a member was in fact the Fremantle Branch of the Liberal Party. That is the only organisation in Fremantle, of which I am aware, which has supported the Government's activities. It is the only organisation, as far as I am aware, which has not called for the reintroduction of the service. I do not regard that as a particularly sound position.

Mr MacKinnon: What about the coach of the South Fremantle Football Club?

Mr PARKER: The South Fremantle Football Club, as well as the football league, opposed the cessation of the service.

Mr MacKinnon: What about the coach of the South Fremantle Football Club?

Mr PARKER: I am talking about the club as a whole. The coach of the club is a well-known member of the Liberal Party. The club as a whole opposed the cessation of the service, and it would like the service to be reintroduced.

Mr Williams: Come on! You do not know that.

Mr PARKER: I do know that. Later in my speech I will deal with some of the people supporting this motion. At this stage, I wish to speak on the questions of economics which were involved in the railway closure in the first instance, and in the reopening of the railway line now. Nobody could deny that the metropolitan urban transport system, as a whole, is losing large sums of money. The losses which have been estimated by the Government in the Budget and Estimates have, in each case, been exceeded. For example, the cost of the MTT bus services had increased from an estimated loss of \$28 million to an actual loss of \$35 million, as reported in the recent Budget speech by the Treasurer. That is a very dangerous and damaging situation. It is a problem for the people of Western Australia that, according to the Budget Estimates, they will have to fork out money of the order of \$40 million in order to support the urban public transport system. It would be much better if the people did not have to fork out \$40 million, but the fact remains that that is the estimate of what it will cost to retain the system.

Nobody would suggest that there should be a complete abolition of the urban public transport system. The Minister is not suggesting that for a moment. In fact, he is talking about expanding the system in some areas. He is spending vast sums on buses and capital equipment to do that, even though the loss on buses increases rapidly from year to year. The percentage loss as well as the actual amount lost increases rapidly from year to year; and I will deal with that question in a moment.

In relation to the railway line, it was assessed—no accurate figures have ever been produced—that the line was losing \$2.7 million per year. From the figures available, it seems that that was not an accurate assessment of what the railway was losing. That amount pales into insignificance compared with the \$40 million it is proposed to spend on propping up the urban

public transport system this financial year. It pales into even greater insignificance if one adds to it the \$40 million it is proposed to spend on propping up Westrail generally.

That makes a total of \$80 million which will be spent on rail and bus transport throughout the State during the course of this financial year. One could not accept that that amount represents the sort of loss this line was making. That amount pales into insignificance when compared with the total loss throughout the State.

It is interesting to look at some of the figures which are revealed in the various reports the authorities have prepared since the MTT took over the theoretical running of the urban rail system. All the losses of that system have been borne by the MTT, as I understand the position. In fact, Westrail operates the services for the MTT, and advises the MTT at the conclusion of each financial year, or at some other appropriate time, what amount it has cost to run the services. It advises what revenue was obtained; and if the amount of the revenue is less than the cost of the service, the MTT is required to make up the difference to Westrail. In fact, Westrail loses not one cent in respect of the operations of the urban public transport system. The whole of the loss of this system is borne by the MTT.

Mr Rushton: That is the direct cost. There is a recovery of the direct costs; and there is a contribution to core costs. There is a total recovery of all expenses.

Mr PARKER: It is hard to assess that. I have looked through the Westrail reports, the MTT reports, and the Budget papers for a couple of years. It is hard to work out how Westrail assesses the amount it raises. I have read all of the debates on this topic last year; and there was no attempt made on the part of the Minister to produce evidence of the way Westrail arrived at the amount it cost to run the urban rail system. There certainly was not any breakdown of how the Minister or the Director General of Transport assessed the proportion of the loss which was attributable to the Fremantle-Perth line. There was no detail about that at all.

It is interesting to note that the MTT report for 1979 reveals that the earnings from the urban rail system were \$2 416 million, and that compares with the amount of \$2 253 million at 30 June 1978. The report of the Auditor General, which was tabled last week, reveals that last year the revenue from urban rail transport was \$1 926 million only, a drop of some \$500 000 or so from one year to the next. I am sure a substantial proportion of that can be attributed to the

revenue being brought in by the Fremantle-Perth rail service, which was assessed by the Minister as \$680 000 a year; so there was a considerable drop of some \$500 000 in revenue from urban rail last year.

The costs increased, despite the fact that for 10 months of the year, or 80 per cent of the year, the Fremantle-Perth rail service was not operating. From the beginning of September to 30 June, or for 10 months of the year, there was no cost attributable to the Fremantle-Perth line. We were told that it was losing \$2.7 million a year; and therefore it is reasonable to expect that when the service ceased 20 per cent of the way through the year, the total cost would be reduced, and some of it would have been transferred—

Mr Rushton: You said you disputed the figures given to the Parliament on the closing of the service. You will find the Estimates at that time indicate a progression over five years.

Mr PARKER: That is true. I will come to that figure in a moment. It simply adds weight to my case.

Various figures were quoted, and I will go through them because the different figures are interesting. They are the figures the Minister, and other people acting on his behalf, have quoted.

I shall return to that matter later. It is interesting to note that over the five years it was assessed, according to one figure, there would be a substantial saving in the vicinity of \$9 million, and according to another figure in the vicinity of \$13 million. That saving would be made by virtue of the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr PARKER: Bearing in mind the hour, I move—

That I be given leave to continue my speech at a later stage of the sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned until a later stage of the sitting.

(Continued on this page.)

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

RAILWAYS: FREMANTLE-PERTH

Reinstatement of Passenger Service: Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR PARKER (Fremantle) [7.40 p.m.]: Eventually, I am able to get back to the motion

after the Dorothy Dix questions asked by members opposite.

Mr O'Connor: After a cover-up by the Opposition.

Mr PARKER: I am anxious that this debate should be concluded this evening so I will keep my remarks to a minimum, although I could speak for the whole of the time remaining to me, and for much longer.

Much has been said on this subject, and many false statements have been made on behalf of the Government. I intend to make some salient points, and the first is that in an announcement made by the Minister for Transport in this House on 29 August 1979, he said the cost saving over a five-year period, which would be incurred by the removal of the Fremantle-Perth line, amounted to \$6.9 million in running costs and \$6.7 million in capital costs. That was a total of \$13.6 million.

By way of interjection earlier in this debate the Minister for Transport said that saving was to be built up over a period of five years. I can appreciate that. Nevertheless, one would expect some of that build-up—even a minute portion—to have occurred in the 10 months between the closure of the line and 30 June.

Mr Rushton: The saving was \$500 000.

Mr PARKER: The Minister has mentioned a sum of \$500 000. I find that difficult to ascertain from the Auditor General's report. The loss for the whole of the urban rail transport system increased during the year to the end of June 1980, notwithstanding that for a period of 10 months there was no passenger service between Fremantle and Perth. The passenger receipts dropped from \$2.5 million to \$1.9 million, I imagine mainly as a result of the closure of the line.

Expenditure increased substantially from \$12.174 million to \$12.285 million, and losses increased by \$500 000. That is extraordinary if, as is claimed, \$2.7 million lost by the urban rail transport system was attributable to the Fremantle-Perth line. The fact is that on that basis \$2.16 million of that money would have been expected to be saved since the Fremantle-Perth line had closed.

In fact, that was not the case. There was an increase in a loss of \$500 000. It is obvious from statistics—and they are not terribly specific; it is hard to get a proper breakdown of what is happening—that there is not a great deal that can be done about increasing revenue to urban public transport unless patronage is increased. It appears that increases in fares from time to time do very little to increase revenue. In fact, the only result is

to decrease patronage thereby, to some extent, decreasing revenue in real terms.

It is difficult to see how that loss of over \$10 million recorded to 30 June 1980, which was an increase of some \$500 000 over the loss in 1979, can be accepted by some as revealing a trend to savings in the future from the closure of the Fremantle line.

Indeed, the Estimates which the Treasurer provided to the House last week revealed under the heading, "Transport", that the Western Australian Government railways will receive revenue totalling \$13.5 million from the metropolitan rail system. At page 147 it is indicated the contribution which it is intended will be paid by the MTT to Westrail for the operation of the urban rail system will increase to \$11.327 million. That is the forecast loss. Again a substantial increase over the current position where the loss is somewhere in excess of \$10 million.

So last year before the closure was effected, on the one hand the Minister told us that we would gain \$13.9 million from the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line over a five-year period; that is, \$2.7 million a year. In fact, we see a loss of an extra \$500 000 already recorded this year, and an estimate of a further \$1 million loss to 30 June 1981. Those were the figures provided by the Treasurer, and those figures may very well be overstated. Last year the Government told us that it would lose \$28 million, and in fact it lost \$35 million.

Mr Rushton: Mainly because of an increase in wages.

Mr PARKER: The Treasurer's report, distributed to all members of Parliament earlier this year, said that the increased cost of all Government operations above that budgeted for was \$4 million in respect of wages. That was in a total Budget of \$1 600 million, so it certainly was not \$7 million for wages for the MTT alone.

Since the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line, patronage of public transport has declined quite substantially. The Government has produced no evidence that those patrons have transferred to other methods of public transport, or if they have transferred, it has not resulted in an overall decrease in the actual debt attributable to urban public transport. In fact, quite the reverse is the case.

This year \$40 million is to be spent in subsidising urban public transport, and as I said, last year's estimate was substantially lower than the actual figure.

The Government is always quoting the figure of \$2.7 million for the loss per annum on the Fremantle-Perth line, but it has never brought any evidence forward to justify that. We were expected to accept the Government's figures without statistics to back them up. Despite the fact that the line has been closed, the Government is losing more and more money on urban transport. The fact is the Government does not want the public to use the urban railway system in the metropolitan area. It has let the railways run down to an extraordinary degree. Except for the diesel railcars purchased last year, virtually not one cent has been spent on the urban rail system. Since 1973 the Government has closed down services which attracted people to the trains. When it ceased running the Claremont express to Perth, an immediate drop in patronage resulted. What we must do to get our railways back into a viable situation—

Mr Barnett: Is to get rid of the Minister for Transport.

Mr PARKER: —is to encourage increased patronage, and the only way to do that is to provide a facility that people want to use. People do not want to use a facility unless it is convenient for them.

Just last night I attended a meeting in the Cottesloe area. This is the bastion of the Liberal Party, and yet at that meeting I was told by some of the people that no substitute has been provided on some parts of the line. I do not know whether the Government is aware of this, but the section of the line between the Grant Street station and the Swanbourne station now has no service whatever. It has no train service, of course, but also it is not serviced by linc buses or anything else. The people living in that area who used that section of rail have not been able to transfer to another form of transport. Not only has there been a derogation of the service obviously desired by the people of Western Australia, but also nothing has been done to replace that service, let alone anything that could be described as adequate.

Mr Rushton: How many people now travel on that line, can you tell me?

Mr PARKER: I do not know how many travelled between Grant Street—

Mr Rushton: How many travelled on the Fremantle line?

An Opposition member: Nobody now.

[Applause from the Gallery]

The SPEAKER: Could I point out to the people in the Public Gallery that it is their right

to be able to sit there to listen to debates in the Parliament. However, they have no right at all to make any noise or to do anything in any way to detract from the debate that is taking place. I am pleased that they are here, and I hope they will assist me in the conduct of this House by not clapping, interjecting, or by making any other noise. The member for Fremantle.

Mr PARKER: I could continue to speak for a considerable time, but I want to let everyone else have an opportunity to contribute.

I would like, however, to make one point. Last year the Premier referred repeatedly to subversive groups which were financed mysteriously. I must admit I agree that the Queensland Government is subversive to democracy, but nevertheless it is the elected Government of the State. Queensland converted recently to an electric rail service for the suburban area of Brisbane. I could not put it better than the way it was put in a report entitled, "Electrification 79", published by the Queensland Railways. It stated—

A fully integrated public transport system embracing the use of rail, bus and ferry services throughout Brisbane and adjoining areas is the ultimate aim of the State's Transport Planners. A great deal has already been accomplished by the Metropolitan Transit Authority—

I would like to interpolate that there are some 16 pages explaining the virtues of rail and electric rail in particular. The report continues—

—with the provision of rail/bus interchanges at four key railway stations—Sandgate, Oxley, Darra and Goodna—enabling passengers living in outlying suburbs to travel by 'feeder' bus right to the station and complete the journey to the Brisbane Central Business District by fast rail.

Mr Speaker, nothing could be more appropriate for the metropolitan area of Perth, and in particular nothing could be more appropriate for the area and the people that I represent.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [7.52 p.m.]: Tonight we are debating a most interesting subject, and it is my intention to speak at some length. I would like to answer the points put forward by the speakers so far.

It is most interesting that we have more interest than usual in this debate. It is passing strange that the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway line receives extra emphasis before a State election or before a Commonwealth election.

I was invited to speak at the rally held tonight, and I would like to read to the House the reply I wrote to the person who invited me. I said—

With reference to your letter of 4th October, I wish to inform you that I will not attend your gathering at Parliament House tonight.

In the first instance, the issue is to be debated today in the House, and the Government's view will be adequately expressed there. The galleries will be available to members of the public interested in that view.

In the second instance, your advertising in the press would indicate that you are planning a general political rally, and not a discussion on the specific issue of transport in the Perth-Fremantle corridor.

I referred to my letter to answer whatever queries might have been raised regarding that issue.

Referring to the advertisement, comment was made that people from rural areas intended to support such a proposal, and it will be interesting to hear the reactions of that group at a later time. However, I could not believe that the people from rural areas could support such a proposal as is contained in the motion because they have been pressing for a reduction in the cost of running our public transport system. This is one of the remarks heard frequently when one visits country areas, particularly when there was considerable interest in our urban transport system. It is put to me quite frequently by country people that they believe they are paying for our urban transport system and they object to doing so. I was asked many questions about it.

The Fremantle-Perth railway line was closed on 2 September last year, and the Government gave its reasons for the closure. I might add that great support was given to this move throughout the country.

Mr Barnett: Could you speak up a little bit; it is very difficult to hear you.

Mr E. T. Evans: Especially in the back bench, we cannot hear.

Point of Order

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, just a few nights ago we had to listen to the Minister for Transport speaking for about an hour, and we could hardly hear him. There is provision for any member to come to the Table of the House to speak if he cannot be heard. We are having difficulty hearing him on the front bench, and we are concerned for people further back.

Could you prevail upon the Minister to speak a little more clearly?

The SPEAKER: I am becoming quite concerned at the level of background conversation that takes place in the Chamber. In the last few days there has been an excessive amount, and members will be aware that on two or three occasions I have asked for the background conversation to be lowered. Since the House met today almost consistently a group of people on my right and to the rear of the dais have been conducting conversations at such a level that I have been able to hear virtually every word said.

Mr Tonkin: That is dangerous!

The SPEAKER: From time to time during today's sitting similar types of conversation have taken place on my left. A number of members in the House seem to have been conducting conversations at a normal voice level without any regard for the rights of the person who is on his feet and who is attempting to address the House. I believe firmly that the acoustics of this Chamber are first class, and with the exception of one or two members who, I must admit, are difficult to hear at times, most members of this Chamber have a voice level which is sufficient for them to be heard. However, they cannot be heard with this constant babble.

I believe the Minister for Transport can be heard and will be heard if the members of the Chamber remain silent and allow him to be heard. I believe there is no requirement for the Minister to advance to the table to make his speech. The Minister for Transport.

Debate Resumed

Mr RUSHTON: At the time of the interruption, I was referring to the situation of people in the country who were concerned about rising costs. It has been brought to my notice constantly that they believe they carry a share of the burden of the public transport system. These people made the point at the time of the severance of the Fremantle-Perth service that it was a move in the right direction.

There were a number of reasons for the closure, of course, and I would like to state that the situation relating to the commitment made by the Government has not changed. The commitment was that there would be a three-year trial period, a review, and a further decision would be made at the end of that period.

Mr Barnett: Can you say why you are pulling up sections of the rail?

Mr Sodeman: Be quiet and listen.

Mr RUSHTON: Other decisions have to be made, and these relate to the vexed question of sorting out the regional road system between Fremantle and Karrinyup. I will speak about that at a later stage.

Mr McIver: Did these country people write to you personally on transport, or on the economics specifically of the Fremantle line? Did you receive letters from organisations or from individuals?

Mr E. T. Evans: Will you table the letters?

Mr RUSHTON: I travel extensively in country areas, and it was a comment made by many people.

Mr McIver: Did they come forward after the Government's announcement that the line would close?

Mr RUSHTON: They spoke to me not after they knew the line would be closed but when they learnt there would be a severance of the service. They spoke to me frequently on that matter.

Despite the statements which have been made from time to time that the Government has been unduly harsh, and has acted without appropriate thought for the community, I re-emphasise that the Government has made a commitment to review the results of the three-year trial period. I add that all the Government's transport advisers recommended the altered service. Members opposite did not mention the report of the consultants, which also was in favour of the altered service.

The Tonkin Government actually introduced legislation in this House and in the upper House to close down the rail between Leighton and Barrack Street. I will go into more detail on that later.

Mr McIver: I hope not; not on this motion.

Mr RUSHTON: I think I should.

Mr McIver: It is entirely irrelevant.

Mr RUSHTON: I did not think the honourable member would want to resist a full debate.

