

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 11 November 1981

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

EDUCATION: FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Petition

MR NANOVIČ (Whitford) [2.16 p.m.]: I have a petition addressed to the Speaker and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. It goes through the normal procedures of a petition, and it bears 29 signatures. I have certified that the petition meets with the requirements of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: What is it about?

Mr NANOVIČ: The petition deals with Government funding for the education of four-year-olds. I apologise for not saying that right from the start.

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

(See petition No. 115.)

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

In Committee

Resumed from 10 November. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after Division 25 had been agreed to.

Division 26—Public Service Arbitration, \$106 000—put and passed.

Division 27: Consumer Affairs Bureau, \$724 000—

Mr TONKIN: I have been concerned to discover that Western Australians are treated badly when it comes to their buying electric lamps or, as most people call them, globes. Our supply of electricity is at a much higher voltage than that in the rest of Australia. Indeed, it is supposed to be at 260 volts: but when one allows for the 6 per cent tolerance, one realises it can go much higher than that. Most Western Australian consumers buy 240-250 volt lamps, which have 245 volt filaments. However, as the power can surge to 270 volts—in fact, readings in outer metropolitan areas have been in excess of 280 volts—it is clear that the lamps which most people are buying are not equipped to take that voltage. As a

consequence, Western Australians are using double the number of lamps as do people in eastern Australia. This is a grave disadvantage suffered by Western Australian consumers.

In a question to the Minister for Fuel and Energy, I asked what the State Energy Commission was doing about looking after consumers in this regard. The answer was that the SEC was encouraging people to buy 260 volt lamps. However, the encouragement consists only of publicity which most people do not see. The long-promised printing on accounts advising people to buy 260 volt lamps will not come into effect until next year, so most Western Australians are not aware that they should not be buying the 240-250 volt lamps.

The 240-250 volt lamps are unsuitable for our current; and the consumers should be buying 260 volt lamps. However, even the consumers who do know not to use the 240-250 volt lamps—and I have been contacted by a few of them in the last couple of days—have found it impossible to buy the 260 volt lamps. They are very scarce.

One woman rang me to say that she had not been able to buy a 260 filament lamp in a supermarket and so had gone to an electrical store only to find that while the lamps were available they were double the price at which they are normally sold in supermarkets. Quite obviously this means they would be out of the reach of most people.

We really do need to take action so that Western Australians have the lamps which are most suited to the current they are receiving. The 240-250 filament lamps are just not suitable. We experience electrical surges up to 280 volts, so we certainly need to have available 260 filament lamps. It is estimated that Western Australians may be using as many as twice the number of lamps used by people in the Eastern States.

One of