Mr McIver: You are misleading the House. It has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr B. T. Burke: Is it your intention that this motion should go to a vote tonight?

Mr McIver: I hope you are going to do better than this.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to come to order!

Mr E. T. Evans: You will blame Whitlam next.

Mr RUSHTON: I might add that the interjections from members opposite have the result of members using up their own time.

Mr B. T. Burke: Is it your intention that this motion will go to a vote tonight?

Mr RUSHTON: I will now answer the member for Avon, who was the lead speaker and the mover of the motion. He made many points, and I will endeavour to answer them. The honourable member suggested that the Fremantle-Perth line was closed in order that the Armadale and Midland services could be upgraded. In general terms, that is correct. When this decision was made that the Fremantle service would be reduced the Government took steps relating to the provision of capital.

Other members have mentioned there has been a saving of capital which otherwise would have been spent on procuring more and more rolling stock. On the recommendation of the consultants and our transport advisers, the Government purchased the line buses. These steps have been taken, and are under control. There is no way anyone can imply that the Government is arrogant or is acting against the wishes of the people. It has accepted the advice of its top advisers to implement a trial period so that an alternative transport system may be evaluated and tested. Surely that is a very practical way around this problem. No overnight decision has been made. We have not decided on the future of the line. Indeed, the actual rail is still being used by freight services; however, the alternative system is being put to the test.

At the same time, a very important issue must be resolved. I refer to the future of the regional transport route in this sector. This is a problem which has been with us for a long time, and to which I will be giving extra attention.

It is true that the closure of the Fremantle service permitted the Midland and Armadale services to be improved. Patronage has increased on those services and the patronage between Fremantle and Perth has held, despite the system being changed from a combination of bus and train, to a bus only service.

We heard the comment earlier in the debate that the bus service does not go exactly where the rail went. Of course, it could not at this time. However, it is a very adequate service and it is evident there is plenty of capacity within the existing system to take many more patrons. After all, it is simply a bus service running on an ordinary road. Members can imagine what the situation would be if the buses were running on a special busway; the buses would eat the available patronage.

This public transport corridor is very well used by local residents. In fact, something like 45 per

cent of people who commute to Perth from this area use the public transport system.

The previous chairman of the trust (Mr Shea) sought to have line buses running parallel to the railway line. However, the unions prevented this by black bans. Further studies revealed that the patronage could be accommodated by other means. It was still Mr Shea's desire to run the line service between Perth and Fremantle along the railway line, by going over the Bailey Bridge at Stirling Street and through the railway yard at Claremont, thus having a very close link with the rail system. However, that was not to be.

The member for Avon referred to the very pertinent matter of the suffering caused to handicapped people by the cessation of this service. I was interested to hear him say he had received some 30 letters from handicapped people. He quoted three of those letters. Just the other day in the *Daily News*—I do not remember the exact date—he was reported when commenting on the march which was to be held today as saying, "Hardly a day passes when I do not receive correspondence about the line." Give or take a few letters, that should amount to about 300 letters. However, today he tells us he has received only 30 such letters.

People should stop exaggerating on this issue and get down to realities; they should be fair. Although I have certainly received correspondence from some people, some of whom put recommendations consistent with the Government's decision while others made recommendations which are not consistent with our decision, I have not received a great number of letters.

When one realises that the Fremantle-Perth line, in route-kilometres, comprises less than 0.5 per cent of the total urban public transport system for metropolitan Perth, it is easy to understand why one does not receive many letters on the subject.

On the same subject, the member for Avon said that some 40 000 handicapped people used the public transport system. Of course, he is referring to the entire transport system, whereas the Fremantle-Perth line represents less than 0.5 per cent of the total kilometre route of the entire system.

Mr McIver: I am sorry; I was distracted. Will you please repeat what you just said?

Mr RUSHTON: I referred to the honourable member's statement in the *Daily News* to the effect that he received correspondence virtually every day about the line. I mentioned that, give or take a few letters, he should have about 300

letters in his file, whereas today he told us he had only 30.

Mr McIver: I have not received only letters; I have also received telephone calls.

Mr RUSHTON: I also pointed out that the Fremantle-Perth line comprises less than 0.5 per cent of the total urban transport system for metropolitan Perth. I referred to the fact that the member for Avon had mentioned some 40 000 handicapped people using the transport system and I pointed out that only a fraction of this number would be affected by the rail closure.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are determined to prevent this motion going to a vote tonight. Why don't you answer my question?

Mr Nanovich: Why don't you let the Minister speak?

Mr B. T. Burke: You are determined to prevent this motion going to a vote. The Government is scared.

Mr O'Connor: Let him have his say; you have had yours.

Mr B. T. Burke: If the Minister answers the questions which have been asked, we will hear him in silence. We will not sit here and listen to his usual nonsense.

Mr Pearce: He is discussing with the member for Avon how many letters he has received.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister is repeating himself.

Mr Sodeman: Yes, because the member for Avon said that he was distracted, and asked the Minister to repeat what he had said.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is a deliberate attempt to talk out this motion, because members opposite are frightened.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr RUSHTON: I realise this subject is quite important to a number of people and it is important that, as the Government representative on this matter, I respond to the claims which have been made in the motion moved in this House today.

I was pointing out to the member for Avon that we must be rational in any claims made about this service and the number of people who are affected by its closure. Perhaps it is true that something like 40 000 handicapped people throughout the metropolitan area rely on the transport system. However, as I pointed out, only a fraction of this number would be affected by the closure of the line. The transport system at Midland and Armadale would also have a responsibility to look

after people, whether they be handicapped or otherwise.

It has been put to me by Westrail and by the MTT that there is minimal use of the public transport system by handicapped people generally. I wish I had the exact figures in relation to rail, because they would be interesting to members.

Mr McIver: If you were handicapped, which service would you prefer to utilise—the bus, or the suburban rail service?

Mr RUSHTON: I will tell the honourable member what we are doing about this matter. I do not believe it is easy for handicapped people to leave their homes and travel by train to wherever they are going, whether it be to a shopping centre, to hospital, or somewhere else. They might be able to enter a station on one side but in the main they would experience great difficulties with overhead bridges and the like. It is not as clear cut as some people would have us believe.

The Minister for Health interjected on the member for Avon when the honourable member was referring to the "spokesman" for the handicapped, a person by the name of Mr Warrington. The Minister for Health indicated that to the best of his knowledge he was not a representative of those organisations. I researched this matter some time ago when this same gentleman began appearing in the local Press as the so-called spokesman of these groups and I was informed he was not officially acting in that capacity, but was self-appointed. No doubt he has the best of intentions, but he is not their official spokesman. Certainly, I do not deny Mr Warrington the right to make known his point of view; I am simply being realistic about this situation.

The member for Avon referred to the King Edward Memorial Hospital and how easy it was to travel there by train, as opposed to bus.

Mr McIver: I did not mention KEMH.

Mr RUSHTON: The member for Avon was making the point that by using the rail service, people were better able to be accommodated.

Mr McIver: I did not; but there are plenty of doctors in Western Australia who have and who would really like to see it reinstated. They would know more about it than I would.

Mr RUSHTON: We come back to the point about the number of people using the service. The number of people using the service was about 4 000 and that figure was reducing year by year. The population in that corridor was reducing year by year.

The other point the member raised and which I undertook to reply to related to the fact that next year is the International Year of Disabled Persons. The Minister for Health is chairman of a committee attending to this question.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hurry up.

Mr RUSHTON: At the very earliest stage the General Manager of the MTT created a committee to look into the needs of the handicapped with respect to public transport. That committee comprises the following people—

Mr A. Robinson, General Manager, MTT (Chairman)

Mr R. J. MacDonald, Planning Superintendent, MTT

Miss J. Major, Council for Assisting Disabled Students, WAIT

Miss J. Stewart, Association of Social Workers

Mr F. Dargan, Committee on Access for the Disabled

Mr R. Maher, President, Australian Association of Social Workers, (WA Branch)

Mr M. Stokes, Marketing Officer, MTT

Mr S. Hicks, Secretary, MTT.

Mr Bryce: We would be quite happy to have you incorporate that in *Hansard* to save time.

Mr RUSHTON: It is important that people know what is being done. There is a technical subcommittee including the following people—

Mr R. J. MacDonald, Planning Superintendent, MTT (Chairman)

Miss J. Stewart, Association of Social Workers

Miss J. Major, Council for Assisting Disabled Students, WAIT

Mr F. Dargan, Committee on Access for the Disabled

Mr M. Stokes, Marketing Officer, MTT

Mr T. Lewis, Assistant Supervisor, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Mr G. Wibrow, Planning Officer, MTT.

Points of Order

Mr B. T. BURKE: Mr Speaker, it is becoming apparent that the Minister is determined not to allow this motion to go to a vote. I ask you to ask him to confine his remarks to the substance of the motion.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are times when I despair in this place. The Minister for Transport, in my view, is exercising his right to reply on behalf of the Government to a motion which has been moved. It is not for me to endeavour to

prevent him from making his speech in any way he wants to make it, provided it is within the confines of the Standing Orders, any more than it is for me to use my position to disadvantage members of the Opposition, who sometimes appear to members of the Government to be taking an unnecessarily long time to make their speeches. Therefore, I believe there is no point of order.

Mr PEARCE: I would have risen earlier, Mr Speaker, but the Minister—

Mr Laurance: He has unlimited time and he will use it all.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Gascoyne used an expression thrown across the Chamber and directed at the member for Balcatta which I consider to be unparliamentary, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr O'Connor: What did he say?

The SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear the remark which was obviously offensive to the member for Gosnells. I simply ask the member for Gascoyne to withdraw the remark, notwithstanding the fact that I am not in a position to rule whether or not it was unparliamentary. I do not want the offence to be compounded by the offensive statement being repeated. If the member for Gascoyne believes the statement he made was innocuous and one that was not unparliamentary I would have to hear it and then make a determination as to whether or not it was unparliamentary.

Mr NANOVIK: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am overwhelmed with the offers of assistance which have been made tonight. However, I have ruled on a point of order and I seek the co-operation of the member for Gascoyne.

Mr LAURANCE: I think the *Hansard* record will show that I distinctly said that the Minister has unlimited time and he intends to use it all. If that is offensive, I withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Whitford have a point of order?

Mr NANOVIK: No. The question has been answered.

Debate Resumed

Mr RUSHTON: I had been indicating that a committee had been established and I thought it pertinent and opportune to indicate to the House what was happening. The committee is dealing with the possibility of providing a viable transport service for physically handicapped people. I

acknowledge that those who are not totally handicapped desire to use the public transport system in any way they can. Obviously, it is a responsibility of those administering transport in this State to see that those people are accommodated in the best way possible.

I earlier described some of the difficulties that relate to the use of rail by the handicapped and I realise there are difficulties for these people when they use buses. I have given some attention to this matter myself.

I attended a seminar overseas on the topic of transport and I learned that a trial with buses equipped with a lift to bring aboard or put to ground wheelchairs and other aids of the disabled has been established. A special paper was presented at the conference by the American representatives who had tried using ordinary buses carrying out their normal public transport operations, but equipped with a lift near the front door to assist people in wheelchairs. The system failed miserably because of the weight of the lift and the varying road slopes. The lifts broke down frequently and became a great impediment. With a broken lift the whole bus had to be taken off the roads.

Mr McIver: The platform is at the same level for all trains. The best gesture the Government could make would be to reintroduce the service.

Mr RUSHTON: The reintroduction of the service would not help the handicapped very much, because those people using the service added up to less than 0.5 per cent of total transport users.

Mr McIver: Even if it is only half a dozen people, it should not matter.

Mr RUSHTON: We have to think of the great majority of people who need assistance. The Chairman of the MTT is considering altering a number of buses which could be used for the special work of helping the handicapped. This is a laudable scheme and one which has been established deliberately as a feature for next year. The assistance we offer needs to be on a continuing basis, and I give credit to the MTT for its action in this regard.

Mr McIver: The handicapped detest buses; they want trains.

Mr RUSHTON: The member is speaking of only a few people. We have to take into account the very big majority who need the service.

The next topic mentioned related to blind people and I mentioned that the linc buses run on train-like timetables. They stop at a bus station and wait for a while and do this at all stops, so

emulating the train services that had been on the route previously. In fact, a few extra stops have been included.

The member for Avon also mentioned discrimination against the handicapped. He would have to accept that no claim such as the one he has made could be substantiated. He would know from remarks I have made that the public transport managers in this State are giving special attention to the transport needs of the severely handicapped. I do not know the details of the arrangements, but they will be known shortly. They may introduce a scheme such as "Dial a bus" for the handicapped.

The member for Avon mentioned that the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line destroyed the lifestyle of the Fremantle people. We have heard from another speaker and from interjectors that there should be a greater density along this route so that there would be more people to carry. This is something the present Premier attempted to introduce when he was Minister for Railways. During the days when Mr Wayne was Commissioner of Railways, the Premier gave great attention to the idea that if we could get densities which we see in other areas along other railway lines, and if people accepted that sort of lifestyle, it would be a natural thing for the line to continue. The lifestyle chosen by people between Perth and Fremantle is one of low density.

Mr McIver: What about in 10 years' time?

Mr RUSHTON: I could give the member more information another time, but I am responding to his remarks. Both he and I know that there is a great deal of ground along this route which cannot be used for residential purposes. It is used for schools, cemeteries, and business purposes. People should reasonably accept that we cannot have a high capacity transport system looking after a low-density population. It cannot happen economically. However, there are steps we will be introducing to accommodate this situation.

Mr Parker: The density of the area has increased.

Mr RUSHTON: During an exchange whilst the member for Avon was making his speech, it was agreed by him that the Tonkin Government had been neglectful in not ordering any new carriages and in not placing greater emphasis on transport matters. I am proud of my record and that, during my two years in charge of these matters, I have been able to give a lot of attention to urban public transport. We have done a lot of planning on this matter and we have placed an order for 10 new railcars, and there will be others coming.

Mr Pearce: Please do not turn your attention to the Armadale area if this is all that has happened after you have given attention to the Fremantle line.

Mr RUSHTON: During the exchange I have mentioned I made reference to the decision taken during the time of the Tonkin Government relating to this railway. I mentioned that legislation had been passed through this House and the other place, but was not proclaimed. I will give members some details of that legislation because it is most interesting to see what I think is the hypocritical approach of the Opposition now in condemning this Government for something which the Tonkin Labor Government attempted to do in 1972. Legislation passed through this House which would have removed the Fremantle-Perth line. The Opposition's attitude is hypocritical. Anyone capable of understanding the situation would have to accept that.

Mr McIver: There is no foundation to your argument. What about talking to the motion?

Mr RUSHTON: This is all pertinent.

Mr McIver: It was not proclaimed. Get on with what we are talking about tonight; get on with the motion.

Mr RUSHTON: On 9 May 1972 the present member for Welshpool introduced a Bill and his second reading speech can be found on page 1360 of *Hansard* for that year. The legislation was assented to on 6 December 1972, but it was not proclaimed. The purpose of the Bill was to construct an underground railway through the city and to construct six miles 32 chains of railway to incorporate a loop to the north of the city. A further purpose was to replace the Fremantle-Perth passenger rail service with a bus service. That was part of that legislation. How could anybody—

Mr McIver: It never eventuated. You are the people who withdrew the service. Now, get on with the motion!

Mr RUSHTON: How could any fair-minded person—

Mr McIver: The Tonkin Government may have introduced it, but it was not proclaimed.

Mr RUSHTON: That Government moved motions but did not do anything more than that.

Mr McIver: Bring Whitlam into it now.

Mr Bryce: Why don't you blame Ben Chifley?

Mr RUSHTON: If we refer to history and the last 100 years—and that is not very far away—it is very pertinent indeed that the people opposite, when in power—and it is no wonder they were out of power quickly—

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr RUSHTON:—moved to replace the Perth to Fremantle rail passenger service with a bus service.

Mr Parker: And withdrew when there was public opposition.

Mr RUSHTON: No they did not. They did that on many occasions with many things. The Tonkin Government was condemned for its inaction. That Government moved to close the railway from a point near Leighton through to Barrack Street, Perth. Members should be aware of that and remember it.

Mr McIver: Why should they remember it; nothing happened?

Mr RUSHTON: It reached that stage because of a recommendation given to the Tonkin Government—

Mr McIver: Get on with it.

Mr RUSHTON: I am going along very nicely, thank you.

The Tonkin Government took action on the advice it was given and the member for Welshpool was the Minister at the time who was made responsible for it. I think he was the Minister for Works at the time, but he was given the task of advancing this issue.

Mr Pearce: That member is not here at present to refute that allegation.

Mr RUSHTON: He can read about it. I have read about this matter and if members do the same they will know that there was a move by the Government of that day to remove the railway line between Leighton and Barrack Street and to replace it with a bus service. The reason was that the Government was acting on advice it received from transport experts. That Government was acting on the advice of its consultants.

This action took place in 1972 and, of course, as time has progressed this Government has had to take up what the Tonkin Government did not do and has had to try to advance the public transport system. This Government has been given great credit for doing so.

Mr Parker: Who has given you great credit?

Mr RUSHTON: The majority of Western Australians have. The Tonkin Government also planned a high capacity rapid rail transport system. With that system the buses were to feed passengers into the major rail interchanges. So, there was a move by the Government of the day for a high capacity transport system.

We have heard the member for Geraldton and other members say that we do not want a high density Perth; we want it to remain as it is.

Points of Order

Mr McIver: I think I have been quite tolerant because the Minister is not speaking to the motion before the House. The matter he is putting forward is clearly irrelevant to the motion before us. The Minister should put his case forward now without procrastinating. He is moving away from the motion before the Parliament.

Mr Pearce: A filibuster.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have listened quite carefully—

Mr Pearce: The only one! I apologise, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Gosnells wishes to interject on me whilst I am on my feet, I will have to take some action.

I have listened to the Minister quite intently and I am aware that there is a feeling amongst members that he has strayed from the question before the House. I believe the Minister is speaking about matters that are directly associated with the motion, and where he does tend to move away from it a little, it is highly relevant to the motion. I would be doing this House a disservice if I made such a narrow ruling. I am sure members of the Opposition would not like me to adopt such a practice on matters before the House, because so many of them stray very far from a motion.

Mr SKIDMORE: I rise on a point of order to question whether the Minister has a right to raise the issue of what the Tonkin Government was going to do with regard to the line between Leighton and Fremantle. Having made his point on the relevance of the remarks and as to what was going to take place, he should then move to the motion before the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! I find some validity in the point that has been made by the member for Swan. I say to the Minister that he ought to bear in mind that he has a responsibility to confine his remarks to the question before the Chair.

Debate Resumed

Mr RUSHTON: I would like to recite to the members of the Opposition who seem to be very touchy indeed, especially when I touch on areas on which they seem to be very vulnerable—

Mr Skidmore: I am not at all touchy.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RUSHTON: I listened to the member for Avon and he spoke about the Armadale line and the Midland line. I am talking about the transport system. The member for Avon spoke very broadly indeed.

Mr McIver: Within the confines of the motion.

Mr RUSHTON: I think the member for Avon should be very grateful that he made his speech before the tea break because there was no-one here to hear him. They would not have been able to understand what he was talking about.

The validity of my remarks is that the Perth to Fremantle railway—which is as I understand it what the motion is all about—

Mr McIver: We do, but I don't think you do.

Mr RUSHTON: The Tonkin Government intended to remove the line between Leighton and Barrack Street, and it is difficult for me to understand why the Opposition has resisted so strongly the points I have made. I have been giving an indication of the sort of transport system which had been suggested. The cost would have been \$110 million on 1972 valuations. The total cost in 1972 for the first stage would have been \$450 million. One can imagine what sort of economic managers the Opposition would have been. It may have had done the same as Mr Whitlam had done.

An interesting fact which emerged from the member for Avon's speech related to the arguments put forward by the Government when it was making its decision. The statement of the member was totally without foundation, and I do not think anyone could state that there has been a Government which has been so thoughtful with regard to the reactions of the people in regard to this issue as this Government has.

We have in this State a railway service which has great historical significance. I am very pleased to be able to say to the member for Avon that the Western Australian chapter of the Railways Museum has applied for and has been granted the running of an historical train on this line. It will run between Fremantle and Guildford as part of next year's celebrations.

That does not indicate to me any opposition by me to a railway. It is an action of promoting the railways.

The statement was made that the Government was disinterested in or was not aware of people's opinions. The Government undertook—and that commitment still stands—that the new service would be for a three-year trial period. The present more frequent service would be given a trial of

viability and be reported upon. We have acted upon the advice of our senior experts and professional advisers in transport. We have received a number of consultants' reports and one in particular was commissioned during the time of the Tonkin Government. That report evaluated the urban rail passenger system and it was found that buses would be preferred on the Fremantle line and that rail should be on the Armadale and Midland lines. We have carried out that recommendation.

The member for Avon mentioned the experiences in other parts of Australia. I took the opportunity to visit other States to gain a first hand view of their systems earlier this year. I did this because I had listened to so many comments about these systems that I decided to go and find out first hand. Of course, in South Australia there is an Australian national railways system. There is no Government Australian system. In South Australia they have new trains but they have had trouble. All States had one thing in common, and that was that they could not succeed when using heavy trains in suburban systems. There was a need for a light rail, and there was a need for buses. It was indicated to me in Sydney and Melbourne that heavy rail was not the best answer to a commuter service.

Mr McIver: Where did you travel in Sydney? Did you go to Gosford or the Blue Mountains?

Mr RUSHTON: No, but I have been there on other occasions. I will tell members about the Sydney system.

Mr Bryce: We are going to go right around the country.

Mr RUSHTON: In recent times there has been a recommendation in Melbourne that eight suburban railway systems be shut down because of lack of patronage. I visited the Mursa underground system in Victoria. The city councils and the Treasury financed this system. It has been recommended that some of the systems in Melbourne should close. Some feed into the underground system.

That leads me to speak about our own system and say that we must not get ourselves into a situation such as the one in Melbourne where the costs are prohibitive and the system is not the most suitable one.

I was most grateful to the people in New South Wales who allowed me to travel on a number of their services to obtain a first hand experience of how they operate and how they feel about their system. As a matter of fact I was in the main signal box when the Queen visited.

I will digress for a moment and say that the Queen's train was held up for a short time in a tunnel and the people in the signal box said that the railways would get the blame. It happened that the Queen was held up for 22 minutes at the airport but when she was delayed for a further two minutes the newspapers that afternoon blamed the railways for the Queen's total delay.

The double decker system in Sydney has now reached total capacity.

Mr McIver: They have increased by 68 per cent.

Mr RUSHTON: Even with the eastern extension out to Bondi Junction which people laud and which has been sold as a great achievement—one finds out more when one is on the ground and they were very helpful over there—the indications were that the total costs have not yet been allocated to that service. So, one has to get the cost in its true perspective. The indications behind the scenes were that such a system would never be built again. There would have to be a light rail system instead. Once again, the finance is not going against the railways, as I understand it. It has gone only so far and the general belief is it will not go the full distance as previously planned.

The viability of that extension was based on estimates of a certain usage, and just before it was to open it was projected there would be certain patronage which was well below the viable volume. They now have exceeded the latest estimates which they now laud as being a great step forward, but it still does not come to what the figures should be to make it a viable operation. I think it is acknowledged locally by those who use it as being successful.

Brisbane is locked into an extremely difficult situation. Back in the days when money came fairly easily Brisbane was committed to putting in an electric system. The Government had to make a judgment at that time, and it was to cost something like \$275 million. The Queensland Government says if it were starting again it would not commit itself to the heavy rail system. They have some very nice railcars. One reason that we had some variation between Elrail and Westrail's estimates was the difference in the cost of the cars, based on Brisbane's railcars. The track in Brisbane has not been upgraded and some of the electric rail trains can do only 40 kilometres an hour for that reason.

I have given a brief background to the Australian system in relation to ours. People here are saying everybody else is getting electric trains, but that is not so. A city like Canberra has not an electric rail system.

Mr B. T. Burke: Wyalkatchem is a bit short on one.

Mr RUSHTON: Canberra has an appreciable population. I will have more to say about that.

Mr B. T. Burke: Not too much more I hope.

Mr RUSHTON: We need to come back to the actual facts relating to other systems. Obviously, in a high density area with a huge population, a rail system is the answer. I did not mention earlier some of the recommendations relating to the legislation brought in by the Tonkin Government. The Opposition at the time opposed the legislation but acknowledged that rail might be needed about 1990 or later.

Mr McIver: What about feeder services into Claremont and Cottesloe? You would not have all the problems with Servetus Street.

Mr RUSHTON: Obviously, I took up that subject when I had to consider the question of transfer stations. The immediate past Chairman of the MTT (Mr Shea) came forward with the recommendation that the transfer station be at Kelmscott on what I thought was a fairly big scale. I resisted and tested Mr Shea as to whether there was another area which could take it. I knew some people would be unkind enough to say I was bringing influence to bear to have it in my own area. So, I held it up and asked for detailed comment.

Mr Parker: What about the estimated cost of the transfer station in Brisbane?

Mr RUSHTON: Queensland has not even got one.

Mr McIver: You said it was not even operative and it has been open since November.

Mr RUSHTON: I was trying to give the member for Avon a comment relating to that situation. I went along with Mr Shea's philosophy after I had checked the detail. He had observed something similar in another part of the world—Toronto I think—and he made the recommendation that we should not do it piecemeal. When we look at the cost of shifting rails and so on, there is nothing grand about the structure which exists now.

Mr Parker: What has Queensland done for \$100 000?

Mr RUSHTON: They have not done it for \$100 000.

Mr Parker: I have just seen the report.

Mr RUSHTON: I have been all over their system. They were talking about having a transfer station in due course, but they have not anything like ours. I am fortunate that I had a look at the

Queensland system and I know the facts. Otherwise, I might be agreeing with the member for Fremantle, who is giving me a false lead.

Coming back to the situation at Claremont, it is about eight or nine kilometres from Perth. If there were to be a transfer station on that line, it would be at Claremont. The transport specialists indicated to me that it would not work, and they gave me reasons. It is a very narrow corridor, with the river on one side and the ocean on the other. It does not have a great catchment area. Beyond Claremont and Cottesloe there is not much to pick up until Fremantle. We would not have people from Nedlands going to Claremont to get the train to Perth. A transfer station of that nature succeeds only when there is an opportunity to attract passengers. One can see the rationalisation. One does not gain time by going from Nedlands to Claremont in order to go to Perth, and people from Floreat Park obviously would not go across to Claremont. So, there would not be a big catchment area.

Mr McIver: Did you go to the Oxley interchange at Brisbane?

Mr RUSHTON: I went out on the electric system. They were going to build an interchange at a later stage at a town the name of which I forget.

Mr McIver: I am not blind. I am looking at it here in this booklet.

Mr RUSHTON: One might see buses—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RUSHTON: I thought I was being very helpful to the member for Avon. He questioned me about the buses at the Kelmscott transfer station.

Midland is another improvement. Last year we doubled the parking at Midland and we will have to enlarge it again. I would have to say that for years insufficient attention had been given to the provision of parking areas along the railway line. I have given special emphasis to that aspect, and we have money allocated for further enlargement.

Mr McIver: You have taken a lot of money laid aside for parking in order to extend platforms.

Mr RUSHTON: We are doing two platforms.

Mr McIver: So you are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Mr RUSHTON: People have been asking for those two stations to be extended. The member for Gosnells has made a big cry about it. It is reasonable that they should get something extra.

Mr McIver: You are seeking kudos for those parking areas but you are taking money away from that to extend platforms.

Mr RUSHTON: When we had a decision later in the Perth-Fremantle service, it allowed us to give greater attention to urban public transport. Until that time the people responsible for urban public transport could not go forward positively. They did not have a firm commitment for the future. Once that decision was made—for which they had been waiting a long time—we could then give special attention to parking along the rail and other facilities. As far as I am concerned, it is working. We are getting extra patronage from this source. As a matter of fact, Kelmscott is getting full again, so it has to receive more attention.

Last year as a special effort I had Westrail organise the contract for the MTT to put a base on the ground so that they would fill up the holes—not to a sealed or sophisticated stage. This was done and it gave us a great deal more capacity. We could do that very cheaply. On very busy days at Midland cars are extending over the hot mix surface and parking back onto the gravel stand. It is working very well indeed, and I think the member for Avon, who has a particular interest in the matter, would acknowledge it is reasonable that we should build the Kelmscott terminal.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr RUSHTON: I am conscious that the night is moving on, and I move—

That I be given leave to continue my speech at a later stage.

Sessional Orders Suspension

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.58 p.m.]: I move—

That so much of the Sessional Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the debate on notice of motion No. 9 to continue after the hour of 9.00 p.m. this day.

I move this motion for very good reason. Firstly, this is a matter of very great importance. I think we could ask how many issues before this Parliament have attracted the public interest which this one has, even to the extent that earlier this evening interested and concerned citizens marched to Parliament House in an effort to convey their apprehension in connection with the closure of this line.

Mr Nanovich: Were all the speeches about the closure of the Fremantle-Perth line?

Several members interjected.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The Minister for Transport was heard in relative silence, and I commend members for their restraint and co-operation. Having had that example set tonight, I will certainly not allow the standards to lapse so that a member on the other side of the House is subjected to a barrage of interjections.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a matter of great seriousness and public concern, and the manner in which the Minister has utilised the very restricted time available to the Opposition on private members' day does him little credit indeed.

It might be a smart shyster prank; but as far as good parliamentary procedure is concerned, it falls far short of the mark. His predisposition to wander and meander is well known, but the deliberateness with which his speech was made this evening gives the Opposition every right to seek an extension of the debate, as I have moved.

This is a serious matter which was presented by the Opposition in a serious manner. The very capable and complete discourse presented by the member for Avon indicates the depth with which he has studied and researched every aspect of the matter, and it indicates the reason for the concern of the Opposition.

The deliberate wasting of time by the Minister was done for one purpose and one purpose only; that is, to avoid the strong probability of seeing the motion moved by the member for Avon carried and—I repeat—the strong probability of the ignominy which rightly will fall on the Government. That ignominy is upon its own head and of its own making.

If the member for Moore is to retain any shred of credibility, he is obliged to support the member for Avon. He has made utterances in public indicating support for the attitude expressed by the member for Avon. So, too, has the member for Subiaco who has come forward of his own volition and expressed the views of his electorate in no uncertain manner. I think members of the National Party are of the same disposition. It would be certainly most unfortunate for the credibility and reputations of those persons if they changed the attitudes they have exhibited in the past, and the Government knows this.

The Government is concerned about it and it fears—and I use the word advisedly—the ignominy which will result from its action. That explains the reason that the Minister tonight has taken the opportunity to filibuster in the way that he has, in a most blatant and shameless manner.

Mr Clarko: He took no more time than the member for Avon.

Mr Sodeman: That is an unfair statement.

Mr H. D. EVANS: There can be no cavilling at the claim that the pressure of Government business requires that this debate cease, because there is no Government business; the notice paper is as tattered and light as anybody in this House can remember it being.

Mr Pearce: There is no Government business on it worth speaking of.

Mr H. D. EVANS: There has been a dredging around the departments to bring up procedural legislation to act as a filler for the very poor legislative programme of the Government—as poor as any on record. So the Government cannot say now that the pressure of Government business precludes the Chamber from continuing with the motion before it.

To recap the position of the Opposition: Firstly a matter of great consequence and significance is before the House. A Minister of the Crown has blatantly taken the opportunity to filibuster in a way that has eroded and wasted the precious and limited time available to private members. Surely there is no great stress on the Government to enable it to claim that Government business must proceed. It is for those reasons I have moved this motion on behalf of the Opposition.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [9.05 p.m.]: I rise to oppose the motion. While I agree that the issue before us is an important one, there are many other important matters that must be dealt with by the House.

Mr H. D. Evans: They are not on the notice paper now.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Minister for Transport spoke for a long time. What he did not say to the House and to the people listening in the gallery was that his own member—the member for Avon—spoke for an equally long time.

Mr H. D. Evans: It is private members' night.

Mr O'CONNOR: I might also point out that the Government did not have an opportunity to reply to the remarks made in connection with the motion moved in respect of fuel last week by the member for Geraldton.

As far as we are concerned, private members' business finishes at nine o'clock. If the Opposition considers this matter to be as serious as members have indicated, then they had the opportunity to deal with it from 2.15 p.m. this afternoon, but they chose not to do that.

Mr Tonkin: We were on another important matter.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Government has other matters to debate also. While members say that the notice paper has not much Government business on it, if we were to deal with the Appropriation Bills tonight the debate would not finish tonight, tomorrow, or the next day.

Mr H. D. Evans: And traditionally it is not expected to be taken that way. You know that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr O'CONNOR: I agree, but members opposite said there is nothing on the notice paper. I can understand members being concerned because they want to get their own business out of the way. However, private members' business finishes at nine o'clock.

I do not propose to agree to the motion.

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [9.07 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Nobody in this place tonight—in the Chamber or in the gallery—would deny that this is a vitally important question. This is proven by the number of submissions that have been put to the Government, the number of public meetings that have been held in so many different parts of the metropolitan area, and the number of signatures to petitions that have been brought to this place, which has been unprecedented. Nobody here can remember when so many thousands of signatures were put together on a petition in respect of any other particular question.

Mr Laurance: Superman and Mickey Mouse!

Mr BRYCE: Nobody can deny the importance of this issue. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has drawn the attention of the Chamber to the state of the notice paper, and he is so completely right. If the Opposition withdrew its private members' business from the notice paper prior to the introduction of the Budget last week, then this Parliament should have been closed and its members sent off packing to their electorates some two or three weeks ago. More or less right from the moment the Parliament was opened, when the Governor gave his reasons for calling together this Parliament, it was apparent to everybody who takes a serious interest in parliamentary matters that the Government had no legislation. Yet eight months of parliamentary recess had elapsed, and the Government opened the Parliament with nothing to say, and nothing to do.

Mr Hassell: What a stunt this is.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister knows that his little contribution to the notice paper—

Mr Hassell: You have not been here tonight; you have been campaigning.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister's addition to the notice paper—

Mr Hassell interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr Hassell: You have not been here. You have been out campaigning.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask members of the House to have respect for the Chair and to have regard for its authority.

Mr BRYCE: If I may through you, Sir, with a great deal of respect for the procedures of parliamentary debate, I would reply to the Minister for Police and Traffic and point out that the whipping that the Liberal Party will get on the hustings on 18 October may well indicate to him that maybe he should have been out campaigning on behalf of Fraser. Not one of the Ministers opposite has been prepared to open his mouth in support of Fraser.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr BRYCE: We can understand that the Ministers want to distance themselves from the Fraser Government to the maximum extent possible. That is probably why the Minister for Police and Traffic has done precisely the opposite to what was suggested and now—

Mr Hassell: We have been doing our jobs, which you have not.

Mr BRYCE: The final of the three reasons that I support the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is the disgrace brought on this Chamber and the Parliament by the performance of the Minister for Transport not simply in respect of the length of time, but in respect of the substance of his speech. Anybody who was listening to what the Minister was saying knows that he said nothing. If there was ever a member of Parliament elected to this place who was capable of talking under cement for an endless period of time and saying nothing, it is the Minister for Transport. We saw him do it a few days ago, and he repeated that performance tonight. I reiterate that our concern is not based simply on the length of his speech, but on the substance of it.

Mr Rushton: I was replying to the member for Avon.

Mr BRYCE: There was absolutely nothing in what he had to say; we were treated to a champagne performance from the chambermaid. When I first came to this place and witnessed, from the Government back benches, the performance of the then member for Dale I recall looking around and noticing practically nobody in the Chamber. I began to wonder why that was so, and it was discreetly explained to me.

Point of Order

Mr SODEMAN: Mr Speaker, when one considers that the Minister in answering the member for Avon virtually spoke for no longer than the member for Avon did, I would like to know—

An Opposition member: What is your point of order?

Mr Pearce: Sit down, you fool.

Mr SODEMAN: —what the substance of the Minister's remarks has to do with the motion before the Chair?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr E. T. Evans: You fool.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I was in the midst of explaining that we were treated to a performance by the chambermaid of the Legislative Assembly. When I asked the significance of that title as a very young and inexperienced back-bencher in this place—

Point of Order

Mr CLARKO: A point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr BRYCE: —it was explained to me that—

The SPEAKER: Order! A point of order is being taken. Would the member for Ascot kindly give way when a point of order is being taken.

Mr CLARKO: It is my opinion that comments about how a person was referred to is in no way related to the motion. I request that you give a ruling on that matter.

The SPEAKER: I had hoped that the member for Ascot would have taken the lead from the fact that I did not act on the point of order taken by the member for Pilbara. I would now ask him to confine his remarks very strictly to the question before the Chair.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: The question before the Chair was moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because we on this side of the House are concerned at the way the Minister treated this debate. I insist upon my right to make my point in my own particular way. When I asked in respect of so many of the Minister's previous performances why he was referred to as the chambermaid, I was told it was because when he speaks he empties the Chamber.

Mr Williams: Sit down!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Point of Order

Mr E. T. Evans: The honourable chambermaid!

Mr RUSHTON: I find the remarks of the member for Ascot totally offensive and totally untrue and I ask him to withdraw them.

The SPEAKER: Order! The term to which the Minister takes offence is, I assume, the reference to his being a chambermaid. That term has been used in this Parliament by way of interjection and in debate ever since I have been here, and I am afraid that although the Minister may find it offensive, I cannot find it unparliamentary and I will not ask for a withdrawal. The Standing Order that permits a member to take a point of order and ask for a withdrawal requires the Speaker to be convinced that the matter is unparliamentary or in some way is unbecoming. If the Speaker considers it is, he can ask for a withdrawal.

I would be making a laughing stock of this place if, on this particular occasion, I were to ask for the withdrawal of words that have been hurled across this Chamber, not consistently, but frequently, in the 10 years since I have been here.

On the other hand, I ask the member for Ascot to make his remarks without provoking reactions from the other side. The member for Ascot.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: I was attempting to establish, because we on this side of the House consider this subject to be of very real importance, that the Minister's performance was a disgrace. We have seen him use this tactic of speaking in a very low tone, making it almost impossible for members to hear him. In respect of the substance of his speech, he wandered so far and wide that he covered practically everything but the question before the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Would the member resume his seat?

The situation is fast approaching the point where the member is reflecting on me as the Speaker because I permitted the Minister to speak in the way he did. I ruled on the points of order that had been taken, that the Minister was taking advantage of the rules to speak in the way he did. Therefore, if the member for Ascot, or any other member, asserts that the Minister did not conduct himself in accordance with the Standing Orders and the practice of this House, against that background it becomes something of a reflection on my handling of the debate.

The Minister confined his remarks to the matter before the Chair. Therefore, I say to the member for Ascot that he is now starting to reflect on my integrity and on my handling of the situation. I ask him to desist from that.

Mr BRYCE: Mr Speaker, it was never my intention to reflect upon your ruling in respect of the debate. Far from it.

I will conclude my support for the deputy leader's proposition by saying that, having listened to the Minister's contributions, there are approximately 300 people in the Gallery and 20 members of the Opposition on the floor who, because of their commitment to the importance of this question, resisted the urge to leave the Chamber.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [9.18 p.m.]: If members want no other reason to support this move to suspend the Sessional Orders, then they should look simply to the defence put up by the Deputy Premier when he spoke. If we think back to the contribution he made, we will remember how he told us of the important Government business that was to be considered—how he told us that there was a time set aside for private members' business, and that if it could not be concluded within the time set aside, the important Government business should take precedence. Let me tell the Chamber how that same man came to me just a few minutes prior to saying those words and said, "How long are you going to talk on the Door to Door (Sales) Amendment Bill? Will you be long? I'm not really keen to know, but there are only four or five matters on the paper, and we will be off home at 10 o'clock." That is what he said to me.

Point of Order

Mr O'CONNOR: Point of order!

Government members: Scandalous!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Williams: Absolutely disgusting!

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr O'CONNOR: On a point of order: I was trying to arrange the time that the House would finish; and I asked the member how long he would be on that particular point. I indicated that we were going to do three or four items of business and go home. I just want to rectify the untruth that the member told.

Mr Barnett: That is what he said.

Government members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order, as the Deputy Premier would be well aware. However, he obviously adopted a technique that is frequently availed of by members in the House. They rise on a point of order, simply to explain their position in the matter.

Debate Resumed

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am quite happy to have the Deputy Premier attempt to explain what he had to say because every explanation he makes results in his becoming more ensnared in his own words. A moment ago, we heard him say there were three or four important items to deal with and then we would knock off. I gave him until 10 o'clock from nine o'clock, which was the normal time for private members' business to finish. However, in his own words just now, we would not even stay until 10 o'clock because, if members refer to the next four items, two of them are second readings, and the other two would take no more than 10 minutes. What the Deputy Premier is now saying is that the important Government business is so important that we would knock off by 9.30!

Mr O'Connor: Wait and see.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Wait and see! We will see how much time he takes. The same Minister who, a moment ago, was on his feet telling us how important the Government business was, and that it should be dealt with after private members' business concluded, was indicating just prior to saying those things to members of the Opposition that we would be going home by 10 o'clock, or many minutes earlier at 9.30. What sort of charade is that? What sort of nonsense are we supposed to accept from this Government? If the Government has important business and it wants to carry on, let that be the case. However, let us not have the deception and the misleading statement that we will be home within an hour or

half an hour provided we wrap up private members' business at nine o'clock.

Of course there is no important Government business to carry on with. I will explain to the House why this Government does not want to carry on with this motion.

Mr Clarko interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Even those people who have five fingers only on each hand, and five toes on each foot, as does the member for Karrinyup, can count; and even those people know that if the three members of the National Party support this Opposition motion, and they are joined by the member for Subiaco—

Point of Order

Mr CLARKO: On a point of order: the question as to how the members of the National Party will vote is not a question relating to the suspension of Sessional Orders. If that is so, will you rule the member out of order?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: On the same point of order—

The SPEAKER: Before dealing with the point of order, there is another matter with which I will deal. On three separate occasions this evening, the member for Gosnells has continued to speak whilst I have been on my feet trying to deal with the debate in the House. On one occasion, the member apologised for having interrupted. I did little more than look at him on the second occasion. On this occasion I want to warn him that if he does it again, I will take the action that I believe I have a responsibility to take in my endeavour to maintain the standards, the dignity, and the decorum of this House.

Mr PEARCE: I apologise.

Mr B. T. BURKE: On the same point of order, I am simply trying to explain the reasons this Government has for trying to prevent this matter from going to a vote tonight, abusing your indulgence—

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want the member for Balcatta to continue his speech, because that may well be what he would launch into, until I have dealt with the matter raised by the member for Balcatta:

Mr Clarko: Karrinyup.

The SPEAKER: I am sorry. I did not intend to embarrass the member for Karrinyup.

Mr B. T. Burke: Thank you Mr Speaker!

The SPEAKER: I apologise to the member for Balcatta. I did not wish to use that word; but it is said that a slip of the tongue is no fault of the mind. I hope he will accept my apology.

It seems to me the member for Balcatta is giving a reason for the Government's not wanting to accede to the motion that has been moved. I do not want him to stray too far from the confines of the motion. I believe it is inappropriate for a motion of this nature to expand into something more than it should be. It is simply a motion to suspend the Sessional Orders for the purpose of allowing the debate to continue after nine o'clock. The member for Balcatta.

Debate Resumed

Mr B. T. BURKE: Mr Speaker, that is the first apology I have ever received from a Speaker. The only good thing about the member for Karrinyup is that his electorate borders mine.

Let me continue to develop my argument. Quite simply it is that tonight the eyes of the whole Chamber are upon the member for Moore. Now, we all know—and let us not pull any punches—the member for Moore is on record as having said publicly that the Fremantle-Perth railway line should have been continued, and should not have ceased operations. Tonight talk has been abroad in the corridors in this place that the member for Moore who, in the past, has been noted for his principles on certain matters, intends to support the motion that seeks the reintroduction of that service. That is exactly why the Government does not want this motion brought to a vote, in case the member for Moore maintains the principles that he has previously stated publicly.

If the member for Moore votes in that way, it is not even beyond the member for Karrinyup to be able to count the heads and know that the Opposition will have a majority. That is why the Government is desperate in its effort to prevent the member for Moore, should he believe strongly enough in the things that he has said, from voting to support what he said. It is up to the member for Moore, along with those other members who are not bound to support the Opposition's motion to continue this debate, to decide whether they will support the continuance. If the member for Moore and the other members who have said publicly that they want this service to continue and to be reinstated vote against the continuation of this debate tonight, they are just as surely voting against the reintroduction of that service.

That is the reason this Government is headlong in its flight to avoid a vote. With the Opposition

members, and the National Party's members, and the member for Subiaco, and the member for Moore—if, as we are led to believe, he intends to support those principles he has espoused previously and to support this matter tonight—this motion will be passed. If the motion is passed, the Government will be in a very desperate position in respect of the Fremantle-Perth rail service.

Let us make sure that everybody knows that what is at issue here tonight is whether the member for Moore is going to adhere to the principles that he has outlined previously, or whether we will see this Government's attempt to cut across these principles by refusing to allow the debate to continue, whether by expiration of time, or by the malingering in a most shocking manner by the Minister for Transport.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [9.27 p.m.]: Traditionally Wednesday has been private members' day in this place. The only time it has not been, of course, is when we are dealing with the Address-in-Reply.

At the commencement of this session, it was mooted that there should be a change in the sessional hours or the hours of sitting. At that time, it was moved that private members' day, immediately after the end of the Address-in-Reply, should commence on Wednesday and run through until 9.00 p.m. When we had the standard hours, private members' business was allowed to continue until it was determined by the Leader of the Opposition that sufficient business had been covered.

With the new sitting hours, we have a change in the situation. I think most members of the House were prepared to accept the changes in order to see that the sitting hours became a little more reasonable. Now we have the situation where the change to the sitting hours has precluded a great amount of private members' business. Tonight is a classic example. The Government finds itself under a degree of pressure because the Parliament was to express an opinion which would be contrary to the policies of the Government. The Government elected to ensure that the motion would not be voted on tonight.

I am sure the Government must recognise that it is no disgrace to it if this House expresses an opinion which differs from the Government's policy. I cannot for the life of me understand why the Government is not prepared to allow this debate to continue and the motion which is before the House now to be supported in order that the motion concerning the Fremantle-Perth railway

line may be debated, dealt with completely, and removed from the notice paper.

I have heard already two members on this side of the House state they would like to see this matter dealt with tonight. I ask the member for Darling Range who made such a statement to support the comments he made, that he would like to see this matter dealt with tonight and removed from the notice paper.

However, it is quite certain the member for Darling Range, despite his private wishes, will not upset a Government decree. That is the worst thing that can possibly happen to private members' day, because once again, we see the people in this place, as a result of their ineptitude, placing another nail in the coffin of private members' day. We believe strongly that, in this Parliament, members should have an opportunity to express their opinions as opposed to the opinion or policy the Government determines they should express.

We intend to support the motion.

MR McIVER (Avon) [9.32 p.m.]: I rise also to support the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I do so, because during the deliberations on several occasions Government members have accused me of speaking for too long on the motion I moved. Once again, for the benefit of the Parliament, let us look at the motion I moved. It reads as follows—

That in the opinion of this House, the Perth-Fremantle rail service should be reinstated by 31st December 1980. The reinstatement of the service is justified on the following grounds:—

1. public opinion strongly supports the reopening;
2. the inconvenience suffered by the general public as a result of the closure, especially aged persons, mothers with young families and handicapped people.

THE SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the member for Avon to the fact that the question before the Chair is a motion to allow the debate to continue past nine o'clock. I see very little relevance in what the member is saying to the question before the Chair.

Mr McIVER: I take your point, Sir.

I wish to point out, however, that the remarks made by the member for Ascot and the member for Balcatta are absolutely correct.

Mr Sodeman: Incorrect! Wrong!

Mr McIVER: The Government is attempting deliberately to procrastinate on this matter which

is extremely important and concerns the closure of the Fremantle-Perth railway line.

Mr Sodeman: Stop grandstanding!

Mr McIVER: Without being egotistical, I say the motion I moved was one of the most important motions brought before the House by a private member this session. The matter will affect a large number of people.

When I moved my motion I referred to the large number of people whose lifestyles would be affected. Nowhere in the Minister's reply did he refer to that. Not once did the Minister—

The SPEAKER: Order! When I asked the member to confine his remarks to the matter before the Chair, he commenced to do so in a very commendable style; but he is now veering away from the question before the Chair.

Mr McIVER: I shall make my remarks frank and short. It is obvious what is happening here tonight. The Government is concerned that the motion I have moved will be passed and as a result it is panic-stricken. The Government knows that, if the motion I have moved is put to the vote tonight, it will be passed. That is why it is doing everything in its power to prevent my motion being debated tonight.

I commend the member for Merredin for his stand and the manner in which he addressed himself to the Chamber. I certainly support the remarks made by previous speakers from this side of the House and I trust the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will be carried.

Mr Skidmore: Mr Speaker—

Mr Crane: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Moore.

Mr Skidmore: Oh, fair go!

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moore will resume his seat. In response to the exclamations from the member for Swan, I want to say—

Mr Skidmore: You can hardly blame me. Fair go!

The SPEAKER: Order! There is absolutely no requirement for the Speaker to reward athletic ability in a member. The responsibility of a Speaker is to endeavour, as far as practicable, to present a balanced debate to the House. A member of the Opposition has just spoken and I see it as my responsibility that, if a member on the Government side wants to speak, I should give him the opportunity. That is the principle on which Speakers and, indeed, any chairman of any meeting, ought to function.

MR CRANE (Moore) [9.38 p.m.]: I rise on this occasion to speak on the motion before the Chair in response to some remarks made which concern me. I remind members I am perfectly capable at all times of speaking for myself. I shall choose my battle ground and I will speak on the subjects I wish to speak on when I wish to speak on them. I want to make it clear that I support the Government on this occasion.

Several members interjected.

Mr CRANE: It is well known that I intended to speak on the motion moved by the member for Avon and I remind members that one does not hit people over the head with a piece of 4 x 2 when one is seeking their support.

The motion before the Chair now is one on which I will not spend much time, but I should like to make my position very clear. I understood I would speak on the motion moved by the member for Avon after the Minister had replied. I was prepared to do so and I have copious notes here, if anyone is in doubt about that.

However, the situation now is that the Government does not support the motion before the Chair. I understand it is a procedural motion. I once made the mistake in this House of failing to support the Government on a procedural motion. I had not been a member of Parliament for very long on that occasion and I was not really aware of the procedures of the House. I was only learning. I understand now that this is a procedural motion and, therefore, as a member of the Government, it is my intention to support it. However, that does not mean I will not speak—

Mr Tonkin: You have been conned again, haven't you?

Mr CRANE: I did not interrupt when other members were speaking. I remind the member for Morley and other members of the House that on almost all occasions I afford the member on his feet the courtesy of speaking without interruption. Tonight I expect members will afford me the same courtesy.

Mr Barnett: Are you going to support this motion?

Mr CRANE: I shall speak on the motion moved by the member for Avon when debate on it is resumed. There is no doubt about that. However, I make it very clear that when I support the Government on the motion before the Chair, it does not necessarily indicate the way in which I shall speak on the motion referred to previously. I want to make that clear to all members in this Chamber. I remind members once again that one does not hit people over the head with a piece of 4 x 2 when one is looking for their support.

I intend to support the Government on this procedural motion and I remind the member for Balcatta that it is not customary in this place—sometimes I take the Chair and draw members' attention to this—to interject when one is not sitting in one's own seat.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 21	
Mr Barnett	Mr McIver
Mr Bertram	Mr McPharlin
Mr Bridge	Mr Parker
Mr Bryce	Mr Pearce
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Stephens
Mr Cowan	Mr Taylor
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Harman	Mr Bateman
Mr Hodge	
(Teller)	
Noes 23	
Mr Clarks	Mr O'Connor
Mr Crane	Mr Old
Dr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Sibson
Mr Grewar	Mr Sodeman
Mr Hassell	Mr Spriggs
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Trethowan
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Watt
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Williams
Mr Mensaros	Mr Blaikie
Mr Nanovich	
(Teller)	
Pairs	
Ayes	
Mr Jamieson	Mr Shalders
Mr Grill	Mr Coyne
Mr T. H. Jones	Sir Charles Court
Mr Davies	Mrs Craig
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Young
Noes	

Motion thus negatived.

Debate (on leave to continue speech) Resumed

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that, at the time I gave the call to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in fact what I was about to do was to ask the leave of the House, at the request of the Minister for Transport, for the Minister to continue his remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

HIRE-PURCHASE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [9.45 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Major amendments to the Hire-Purchase Act were last made in 1974. During the intervening

period it has become obvious that there are some shortcomings in the Act.

There are moves throughout the States to introduce uniform credit legislation. However, it is not expected that that legislation will be introduced into Western Australia for some time to come.

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs has power under the Act to grant relief to hirers in cases of sickness or unemployment. All applications for relief must be dealt with personally by the commissioner.

As more and more hirers have become aware of the relief provisions, requests have shown a significant increase. Applications must, of necessity, be dealt with expeditiously.

It is considered that in order to meet the increased demands authority to deal with applications be extended to include the deputy commissioner.

This will not only overcome the volume problem, but also will cover cases where the commissioner is not immediately available.

At the same time consideration has been given to the charging of an extension fee where relief is granted. It is considered equitable that where a hirer is granted relief by the commissioner, he should be in no better position than the person who makes his own arrangement with the finance company.

Therefore, where relief is granted it is proposed that the commissioner may, if so requested by the credit provider, allow an extension fee to be charged. Any fee so charged will be limited to the additional amount payable had the period of the hire-purchase agreement been taken over the total period.

In October 1978 the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs instigated action against a major hire-purchase company for quoting incorrect payout figures. The hire-purchase licensing tribunal found that there is no strict obligation under the Act for the credit provider to quote a correct payout figure at the time of request by the hirer.

For this reason the Act is to be amended to provide that correct payout figures at the time of request by the hirer must be given and to impose a substantial penalty for failure to observe this requirement.

Provisions within the Act stipulate that hirers are required to submit written requests for a payout figure and to give written notice to the credit provider that he intends to complete the agreement early by paying the outstanding

balance. In practice, the requirement for written request and notice is not strictly observed by either hirers or finance companies. It is, therefore, proposed that requests or notices may be either written or verbal.

At the same time the opportunity has been taken to update the text of the Act in section 7, which is considered to be defective in that it may require the owner to supply information that is not within his knowledge. By limiting the requirement for the statement to items wholly within the knowledge of the owner and thereby disclosing to the hirer the true position as seen by the owner, the hirer will receive more accurate information.

The Stamp Act 1921 was amended to provide that stamp duty on hire-purchase agreements could now be passed on to the hirer under the agreement. A consequential amendment is now required to the Hire-Purchase Act to allow the inclusion of the stamp duty charge in the agreement.

The penalty for making false statements is to be increased to match the recently amended penalty for misleading statements under the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act.

Difficulties are experienced by credit providers in attempting to serve notices under the Act upon hirers who cannot be located or are deliberately avoiding service. The existing provisions in the Act do not adequately cover these situations. It is proposed, therefore, to provide for substituted or deemed service.

The opportunity has been taken also to make minor amendments as a result of amendments to other legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr B. T. Burke.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS SUBSIDY BILL

Second Reading

MR P. V. JONES (Narrogin—Minister for Fuel and Energy) (9.50 p.m.): I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members will no doubt have realised that following the enactment of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Grants) Act 1980 by the Commonwealth Parliament, complementary State legislation would be required to make the scheme constitutionally valid.

The Bill now before the House provides this complementary legislation by which a Commonwealth subsidy of \$80 per tonne may be made to registered distributors of eligible gas used in residential premises during the next three years. I will refer to the terms "eligible gas" and "residential premises" in greater detail later.

The subsidy scheme is primarily a Commonwealth matter being administered by the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs. The Commonwealth has made funds available to State Treasury to handle the payments, on its behalf, to registered distributors in Western Australia following authorisation by an authorised officer.

The Treasury's role, therefore, will be straightforward and there will be no financial impact on the State.

I shall now draw the attention of members to the main features of the Bill.

Upon enactment, the Bill will be retrospective to 28 March 1980. This date of commencement has been used to coincide with that of the Commonwealth Act and ensures that benefits of that Act are recoverable by registered gas distributors in Western Australia.

I now return to the term "eligible gas" and its use. It will be appreciated that the identification of the gas and the use to which that gas is put, in order to be eligible for the subsidy, must be clearly stated and common to all parts of the legislation. The terms used in the Commonwealth Act have therefore been carefully and clearly restated in the Bill so that "eligible gas" means—

- (a) liquefied petroleum gas; or
- (b) eligible reticulation gas;

which, in turn, means gas supplied to premises by means of pipes, being gas the production of which involves the use of liquefied petroleum gas or naphtha.

The eligible use for such gas, in broad terms, is limited to its use in residential premises in providing food and drink, heating, air-conditioning, hot water, or other domestic requirements for residents of the premises. It also extends to the use of the gas in non-profit-making hospital and school establishments.

The Minister will have power to authorise an advance on account of a payment of subsidy under the Act to a registered distributor on such terms as the Minister thinks fit.

Authorised officers will be appointed by the Minister to control the operation of the scheme, and these officers will examine each claim for

payment and, if satisfied, issue a certificate as to the amount payable.

Once a certificate has been given by an authorised officer, the Minister then authorises payment to be made to the person to whom the certificate has been given. The State may recover the amount of an overpayment which has been made, including an advance.

There are provisions for an authorised officer to require a registered distributor to give security that he will comply with the provisions of the Act, and for the preservation of accounts, books, and other records relating to the sale of liquefied petroleum gas by persons receiving payments under the Act.

An authorised officer will have power at all reasonable times to enter the premises of a registered distributor to inspect books and accounting records, and to require such person to answer questions on oath and to produce documents.

Offences and the related penalties are specified and the offences include—

- (1) Refusing or failing, without reasonable excuse, to attend and answer questions or produce documents, etc.
- (2) To obtain or attempt to obtain a payment, either knowingly or by a false or misleading statement or document, when such payment is not payable.

However, proceedings may not be commenced more than one year after the commission of the offence.

Finally, I should advise members that the Bill has been prepared on the basis of a model State Bill provided by the Commonwealth Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs. On this basis a suitable degree of uniformity exists not only between this Bill and the Commonwealth Act, but also similar complementary legislation being prepared or enacted in other States and Territories.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Pearce.

MARINE NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 30 September.

MR McIVER (Avon) [9.55 p.m.]: At the outset I state the Opposition lends its support to this amending Bill which provides authority for the Harbour and Light Department and port authorities to make arrangements with private

companies such as Dampier and Hamersley Iron to take over control of navigational aids. It will also give the department power to add beacons and radar reflectors which will be of advantage to navigation. The Bill will also allow the department or port authority to add to, alter, or remove navigational aids and assume responsibility for their maintenance.

I have a brief criticism. I firmly believe that the port authorities should have had control of these navigational aids from the start. The companies should never have been allowed to control them.

Section 4 of the Act provides that port authorities are protected against liability, or any claim. It is very important that we keep a close watch on our navigational aids, particularly in the north of this State.

The Bill is of little consequence, and it has the support of the Opposition.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [9.57 p.m.]: I thank the member for Avon for his comments. He mentioned the initial provision of these facilities which cost a considerable sum of money to have installed. They will now come under the supervision of the Harbour and Light Department, and the present Bill will provide indemnity against claims. I thank the Opposition for its support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILLS (4): ASSENT

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

1. Stock (Brands and Movement) Amendment Bill.
2. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Amendment Bill.
3. Slaughter of Calves Restriction Act Repeal Bill.
4. Stallions Act Repeal Bill.

BILLS (8): RETURNED

1. Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Amendment Bill.
2. Public Service Amendment Bill.
3. Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited Agreements (Variation) Bill.

4. Railways Discontinuance Bill.
5. Main Roads Amendment Bill.
6. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Amendment Bill.
7. Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Schemes Amendment Bill.
8. Cancer Council of Western Australia Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

DOOR TO DOOR (SALES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 30 September.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [10.03 p.m.]: The Opposition does not intend to oppose this amending Bill to the Door to Door (Sales) Act. In general terms we agree with the major thrust of the amendments. However, there are one or two questions we would like answered by the Minister for Labour and Industry when he replies to the second reading debate.

It has been raised with the Opposition—and it seems a sensible proposition in some ways—that increased flexibility could be built into the hours at which door to door salesmen may call on householders. For instance, it may be practicable to allow calls to be made a little later in the summer time than in the winter time. Instead of having a blanket 6.00 p.m. finish during week days and Saturdays, perhaps some allowance could be made for a slightly later finishing time during summer. The Opposition does not intend to take issue with the Government on this matter, but it would like some explanation as to why the Government decided on the hours incorporated in the legislation.

The other matter I would like to draw to the attention of the Government is that probably a good case could be made out for a complete reconsideration of the Act. It may be possible to legislate to register door to door salesmen so that we could have some increased control over the activities of those door to door salesmen who might best be described as unscrupulous. Whether it is justified or not, I do not think any member in this place would take exception to the general contention that people view door to door salesmen with some degree of scepticism. It is often thought by some members of the public that door to door salesmen generally are fly-by-nighters who take advantage of unsuspecting householders and who

drive very hard bargains when they stand on doorsteps trying to sell goods.

At the same time it is probably true that in many instances that sort of reputation is undeserved. However, the reputation will perhaps persist when the Government—or any Government—makes no effort to ensure there is a proper system of licensing to standardise the sort of requirement imposed on people wanting to become door to door salesmen. Such licensing could provide a sort of sanction against the actions of those who will not perform as required by common sense and decency in their dealings with the public.

If the Government would like to overhaul the Act itself to provide those sorts of safeguards, then the Opposition would be much happier with the performance of the Government in respect of this Act. As it is, however, the Opposition sees no problem with the changes proposed by the Government and is happy to support the measure.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Consumer Affairs) [10.06 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its general support of the legislation, and I will endeavour, as far as I can, to answer the questions raised by the member for Balcatta.

In considering alterations to the legislation, initially the request for restricted hours was brought to us mainly by elderly ladies who live on their own. Many of these ladies were concerned about people knocking on their doors after dark. We gave consideration to extending the time limit to 7.00 p.m. or varying the hours, but after discussions with the department and with other people it was felt that probably 6.00 p.m. was the most appropriate time. If we find that is unreasonable, we will be prepared to look at it again at a later stage. Most people have their dinner around 6.00 p.m., and they do not like interruptions at that time. The legislation does not preclude a salesman from making an appointment to see a householder at any time. All it does is to preclude salesmen from knocking on doors at times not considered desirable. I take the point made by the honourable member, but I point out that 6.00 p.m. was deemed to be the time most suitable.

In respect of the licensing of door to door salesmen, I must say we had no request for this and we gave no consideration to it. As the honourable member would know, there are thousands of door to door salesmen and saleswomen around the State. Many of these saleswomen are housewives who go out for an hour or two in an endeavour to obtain some extra

money for the household generally. Many Avon ladies work for a few hours only a week, and I have received no complaints about such people. To license such salesmen and saleswoman would be a fairly unwieldy operation; it would give another Government organisation additional work. Certainly it would be a hazard to people operating in this way, most of whom do not require it. If anyone acts in a manner which could harm or harass other people, the Police Act or other legislation would cover the situation.

If this is not the case, I would consider introducing other legislation to cover it. I believe I have answered the question raised; I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 October.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.11 p.m.]: This Bill is procedural in that it seeks to repeal an Act which has become redundant.

In 1930, the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was passed. The legislation was designed purely to allow farmers an extension of time with regard to the payment of their debts so that foreclosure could not be so readily undertaken. It was largely a protective measure. It must be remembered that the legislation was enacted at the onset of the great Depression. During that period, the diet in many parts of the wheatbelt comprised boiled wheat and rabbits; things were very difficult and onerous.

The position deteriorated to the extent that, following the conference between the States and the Commonwealth Government in 1934, some \$12 million was made available to afford relief to the Depression-affected farmers throughout Australia. The legislation which provided the administrative mechanism for this was the Rural Relief Fund Act. It administered the Commonwealth funds made available to this State.

That situation pertained until 1972 when, following the disastrous drought of 1968-69, when

many thousands of farmers in this State fell into very difficult times, a further conference was held at which funds were made available by the Commonwealth for the purpose of reconstruction of the farming situation.

It was at that stage that the Tonkin Government came into office and established the Rural Adjustment Authority, which became the vehicle for the disbursement of the Commonwealth funds for reconstruction purposes.

That briefly is the manner in which the legislation for the mechanism of assistance to farmers came about in this State.

The way in which the Rural Adjustment Scheme has operated has been a worthy exercise, and it has been demonstrated it was far more preferable to have a separate authority for the purpose, than depend on the special agencies of the Rural and Industries Bank, as the Government prior to the Tonkin Government was wont to do.

The situation at present is that the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has lapsed, and the Rural Relief Fund Act remains, despite the fact that it has been superseded by the 1972 legislation. Therefore, it is desirable to remove this legislation from the Statute book.

I have discussed the matter with the Rural Adjustment Authority whose officers informed me it has had no dealings with this particular Act, since it does not concern the authority which has taken over the sole role of dispersing reconstruction funds in Western Australia. It does not really worry the authority one way or the other whether the legislation is repealed; it just does not appear in the picture at all.

So, in the interests of good housekeeping and tidiness, this legislation should be passed, which will allow the Rural Relief Fund Act quietly to slip into obscurity. It has served its purpose and has been superseded. It is for that reason the Opposition has no objection to the passage of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Second Reading: Budget Debate

Debate resumed from 7 October.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [10.17 p.m.]: It does not give me any pleasure to address the House at this time. Of course, the fact that the House is still sitting is due to a fit of pique on the part of the Deputy Premier, who decided that we should remain here a little longer this evening because he was whipped earlier tonight. Quite frankly, it does not worry me whether I am speaking at 2.00 a.m. or 3.00 a.m. Members are going to get three quarters of an hour from me, and they can either remain in their places, or if they do not like what I am saying, they can leave the Chamber. If the Deputy Premier really wants to be savage he should continue his stupid, childish behaviour, and he will get his just deserts.

I wish to discuss the pious attitude of the Government when it comes to the matter of unemployment and inflation in Western Australia, and to quote from statistics produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, an agency of the Fraser Liberal-Country Party coalition Government which indicates that the belief perpetrated by the Government of Western Australia as to the decreasing unemployment situation is a myth.

The statistics to which I refer relate to the period 1977 to the quarter ended March 1980. They are the latest complete statistics available to me. Members should not conjecture as to whether these figures are right or wrong; they are readily available to the public and are contained in the June 1980 *Monthly Summary of Statistics* for Australia. I wish to refer to the group index numbers relating to consumer groups under the headings of food, clothing, housing, household equipment and operation, transportation, tobacco and alcohol, health and personal care.

I will start with the base year of 1977. Under the heading "food" the base unit was 201.2; and in the March quarter of 1980 it was 288.9. That is an increase of 77 points, equating to an increase in food costs in that period of two years of 38 per cent. When I look at clothing, I find that the increase has been 63 units, equating to 27 per cent. When I look at housing, I find that there has been a unit increase of 45 points from 1977 to the March quarter of 1980, and that equates to 18 per cent. In regard to household equipment and operation, there has been a movement of 51 points, equal to a 26 per cent increase in costs. In transportation, the unit factor has moved 75

points; and the actual percentage increase for transportation throughout Australia is 33.7.

In relation to health and personal care, one hears so much about the Government that is supposed to care about the well-being and the health of its people, and how it is going to provide such a wonderful health scheme. One would expect the cost of that scheme to be within the reach of the normal ability of people to pay. The percentage increase in the cost of health and personal care for people in Australia is ridiculous. In the base year of 1976-77 it was 265.8 units. It increased by 175 points to 340.6. That is a staggering increase in the cost of health care for people in this State and throughout Australia of 65.8 per cent.

We are told consistently that the wages of the workers in this country are being increased beyond what is reasonable in relation to the cost of living. The Consumer Price Index has shown tonight that the lowest increase is 18 per cent, and that is for housing. The highest is 65.8 per cent for health and personal care, with an average of 38 per cent for food.

Later I will demonstrate how much wages have increased percentage-wise, to give the lie to the claim that the workers in this State are receiving more than their fair share of the cake. Let us look at the figures which cover the price index of materials used in manufacturing industry. I shall give the unit increase and the percentage figure as well. I will give the particular material as a manufactured material, either imported or manufactured in Australia.

Let us consider chemicals. The unit increase was 71 over a period of two years; a 44.2 per cent increase. In relation to metal manufacturers' components for transport equipment and machinery, the increase of 89 units is 42 per cent. For other manufactured materials, the unit increase of 70 equates to 42.5 per cent. In relation to food, live animals, and tobacco, which are grouped—I would never have thought of a more inequitable group of factors, but I accept the Bureau of Statistics has a reason for it—they started in 1977 at a base unit of 154.9; and in February 1980 they had moved to 296.4. That means a unit increase of 142, and an actual increase in the cost to people of food, live animals, and tobacco of 91.6 per cent in 2½ years. So much for the claim that costs have been contained by the Fraser Government! So much for the claim by the Court Government that it is controlling inflation and is getting on top of the cost of living.

However, worse is yet to come. Let us have a look at the very important matters which are the

concern of the Minister for Fuel and Energy—electricity, gas, and fuel. One would imagine that these are the commodities which everybody in the community has to have. How much have they increased on an average throughout Australia? The unit base in 1977 was 254.8. It increased in 2½ years to 605.4—an increase of 351 units in charges to every Australian, on an average of 137.7 per cent. So much for the claims by the Court Government that we are in a State of great affluence and that we have nothing to worry about!

The Government says the workers have no right to ask for increased wages. When we look at the 137 per cent increase in 2½ years for electricity, gas, and fuel—

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr SKIDMORE: If you would shut up, stupid, I will get on with my speech and you and I will get along all right. As a salesman, you know how to dupe the people. I do not have to dupe anybody tonight. If you sit back, I will give you a lesson. I am not interested in your comments. I never have been, and I will not be.

I want to return to the price index for materials used in house building. These figures are for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth. In making the comparisons of the Australian States over all, one would expect that this great State of Western Australia, under the guidance of this Government, would show some reflection of being one of the better States to live in—the State that New Zealanders, people from New South Wales, Victorians, and Queenslanders are all flocking to to obtain a job. If they had any brains, they would stay where they were. Those people are finding, after they arrive here, that the great utopia, the great State of Western Australia, is not going to give them what they thought they would receive when they left New South Wales or Victoria.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr SKIDMORE: Would the member for Bunbury be quiet? I did not interject on him. I ask him to be quiet.

Mr Sibson: A total of 28 000 new jobs have been established in WA in the past 12 months—the highest rate in Australia.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am glad the member raised that. That is the greatest lie that has been perpetrated on the people of Western Australia. I will prove that in a moment by figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mr O'Connor: That is correct.

Mr SKIDMORE: It is not correct. Let us look at the facts. It is easy to use statistics to suit one's own ends. The Government can say that it created so many jobs in so much time; but it ignores the fact that there are 12 000 or 13 000 people out of work.

Mr Sibson: The best job improvement in Australia.

Point of Order

Mr SKIDMORE: On a point of order—

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr SKIDMORE: I can raise a point of order while I am on my feet, can I not?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): I need to hear your point of order first.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am finding the interjections by the member for Bunbury are more than I care to take. I sat here tonight in reasonable silence and listened to the debate. I was rewarded rather unkindly by the Speaker at the tail end of it. I do not bear him any ill-will for that. That is his business.

My point of order is that I would like a little bit of decorum from the member for Bunbury who is continually interjecting. I would like him to cease.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): I can appreciate the member for Swan's concern, because there is nothing worse than trying to make a speech which is frequently interrupted by interjections when the member endeavouring to make the speech has chosen to ignore the interjections. However, the interjections have been delivered mostly one at a time and even though our Standing Orders indicate that all interjections are disorderly, they have become part of debates in this House. In the circumstances it is not unreasonable for members to interject. However, when a member endeavouring to make a speech makes it abundantly clear, as has the member for Swan, that he intends to ignore interjections, I believe it is incumbent on those members interjecting to cease.

Mr Sibson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bunbury ought to know that when the Acting Speaker has been on his feet and given a ruling, interjections should not be made before the member who has the call has at least had the opportunity to resume his speech. I ask the member for Bunbury to desist.

Mr Sibson: I apologise.

Mr H. D. Evans: Throw him out, anyway.

Debate Resumed

Mr SKIDMORE: The reason I asked for a little courtesy is that I am dealing with statistics and I find *Hansard* has difficulty in getting them in the proper sequence. I was having to shout to get my point over to *Hansard* so that my statements would not be misconstrued when they are printed.

It has been said that one can have lies, damned lies, and statistics—in that order. I do not want to be in the position where people can say my statistics are wrong because they have been wrongly reported.

The report of the Price Index of materials used in house building indicates that in Sydney the unit increase for the period from 1977 to March 1980 was 86 points, an increase of 36 per cent. I indicate that these figures are in all group index numbers over six capital cities and show statistics which give a State-by-State breakdown of the materials used.

In Melbourne, the unit increase was 72 points, an increase in costs of 32 per cent. In Brisbane there was an 85-unit increase, a percentage increase of 34. In Adelaide, the unit increase was 99 points making a cost increase of 39 per cent. In Perth we find it commenced in 1977 on a base unit of 229.8 which increased by 80 units to 309.7, an increase in costs of 34 per cent. The unit increase in Hobart was 76 points, a cost increase of 32 per cent.

I pause to reflect upon those percentages. Time and time again I have been told by members of the Government that the workers in this State have received an amount of money far in excess of what they are entitled to receive to cover their living expenses; the increased cost of consumer goods. The figure has been equated to 17 per cent in most times, and the figure is fairly accurate.

Quorum

Mr Skidmore called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Debate Resumed

Mr SKIDMORE: That shows the response to my inspired words. With respect to the percentages I have quoted, I point out that the Government has consistently said it has achieved its target in controlling inflation and unemployment. I am dealing with the question of inflationary pressures.

When I look at the percentages I see that Hobart has the lowest percentage increase of 32

per cent; Perth has 34 per cent, as does Brisbane; Melbourne has 32 per cent; Adelaide has 39 per cent; and Sydney has 36 per cent. So Perth is in the middle range of the cost structure. I emphasise that the figure for Perth exceeds 34 per cent.

I refer now to wages and prices and the average weekly earnings per employed male. From 1977 to the December quarter of 1980—and I think that should be the March quarter—New South Wales had an increase of \$60 in wages, amounting to a 31 per cent increase; Victoria had an increase of \$60, another increase of 31 per cent; Queensland had an increase of \$54, an increase of 29 per cent; South Australia had an increase of \$51, an increase of 28 per cent; Western Australia had an increase of \$52, an increase of 27 per cent; and Tasmania had an increase of \$54, an increase of 29 per cent.

It becomes patently obvious that when the workers in Western Australia look at their position in regard to wages they receive and compare it with the national average they are 1 per cent worse off than the workers in South Australia; they are 2 per cent worse off than the workers in Queensland and Tasmania; and they are 4 per cent worse off than the workers in New South Wales and Victoria.

What is worse, they actually receive 7 per cent less in their wages than the actual increase in the price of those products on which the Consumer Price Index is considered by the industrial courts in Australia for the purpose of equating the wages which workers should receive at any given time.

The Court Liberal Government has the hide and audacity to tell people in this State that they are well ahead and that it is about time the workers stopped asking for increases in wages. Yet, in essence, they are 7 per cent behind every other State.

The Minister for Labour and Industry cannot refute those figures, because they are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' June 1980 monthly summary. The wages I quoted were actually the average weekly earnings. We all know about the average weekly earnings. If I were to take the average weekly earnings of a worker in Western Australia, said to be \$242, I feel there would be many people—the great mass of people, probably 75 to 80 per cent of the people in the State—who would dearly love to get that wage as their average wage, which they do not.

I want to refer to the actual wages received by workers in Western Australia. I make it clear I quote from the figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The figures run from April 1979 to

May 1980 and they represent the weekly wage rates for adult males in Australia.

In the engineering, metals, and motor vehicles group as at April 1979 the weekly wage was \$153.68. In May of this year the figure was \$170.25. Throughout Australia there was an increase of 11 per cent.

I do not intend to mention the 18 groups referred to here. I have taken the maximum, middle, and minimum figures. I shall refer now to the building and construction group which is the middle range. Frequently we hear the Government castigating the Builders Labourers' Federation, carpenters and joiners, and plasterers and bricklayers for the exorbitant wage increases they demand. In fact, this group falls into the middle range of wages paid, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mr Parker: In fact most of the wages of builders and bricklayers have gone down recently.

Mr Blaikie: Why is that?

Mr Parker: Because they are on piece work rates.

Mr SKIDMORE: I have only three-quarters of an hour in which to make my speech. It is a great pity I am not the lead speaker for the Opposition on this legislation in which case I would speak until 4.00 a.m.

Mr Blaikie: Just as well you are not the lead speaker.

Mr SKIDMORE: The only reason I am not the lead speaker for the Opposition is that I chose to step down from that position.

The figure for the building and construction group was \$174.28 in April 1979, and \$189.42 in May 1980; that is an increase of 8.6 per cent.

When I began my speech I said the percentage increase in the costs of people living in Western Australia amounted to 34 per cent, according to the figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The workers in the building trade received an increase in wages of 8.6 per cent; therefore, they would be approximately 26 per cent behind the eight-ball.

The next group is the amusements and hotels area. The figure as at April 1979 was \$148.36 and as at May 1980, \$163.35; that is an increase of 10.1 per cent.

I want to compare the average figure for wage increases throughout Australia with the actual wage structure in Western Australia. I have taken the average weekly wage throughout Australia and said that it is plus or minus X number of dollars over the three classifications mentioned previously. As a result, when we look at the April

1979 figure for the engineering, metals and motor vehicles group we see it is \$156.63 in Western Australia; that is \$3 more than the national average. However, when we look at the figure for Western Australia as at May 1980, we see the figure is only \$2 above the national average. Over that period, the wages of the workers have decreased by \$1.

I do not know how Government members can say the workers in this State are riding on the crest of great financial gain. It is about time the Liberal Government stopped accusing workers of demanding exorbitant wage increases. The Government should stop jacking up prices whilst at the same time claiming wage increases cause inflation.

The wages of workers in the metal trades, engineering, and motor vehicle workers' group decreased by \$1; that is, it decreased from 11 per cent throughout Australia to 10.2 per cent in Western Australia.

When compared with the national average, the figure for the building and construction group is \$9 below the national average in April 1979 and \$12 below the national average in May 1980. They are the workers the Government castigates continually for seeking wage increases.

How misleading can a Government be in its references to the equality of workers? How much longer will the workers in this State suffer the burden of being held to ransom for the ills of the Court Liberal Government? We cannot get rid of that Government for 2½ years; but we will certainly get rid of the Fraser Government on 18 October. It will then no longer be able to perpetrate its lousy attitude towards the citizens of Australia.

The amusements and hotels group in Western Australia was \$8 below the national average in April 1979 and the figure for May 1980 is the same. The percentages for that group are 10.7 and 10.1. That error could have occurred because I rounded off the percentages in order to obtain an accurate figure quickly.

I hoped that, in the short time available, I could refer in some depth to unemployment. However, it does not appear that I shall be able to do so. I shall quote from the August 1980 Monthly Review of the Employment Situation issued by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs. The Minister who is responsible for that department frequently waxes lyrical about the wonderful opportunities for workers in this country. However, let us look at the true position.

According to the figures of the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, as at the end of

August 1979 the total number of people unemployed in Western Australia was 19 952. In August 1980 the figure was 17 612, a decrease of 2 340.

Using those figures, the Government says it has found jobs for 2 340 people. Of course it did; no-one can deny that. However, one must ask how many more people became unemployed during that period? A total of 17 612 males are still seeking work and there are only 795 jobs available.

Mr O'Connor: Do you have the employment figures rather than the unemployment figures?

Mr SKIDMORE: I have the Monthly Review of the Employment Situation issued by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs for August 1980. Table 25, from which I am quoting, is headed, "Unemployed persons and unfilled vacancies by occupational group (a) Western Australia: original data."

Whilst it is true that the unemployment figure has decreased by 2 340, we have only 795 jobs available for 17 612 workers. That is a great deal of hope for the workers in Western Australia who wish to obtain a job!

I will refer to some figures for unemployed juniors. These are the figures for semi-skilled workers. In August 1979, there were 2 479 juniors looking for work. In August 1980 there were 2 635 looking for work—an increase of 156 juniors looking for work; that is in spite of the efforts of the NEAT scheme, which I might add is questionable as far as its worth is concerned in regard to acquiring employment for people.

I know of one lad in Midland who has moved through four jobs. He has been employed in four jobs because at the end of his employment service he has been given notice. It will now be the fifth time he is dismissed at the end of his employment with absolutely nothing to offer. He keeps returning to the Commonwealth Employment Service which sends him to another job under the NEAT scheme. So much for that sort of scheme.

When I look at the figures I reach the conclusion that there is not a chance for any one of the 17 612 workers to obtain employment in 1980 unless there is a great increase in the number of jobs available.

The increase which the Minister and the Government say will provide some 13 000 jobs on the North-West Shelf gas project is something I would like to prove in six to seven years' time, if I am here. I guarantee I will be able to prove that there were nowhere near 13 000 jobs available. One can compound a felony upon a felony and

workers upon workers and finish up with an inflated figure of those who will be employed.

I wish to speak about a matter which has been causing me a great deal of concern. Perhaps some members may know that I have been President of the Animal Protection Society for some 18 months. In that time I have become very disturbed about the experimentation which has been taking place at universities in Western Australia and in universities throughout Australia.

The manner in which animals are treated during these experiments was brought to my notice when I attended a conference at the Monash University in Melbourne. At that conference an organisation known as the Australian Federation of Animal Societies was set up with some 20 foundation societies. One of the reasons for the formation of that society was to create a national organisation. Christine Townend who lives in Sydney has written three novels, one of which I wish to refer to which is called *In Defence of Living Things*. Christine Townend is a member of the Colong Committee (Wilderness Society) at the Total Environment Centre, Sydney. She is the publicity officer for Animal Liberation; is on the Committee for Humane Research; and she is the Hon. Secretary of the Animals Societies' Federation of New South Wales. She is also on the New South Wales State Government Animal Welfare Advisory Council.

I think she would be a person fairly well equipped to be able to speak about the inhumane operations which are perpetrated on those who have no use for their voice other than to bark, squeal, or when writhing in pain. I will refer to some of the experiments quoted in Christine Townend's book and which were being carried out by the CSIRO. She states as follows—

We went into the next laboratory. Two sheep were standing in raised cages. Their skin was quite bare and shining pink, wrinkled and raw.

"Defleeced," he said. The sheep stared back at us. One was wearing a plastic coat, which was rubbing the skin on its neck where it was drawn tight by elastic.

"This is one sort of coat," the supervisor said, "But it's not any good." He seemed depressed. "Shall we pass on?" he asked.

He held the door open for me, and we passed through into the sun. There were sheep in paddocks, grazing as though everything was ordinary.

We walked on up some stairs. "Here's the climate room," he said. We came to a door of

double thickness with bolts and locks like freezers in factories. We went inside, and stood in a small room with no windows. Sheep were in cages on either side. They could not step or use their legs, except for propping themselves in an upright way. The room was very hot. The supervisor wiped his face.

The sheep stood in useless despair, eyeing us with their yellow eyes.

"What is this experiment?" I asked.

"We're doing some very important work on heat stress," he said. "This work is published in journals all over the world."

"What are they trying to discover?"

"How sheep react to heat," he said. "You might think that's obvious, but the ramifications are many."

I do not mind experimentation at all if it is done to achieve the objective of assisting the pastoralists and the sheep breeder. I do mind, and will not agree to, the inhumane treatment of these animals during experimentation. I do not think members would like to be subjected to the temperatures which these sheep are subjected to for not just a day or a week, but for months!

Mr Grewar: What were the temperatures?

Mr SKIDMORE: These sheep were in freezers and the temperatures would get down to something like 5 degrees and 6 degrees centigrade.

Mr Grewar: Some sheep are subjected to that temperature whilst in paddocks on farms.

Mr SKIDMORE: To continue—

"What are scientists using this room for?" I asked.

"They've been doing experiments with lambs. They clip off their wool then subject them to freezing temperatures while they're still conscious."

"Why do they do that?"

"To measure their metabolic rates."

We left the stark room. The two sutured sheep were still lying panting in the cages as we walked past. No person seemed to care whether they lived or died.

"Just before I take my leave of you, I'll show you the fleece rot tests," the supervisor said.

So much for the poor sheep that can only bleat to complain about their inhumane treatment. So much for the experiment which continues until the fleece rots and the skin is rippled. The sheep

are subjected to this treatment for not a day or a week, but for months. I say that I have more feeling for these animals than has the member who has interjected. There are many other instances, but there is one I would like to mention. It reads—

"At Monash University I saw fully conscious cats being experimented on with knives and being given various electric shocks with several people recording the data on instruments, and obviously enjoying what they were doing to these cats, as they were all making dirty jokes about cats and different animals.

"At La Trobe University, Melbourne University, School of Veterinary Science inc. with Melbourne University and the Melbourne State College, I heard many dogs and other animals yelping and crying—it was obvious they were being experimented on and in a lot of pain. If I made efforts to find out more on my delivery rounds, I was told every time, to stay in the loading bay, as the Animal Clinics were private to outsiders, and I was not to speak to anyone of what I'd heard or seen. . . .

And so it goes on and on.

There was another experiment which I will explain quickly. There were a number of mice and rats in a cage on a wire platform. When a button was pushed the platform dropped and the rats and mice landed on an electrified wire. They immediately became subjected to an electric current and tried to jump back onto the platform. As soon as they landed on the platform they went down again and landed on the electrified wire. That went on hour after hour and day after day as an experiment. Who the hell wants to worry about a rat; who the hell wants to worry about a mouse? Well, I do. I believe they have a place in this world.

The member opposite might well laugh. That shows how much feeling he has for anything that breathes and moves. The member opposite would be one of those who do not want to think about the experiments which are taking place. I have a greater degree of sympathy for animals than ever he will have.

These experiments disturb me greatly, so much so that I have become a member of the organisation I have mentioned.

I will make brief reference to proposals for changes in the legislation governing the use of live animals for research, experiments, and laboratory purposes. A paper was submitted to the Home Secretary by the Committee for the Reform of

Animal Experimentation in England, during November 1979. Under the heading "Pain cause", it was stated—

All animals being used for any purpose under the Act which has the potential for causing pain or distress must be kept under regular supervision. If despite all reasonable precautions both before, during and after experimentation, an animal is found to be suffering pain or distress, it must be

forthwith humanely killed, and the procedure shall not be re-employed.

In answer to a question asked of the Minister for Health, in 1978, it was stated that over 9 000 experiments were taking place on animals in Western Australia. I wonder what use they were.

Mr Grewar: For your good, and for everyone else's good.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Blaikie.

House adjourned at 11.02 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HOUSING

Collie

998. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will he inform me of the amount allocated for the upgrading and maintenance of State Housing Commission homes at Collie during the last financial year?
- (2) Will he inform me of the amounts actually spent on maintenance and upgrading for the last financial year?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2) Amounts allocated and actually spent on State Housing Commission homes at Collie during 1979-80—

	Allo- cation \$	Expen- diture \$
Upgrading	66 000	148 098
Maintenance	78 550	80 000
		(est)

In addition to the substantial programme mounted during 1979-80 a further major upgrading programme costing in excess of \$500 000 will be completed during 1980-81 at the request of local members of Parliament in both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.

SEWERAGE

Thornlie

1011. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is he aware that an area designated as natural parkland for wildlife in Spring Road, Thornlie, is being affected by the removal of top soil by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department for use on the construction of the sewerage mains?
- (2) If "Yes", will he have this matter attended to immediately?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) Approximately five cubic metres of surplus top soil from the parkland have been removed to restore nearby

private property disturbed by sewerage construction.

Remaining stockpiled top soil from the excavation works will be re-spread on the parkland when it is sufficiently dry to allow satisfactory spreading.

- (3) Not applicable.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Art Gallery: Mr Lou Klepac

1012. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

Further to his comment in the *Daily News* on Tuesday, 30 September, and my question without notice on Wednesday, 1 October, will he now assure the House that Mr Lou Klepac will be appointed to the newly created position of Assistant Director (Curatorial) of the Art Gallery, and will he indicate the ways in which the approximate \$2 000 salary difference would be made up?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Art Gallery Board will meet on 17 October to consider applications for the position of assistant director (curatorial) and to interview the applicants.

HEALTH

Breast Prostheses

1013. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it fact that seven years ago, to buy a "prosthesis"—a "breast form" used by women who have had their breasts removed due to breast cancer—cost \$19, that three years later it cost \$29 and that it now costs \$56 and over \$100 for two other different brands?
- (2) If "Yes" will he advise how such price rises can be justified?
- (3) As these articles are obviously essential to women who have had breast cancer, will he further advise if there is any department or Government assistance which could be given to ease the price burden?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), which department?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) I am not aware of earlier prices for breast prostheses, but I am advised that the present average cost of prostheses purchased by public hospitals is \$50 to \$75.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) and (4) I am advised that some forms of assistance are available, but having no details I would suggest that the question should be referred to the Department of Health and Medical Services.

POLICE

East Perth Lock-up: Bail

1014. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) With reference to question 943 of 1980 relevant to bail releases and the Minister's answers to the member for Collie, will the Minister further advise: Can a person arrested on a bench warrant No. 10, which is in fact a "warrant to apprehend the defendant when the summons is disobeyed", be released on bail at the East Perth lock-up?

- (2) If "Yes", what is the procedure?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No. The issuing of a warrant in form 10 is in the discretion of the court and is used only in exceptional circumstances; for example, where a prison sentence is contemplated or there is some other compelling reason for the attendance of the defendant. In other cases, the court may proceed to hear the matter in the defendant's absence.
- (2) Not applicable.

WATER RESOURCES

Geraldton

1015. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Will he please provide details of the work undertaken in the water resources section of the Public Works Department water supply depot in Geraldton?
- (2) Is it a fact that this section is being closed?

- (3) If not, will he please advise of the correct situation?

- (4) If "Yes" to (2)—

- (a) what is the reason for this closure;
- (b) what is the extent of retrenchments associated with this closure;
- (c) where will the work previously undertaken in this section be carried out;
- (d) are similar sections to be closed at any other country locations; and
- (e) if "Yes", will he please provide details?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Work undertaken—

Operation and maintenance of 17 gauged catchments from Lynden River in the north to the Arrowsmith River in the south. Operation involves the measurement of streamflow, water quality and some meteorological parameters as appropriate. Monitoring of 92 boreholes grouped mainly in four areas—Eneabba, Arrowsmith, Allanooka, and Wiluna.

- (2) No.

- (3) Because of financial constraints, operations and staff are being reduced as follows—

- (i) Seven borehole level recorders and seven rainfall recording stations in the Wiluna area are being closed.
- (ii) Water samples normally analysed in Geraldton will now be analysed in the Welshpool laboratory.
- (iii) One hydrographic field assistant who had previously notified his intention of leaving will not be replaced.
- (iv) The materials tester has been given notice of retrenchment to take effect on Friday, 10 October, 1980.

No further reduction in operation or staff is envisaged at this time.

- (4) (a) to (e) Does not apply.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Geraldton Group Home

1016. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

With reference to the allocation of \$89 000 for a group home in Geraldton, as mentioned in the General Loan Fund Estimates of Expenditure, will he please provide more details as to what is intended?

Mr HASSELL replied:

My department proposes to build a group home to replace the current facility which is housed in one wing of the former Geraldton Maternity Hospital. This building has been classified by the National Trust and assurances have been given by the Government that its management will be handed over to the Geraldton Cultural Trust when the department vacates those premises.

The new group home, which will house up to eight children, will be located on a portion of Reserve No. 27321 on the north side of the Chapman River mouth. The land is being leased from the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

The building has been designed to blend in with and maintain the current high standard of residences in that area and its operation will be modelled on a normal home.

TRANSPORT

Pensioners: Free Trips

1017. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) With reference to the one free trip per year for pensioners in the country to travel to Perth, has the Government given consideration to allowing the trip to be taken between two country locations, so that country pensioners with family living in another country centre may be able to use the scheme to greater advantage?
- (2) If the Government has not considered this suggestion, will it please do so?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) There is no restriction as to the origin and destination for the one free trip per year for pensioners travelling on Westrail services.
- (2) Answered by (1).

EMU BARRIER FENCE

Karara Station

1018. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Would he advise whether the need to change the emu barrier fence line was—
 - (a) to save the amount of compensation claimed by the lessee of Karara Station; or

(b) at the express wish of the lessee of Karara Station?

- (2) (a) Which pastoral leases were held by the lessee prior to accepting the lease of Karara Station; and
 - (b) for what period of time were they held?
- (3) What pastoral experience did the lessee gain in any other capacity related to the pastoral industry, and over what period?
- (4) How much actual barrier fence experience has the project officer in charge had as—
 - (a) a construction worker on a fence of this nature;
 - (b) a fencing supervisor?
- (5) Would he explain the claim made by the project officer in charge in his presence that only 290 km of material had been purchased, when the material list shows 301 km of netting plus excess of other material?
- (6) What is the actual length of netting on washaways and creeks?
- (7) Is there a cost factor in taking up the deleted section of the fence, no matter who does the job, nor how long it takes?
- (8) What was the cost per kilometre of construction paid to the contractor recently dismissed?
- (9) How much was he paid for the construction done on the abandoned re-alignment?
- (10) Has an estimate been made for the cost of survey for the new line?
- (11) Will sections of the fence need to be re-done through lack of experienced supervision?
- (12) Since he stated that the original alignment would cover approximately 34 kilometres and that the new re-alignment would only cover 32 kilometres, and as the shires in the area are in agreement the old alignment covered 40 kilometres and the new re-alignment covers 44.6 kilometres, would he now assure the House that the figures given to him by the Agriculture Protection Board are accurate?

- (13) Is he prepared to call for a report from Mr Whitehouse to substantiate or dismiss the allegations of the barrier fence committee that they were advised the change in line was to save money?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (13) I am astounded at the continued interest in this minor administrative matter shown by some members. It has been dealt with in answers to questions 233 and 236 on 17 September, in the Legislative Council, in correspondence with individual shires and the barrier fence committee, and in discussions with representatives of the barrier fence committee and of the northern wards of the Country Shire Councils' Association. I will, however, as a matter of courtesy, provide the details requested by the member to him in writing in due course.

HEALTH

Laboratory Services

1019. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Further to question 944 of 1980 relevant to laboratory investigations, I now ask why is the Government giving consideration to allowing private pathologists to take over work in public hospitals that at present is done by the State Health Laboratory Services?
- (2) Does the Government lack confidence in the State Health Laboratory Services?
- (3) Will private pathologists be able to offer the same standard of work as the State Health Laboratory Services?
- (4) Who initiated the negotiations that have occurred between the Government and private pathologists?
- (5) Who are the members of the committee who are currently considering this matter and which organisations do they represent?
- (6) When is it anticipated that the committee report will be presented to Cabinet?
- (7) If private pathologists are permitted to take over from the State Health Laboratories in Government hospitals, will this result in any State Health Laboratory Services employees losing their job?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) At the request of the Australian Medical Association and in recognition of anticipated events and Government policy on cost containment.
- (2) No.
- (3) This will be guaranteed and is an essential consideration.
- (4) The Department of Health and Medical Services.
- (5) Dr J. C. McNulty, Commissioner of Public Health and Medical Services—Chairman.
Dr W. D. Roberts, Director, Hospital and Allied Services represents public hospitals.
Dr V. Blackman, Director, State Health Laboratories represents the State Health Laboratory Services.
Dr D. J. McCully and Mr W. S. Coleman, Australian Medical Association and represent private practice.
Professor M. N.-I. Walters, Faculty of Medicine and represents pathology services on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site.
Mr R. E. Ledger, Chartered Accountant, in private practice.
- (6) Within six months of 1 August 1980.
- (7) Naturally every effort will be made to ensure that there is no unemployment whatever action is taken.

COURTS: PETTY SESSIONS

Kimberley

1020. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

Would the Attorney General please provide statistics for the number of offences dealt with in the Kimberley Courts of Petty Sessions for the 12 months period ended 30 December 1979 in the following towns—

- (a) Broome;
- (b) Derby;
- (c) Fitzroy Crossing;
- (d) Halls Creek;
- (e) Wyndham;
- (f) Kununurra?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Details of the number of offences dealt with in Kimberley Courts of Petty Sessions for the 12 months' period ended 30 December 1979, are as follows—

(a) Broome	1 173
(b) Derby	1 799
(c) Fitzroy Crossing	1 645
(d) Halls Creek	1 125
(e) Wyndham	449
(f) Kununurra	680

ABORIGINES

Reserves

1021. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

Would the Minister please advise the following details concerning land which has been reserved for Aboriginal people in Western Australia—

- (a) name, location and reserve number;
- (b) area of reserve;
- (c) date reserve created;
- (d) the Act, reserve vested under—e.g., Land Act, Aboriginal Heritage Act, etc.;
- (e) purpose of reserve;
- (f) Government department or instrumentality responsible for administration of reserve;
- (g) controlling authority of reserve—e.g., Roman Catholic Diocese of Broome, etc.?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (a) to (g) The request by the member is couched in such general terms that hundreds of reserves—both large and small and both outside and within townsites—could be encompassed. Considerable research and preparation would be involved.

If the member requires details of major Aboriginal reserves outside townsites, arrangements could be made for such information to be prepared for submission to him.

RAILWAYS

Road Bus Services

1022. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is any inquiry being carried out into the Westrail bus services?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what is the nature of the inquiry;
 - (b) when will it be completed?

- (3) What is the Government's policy towards the continuation of the Westrail bus services?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) It is a joint study by Westrail and the Transport Commission. In general, the objective is to produce an overall review of public transport to and from country centres in Western Australia.
- (b) The study is expected to be completed by June 1981.
- (3) Government policy at this time is to continue Westrail's bus services.

UNDERWATER BREATHING APPARATUS

Filling Equipment

1023. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

What checks are made and by what departments on equipment used to fill self contained underwater breathing apparatus in various shops and premises throughout the State?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The Health and Medical Services Department, through its Clean Air Branch, is involved on request on a voluntary basis in checks on equipment used to fill self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.

Contents of a cylinder are tested for carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and total hydrocarbon contents and occasionally water and oxygen content.

The Department of Labour and Industry is involved in respect of approval of the pressure vessel used.

MINING ACT

Draft Regulations

1024. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

Further to questions on notice 333 and 748 of 1980, relevant to Mining Act draft regulations, would he please ensure that the Environmental Protection Authority's opinion, "That 1978 Mining Act regulations retain the requirement that applications for mining tenements be publicly advertised" is implemented?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The regulations to the 1978 Mining Act are still being formulated, following the receiving of submissions.

applications for mining tenements and proposals for temporary reserves in the Rudall River national park?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) to (c) Applications are referred to the National Parks Authority by agreement with the Minister for Conservation and the Environment.

MINING

Tenements: Advertising

1025. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

Further to question 749 of 1980 relevant to mining tenements, and especially in respect to his answers to parts (3) and (4), how does he reconcile the statement he made in Parliament with the fact that the Minister for Mines stated in October 1978 that: "Provisions relating to advertising of applications for mining tenements will be contained in the regulations as is the case in the current legislation, and in addition the present departmental practice of referral of applications on reserved land to the appropriate authority will continue"?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The statement made by the Minister for Mines in October 1978, did not specifically say that applications for mining tenements would be advertised in a newspaper, but indicated that provisions relating to advertising would be contained in the regulations to the 1978 Act, as is the situation under the 1904 Act.

The Minister for Mines is still considering the proposed regulations to the 1978 Act.

MINING

Rudall River National Park

1026. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

Since 1978 has the Mines Department continued to refer to—

- (a) the Minister for Conservation and Environment;
- (b) the Environmental Protection Authority/Department of Conservation and Environment;
- (c) the National Parks Authority,

MINING

National Parks, State Forests, and Nature Reserves: Consultation

1027. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Mines:

Under the 1978 Mining Act which has yet to be proclaimed, is there a statutory obligation for him or his department to consult or inform—

- (a) the Minister for Forests; the conservator or his department—regarding applications or approvals by prospectors to enter State forest to mark out mining tenements;
- (b) the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife; the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife, his department or the WA Wildlife Authority, regarding applications or approvals to enter nature reserves to mark out mining tenements;
- (c) the Minister for Conservation and the Environment or the National Parks Authority, regarding applications or approvals to enter national parks to mark out mining tenements?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) to (c) There is no provision in the Mining Act 1978 for applications to enter State forests, nature reserves, or national parks for the purpose of marking out mining tenements. However, there is a statutory obligation for the Minister for Mines to consult with the responsible Ministers before granting an application for a mining tenement.

In the case of applications on State forests or timber reserves, he must obtain the concurrence of the Minister for Forests, and in the case of applications for leases on national parks in the south-west division of the State, he must obtain the consent of both Houses of Parliament.

MINING

Nature Reserves

1028. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Mines:

In regard to a nature reserve vested in the WA Wildlife Authority that is declared a prohibited area under the Wildlife Conservation Act, will entry approval granted to a prospector under the 1978 Mining Act still require him to obtain specific approval to enter under provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

A mining tenement can only be granted over such a reserve after consultation with the responsible Minister.

A miner must comply with the provisions of the Wildlife Conservation Act the same as anyone else whilst, in addition, conditions to protect the reserve would be imposed on the grant of any mining tenement.

MINING

National Parks and State Forests: Approvals

1029. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) In regard to a designated wilderness area of a national park will entry approval granted to a prospector under the 1978 Mining Act still require him to obtain specific approval to enter with a vehicle under provisions of the National Parks Authority Act?
- (2) In regard to dieback quarantine areas of State forests, will entry approval granted to a prospector under the 1978 Mining Act still require him to obtain specific approval to enter with a vehicle under provisions of the Forests Act?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The grant of a mining tenement under the Mining Act 1978 will not relieve a miner of his obligations to comply with other laws of the land.

A mining tenement cannot be granted on State forests or timber reserves without the concurrence of the Minister for Forests; mining leases and general purpose leases can only be granted on national parks in the south-west division of the State with the consent of both Houses of Parliament; and in all other cases consultation with the responsible Minister is a statutory obligation before a mining tenement is granted.

In all cases, conditions would be imposed to protect the reserves.

TIMBER

Mill Ends

1030. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

- (1) Further to question 673 of 1980 relevant to mill end tonnages, in each of the past five years how many licences/permits have been current for obtaining firewood from State forest and timber reserves?
- (2) (a) What is the fee for obtaining such licences/permits; and
(b) what royalties are imposed on firewood removed?
- (3) What quantity of firewood was removed in each of the past five years by holders of firewood licences/permits?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The numbers of local firewood permits issued in each of the past five years were—

1975-76	28
1976-77	16
1977-78	9
1978-79	7
1979-80	5.

Forest produce licences for firewood are also issued by various Forests Department offices throughout the State, but the numbers are not recorded. However, the quantities of firewood obtained under licences are included in answer to (3).

- (2) (a) Nil;
(b) Domestic—\$0.47/tonne
Agnew Clough—\$0.26/tonne.

(3) 1975-76	151 632 tonnes
1976-77	113 766 tonnes
1977-78	118 860 tonnes
1978-79	107 856 tonnes
1979-80	113 083 tonnes.

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Release

1031. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Further to question 737 of 1980 relevant to land release, did the areas of land identified by the land release review committee include the following localities recommended by the Environmental Protection Authority in 1976 as conservation reserves—
 - (a) 2.3 proposed south coast national park especially land near Lake Jasper, Mt. Chudalup and the Pingerup Plains;
 - (b) 2.12 (1) Gingilup swamp area;
 - (c) 2.15 Kent and Denmark River catchments?
- (2) Did areas of land identified by the land release review committee include Sussex locations—
 - (a) 4 479;
 - (b) 4 480;
 - (c) 448; and
 - (d) 442?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) (a) to (c) As indicated in my Press announcement last July, broad areas were identified by the committee both within and adjoining existing agricultural areas. The actual localities specified by the member were not identified by the committee as such. Any investigation into suitable land in this general area would be subject to environmental assessments or commitments.
- (2) (a) to (d) Sussex locations 4 479, 4 480, 448—presumably should read 4 481—442—presumably should read 4 482—were included in the Scott National Park reserve in April 1979.

COURTS

Sentences: Appeals

1032. Mr SODEMAN, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) When did the Government introduce amending legislation to enable the Crown to appeal against a sentence considered inadequate?
- (2) How many appeals has the Crown since taken?
- (3) How many of such appeals have resulted in a higher sentence?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) September 1975.
- (2) 26.
- (3) 22.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

South Coast National Park: Mining

1033. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Have any constraints and requirements with regard to the environment been placed on the mining reserves in the area of the proposed south coast national park held by—
 - (a) Swan Resources Ltd. and Eagle Corporation—T.R. 7325H and T.R. 7326H— and
 - (b) Dampier Mining Company Ltd. 7425H, 7669H, 7670H, 7676H, 7677H, 7678H and 7845H?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) what are the environmental requirements which have been imposed;
 - (b) who is responsible for ensuring that these requirements are being carried out;
 - (c) how many inspections of operations have been made of each of these areas and what were the dates of such inspections;
 - (d) what actions were carried out following these inspections?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Conditions on mining tenements and inspections in relation to compliance with them are the responsibility of the Minister for Mines to whom the member should address his question.

WATER RESOURCES

Agaton

1034. Mr McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has the State Government advised the Federal Minister for National Development that the Agaton water supply project has No. 1 priority in the allocation of funds for further development of water supplies in Western Australia?
- (2) If this has not been done, will he take the necessary action?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) The State-Commonwealth joint committee examining the viability of the Agaton project has asked for a cost benefit study comparing the project with on farm supply. This is being done and before the conclusion of this study there is no practical purpose in further recommendations to the Commonwealth.
- The Agaton project—as far as reticulation of farmlands is concerned, and depending on capability to finance it—has the highest State priority.

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS

Mirrabooka, Nollamara, and Westminster

1035. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What were the numbers of year 7 children attending the following primary schools in the years—
- (a) 1978;
- (b) 1979; and
- (c) 1980;
- (i) Mirrabooka;
- (ii) Nollamara; and
- (iii) Westminster?
- (2) What are the projected numbers of year 7 children for the same schools in 1981 and 1982?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1)	(a) to (c)	1978	1979	1980
	Mirrabooka	75	51	57
	Nollamara	55	58	52
	Westminster	122	122	95
(2)		1981	1982	
	Mirrabooka	45	60	
	Nollamara	58	45	
	Westminster	110	110	

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Reserves and Biological Surveys

1036. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) (a) In regard to the Environmental Protection Authority's proposals concerning conservation reserves in the South Yilgarn—Red Book 1—were class recommendations for the Lake Barker nature reserve, and the Frank Hann and Peak Charles national parks visualised as an interim measure until further biological information was obtained and boundaries then be relocated if need be as proposed by the conservation through reserves committee;
- (b) if so, is it the Environmental Protection Authority's view that, once satisfactory boundaries can be determined from a biological point of view, these conservation reserves should be made more secure and be declared Class "A"?
- (2) (a) What progress has been made concerning a biological survey of the Dundas area, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Authority in 1975;
- (b) what additional resources has the State Government provided to permit the WA Museum, National Parks Authority, WA Herbarium, or Department of Fisheries and Wildlife to carry out the recommended survey?
- (3) What progress has been made concerning the recommended biological survey of the Nerren Nerren east area?

- (4) (a) What progress has been made in implementing the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations made in 1976 concerning the Coomallo reserves and associated vacant Crown land;
- (b) what surveys and reports have been made, and what consideration is being given to them?
- (5) What progress has been made in implementing the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations concerning—
 - (a) Beekeepers reserve;
 - (b) Lake Arrowsmith area;
 - (c) Mt. Lesueur reserves?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) No.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (2) (a) and (b) A biological survey has been carried out by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Suitable boundaries for a reserve have been finalised and plans are in preparation to enable reservation of the area.
- (3) The biological survey has been completed and reserve boundaries are being determined.
- (4) (a) and (b) Discussions are being held between the Department of Conservation and Environment and the Mines Department in respect of mining and petroleum tenements in the area. Field investigations by officers of the Department of Conservation and Environment have been completed and a report to the EPA is in preparation.
- (5) (a) Negotiations are proceeding with various interested organisations.
- (b) and (c) Discussions are being held between the Mines Departments and Conservation and Environment in respect of petroleum exploration permits and mineral resource aspects.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Metallic Silicon Plant

1037. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) What stage has been reached on the planned development of a metallic silicon plant in the State?

- (2) Has a locality for the plant site yet been selected?
- (3) Which firms are involved in this interest?
- (4) What are the principal raw materials used in producing metallic silicon?
- (5) What are the main uses of metallic silicon and what are seen to be the principal market outlets?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Various aspects of the development are being investigated to assess its feasibility.
- (2) A potential site has been assumed as part of assessing the overall feasibility of the development.
- (3) It would not be appropriate to disclose this information at this stage of the project negotiations.
- (4) Silica and charcoal.
- (5) (a) Manufacture of aluminium alloys and silicon resins.
- (b) Replacement of current imports into Australia and supply of overseas markets.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Employees: Retrenchments

265. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Further to yesterday's questions without notice, how many employees of his department throughout the State are to be retrenched?
- (2) What is the break-down of numbers to be retrenched from each depot?
- (3) When will the retrenchments occur?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (3) The question of further retrenchments is being examined having regard to funds made available from all sources, for example, General Loan Fund, Consolidated Revenue Fund, private subdivisions and work for mining companies.

Present indications are that further retrenchments will be necessary; however, departmental programmes are being reviewed with a view to minimising reductions in staff.

STATE FINANCE

New Federalism

266. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Is he aware that the abolition of the guarantee in respect of the financial assistance grants formula under stage one of the Fraser Government's new federalism policy has cost the States collectively an estimated \$250 million in 1980-81 in revenue foregone?
- (2) Is he aware that the abolition of the guarantee has cost Western Australia individually an estimated \$33 million in revenue foregone in 1980-81?
- (3) In view of the Premier's special statement to this House on Tuesday, 13 April 1976, on the merits of the Fraser Government's so-called new federalism policy, in which he is reported to have said, "I am confident that the scheme will now operate successfully and to the advantage of the States", does he now agree that the Fraser Government has deceived the States and has made them financially worse off than under the old system of financial assistance grants?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) I cannot remember the whole of the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, because it was a rather lengthy one and I did not receive notice of it.

I should like to point out the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is flogging a dead horse.

Mr H. D. Evans: It is just coming into the picture.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I noticed when the Federal President of the ALP and the Premier of New South Wales (Mr Wran) was in Perth last weekend, he was on this hobby horse also.

It appears Mr Wran is the catalyst for this renewed interest in tax sharing arrangements. I should like to point out he must have failed to confer with his deputy who, on his behalf, attended not only the General Loan Council meetings and the Premiers' Conference in June, but also the August and September meetings of the Premiers which were held subsequently, and independently of the Commonwealth.

At the two meetings of the Premiers it was made clear, as I had announced

over 12 months ago, that this State had no intention of proceeding with the tax legislation. The Premiers announced unanimously they did not intend to proceed with stage two of the tax-sharing arrangements.

If we get the record straight and start at that point, we will correct some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition last night.

I have spelt out very clearly in the Budget speech and the predictions which have been made in regard to the future, the effect of the changed arrangements following the expiry of the guarantee period.

I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Premiers have met together, irrespective of their political colour, and have prepared a case for presentation to the Commonwealth which is to be discussed with the Prime Minister so as to determine a basis for a formula for the future. Of course, that will be the subject of some rather heavy bargaining between the Premiers and the Federal Government.

However, I remind the House that here again we have a case of Premiers of all political persuasions—Country Party, Labor, and Liberal—going together to the Commonwealth Government on the basis of a common statement.

So far as the differences in the amounts that would be payable under the present arrangement—that is, the arrangement that the Prime Minister agreed to for the year after the expiry of the guarantee—are concerned, that matter has been spelt out in the Budget papers; therefore, I do not believe it is of any use the member trying to flog a dead horse.

FOODLAND ASSOCIATED LTD.

National Country Party Debt

267. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In the interests of the 1 200 small businesses involved in the Foodland co-operative, will the Minister indicate whether the National Country Party intends to default on or make good its debt of \$820 000 to Foodland?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have been advised that writs were issued today in the Supreme Court with respect to the matter which appears to be the subject of the question the member seeks to ask. I was unable to ascertain the precise nature of the writs. I have asked the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to obtain the details for me. I am in a position of not knowing precisely the nature of the writs and until such time as I am aware of it, I must rule the matter as being *sub judice*.

Points of Order

Mr BRYCE: If you, Sir, are not aware of the details of the writs, but you are aware only of the general form of the writs which have been issued in respect of a particular community matter, how can you, Sir, rule that any related question whatsoever is, therefore, out of order?

Mr HASSELL: On a further point of order—

Mr Davies: One at a time!

Mr HASSELL:—on the same subject, regardless of whether or not the matter is out of order because of the *sub judice* rule, it also appears to be out of order because it is not within the ministerial responsibility of the Minister to whom it was directed.

Mr Davies: I'll bet he is glad to have your help on that. The Leader of the NCP is delighted with your interjection.

The SPEAKER: I will deal firstly with the point of order raised by the member for Ascot. I do not have the precise detail, but I believe that, out of courtesy to the court, I would be irresponsible if I were to allow questions to be asked before such time as I have the precise detail. Therefore, I adhere to my ruling that the matter is *sub judice*. When the information is available to me tomorrow, I will be in a better position to know precisely what should happen with respect to any questions in regard to this matter which may come before the House.

With respect to the matter raised by the Minister for Police and Traffic, I should like to point out it is permissible only for a member to ask a question of the leader of the minor party of the coalition on matters that relate directly to the policy

of that particular party. Therefore, I believe the question is out of order on those grounds.

Mr BRYCE: On a further point of order, Sir, can you indicate which Standing Order lays down precisely that we in this place may ask the leader of a minor party in the coalition only those questions which relate to matters of that minor party's policy?

I might remind you, Sir, that over the years in this Parliament—I make this point also for the benefit of the "Johnny come lately", the Minister for Police and Traffic—members on this side of the House have frequently questioned leaders of the NCP in respect of matters—I underline the word "matters"—of concern to that particular political party in this Chamber.

It would appear to me that you, Sir, are about to depart from a procedure we have well and truly accepted in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: So that I do not do that which the member for Ascot suggests I might be doing, I intend to leave the Chair until the ringing of the bells so that I can make a detailed study of the matter which has been raised. In view of the time, I shall resume the Chair at 7.30 p.m., at which stage I will give a considered opinion on the matter raised by the member for Ascot.

Mr B. T. BURKE: On a further point of order, Sir, can you enlighten me with respect to the position of questions without notice if, when you return to the Chair at 7.30 p.m., you rule one way or the other?

The SPEAKER: Very few questions without notice have been asked and I believe it would be inappropriate for me to terminate questions without notice, but a point of order has been taken which necessitates my leaving the Chair to ascertain how I should rule. Therefore, I shall be prepared to accept further questions without notice after I have given my ruling at 7.30 p.m. or thereabouts.

Sitting suspended from 5.54 to 7.30 p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: Prior to the tea suspension I was asked to respond to a point of order

taken by the member for Ascot. I have had an opportunity to look at the situation and I wish to state that—

Standing Order No. 107 provides the broad rule which governs the types of questions which are admissible in this House. Questions asked of Ministers should, under that Standing Order, relate to public affairs for which they are administratively responsible. The numerous rulings and precedents which have been recorded assist in the interpretation of Standing Order No. 107. There are precedents recorded where the leader of a minor party in coalition has been asked questions concerning that party's policy. One of the most recent occurred on 5th April 1978 (Hansard page 475). At that time I expressed doubts on the eligibility of that particular question and, on the following day, made the following statement—

Yesterday the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked a question without notice of the Minister for Agriculture.

I might point out it is the same member who has taken the point of order on this occasion. To continue my statement—

I asked the honourable member to put the question on the notice paper as I was in some doubt as to whether it was one that should be admitted. It is my view that the question does conflict with Standing Order No. 107. However, on closer examination I find that former Speakers have allowed almost identical questions and therefore, as it has been a practice of the House to accept such questions, I have decided to accept this one.

I will submit this matter to the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders Committee in order that the committee may consider whether or not Standing Order No. 107 ought to be amended in the light of past practice of this House.

The member for Ascot then asked the following question of the Minister for Agriculture—

What is the policy of the Parliamentary National Country Party towards the proposed expansion of bauxite mining in the Darling scarp?

The Minister for Agriculture replied—

I refer the member to our Policy document—in particular to that section under Minerals and Energy.

For the information of the House, and in particular the member for Ascot, the Standing Orders Committee discussed this matter at its meeting yesterday and agreed that the present practice should continue and that no alteration to Standing Order No. 107 was required.

I rule that the question asked by the member for Ascot of the Minister for Agriculture does not concern his party's policy and, therefore, is inadmissible.

Questions (without notice) Resumed

ELECTORAL: FEDERAL ELECTION

Share Market Values

268. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Deputy Premier:

Has the Deputy Premier seen the front page report in today's issue of the *Daily News* where it is stated that hundreds of millions of dollars have been wiped off share market values because of an impending possible Federal Labor victory?

If so, why should investors be so concerned, and does he believe the concern to be ill-founded?

Point of Order

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, and on precisely the same point of order you have just dealt with, Mr Speaker, the question asked by the member for Vasse has nothing whatsoever to do with the portfolios administered by the Deputy Premier.

Mr Blaikie: Nothing to do with the Deputy Premier of Western Australia?

Mr Bryce: Precisely.

The SPEAKER: Order! Unfortunately, my attention was distracted at the time the question was being asked so I ask the member for Vasse to restate his question.

Mr BLAIKIE, to the Deputy Premier:

Has the Deputy Premier seen the front page report in today's issue of the *Daily News* where it is stated that hundreds of millions of dollars have been wiped off share market values because of an impending possible Federal Labor victory?

If so, why should investors be so concerned, and does he believe the concern to be ill-founded?

Several members interjected.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: Order! The question is inadmissible.

Questions (without notice) Resumed

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Family Policy

269. Mr SODEMAN, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Will any recently-announced State Government Family Policy Committee include special interest groups or regional representation?
- (2) If so, would the Minister consider nominations from the Pilbara?
- (3) If not, what is the proposed structure of the committee and what will be its objectives and method of operation?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The committee is to consist of 10 persons. Three will be drawn from Government departments that have a close involvement with families, and seven persons selected from outside the Government services. The individuals who have been selected and notified of membership of the committee—although the committee has not yet been finalised—appear to me to have a balanced social contact and I believe have an ability to make a worthwhile contribution, and all have a credible standing within the community.

Referring to the member's question, membership will not be by representatives of groups organisations, geographical areas, or based on the sex of the people concerned.

The main objective of the committee will be to advise the Government in a general way, and on specific issues from time to time, on matters that appear to have a bearing on family well-being. The committee will meet under its chairman periodically as arranged, and will consider matters which are referred to it or on which it takes submissions, and which come within its terms of reference.

STOCK EXCHANGE

Share Market Values

270. Mr SODEMAN, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Could the Minister advise the House whether there is a method within his power to protect shareholders against the decline in the share market values?

Point of Order

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, that is a sort. The member for Pilbara is quite aware of that. He hatched up the question with the Minister concerned and I ask that it be ruled inadmissible.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: The question is inadmissible.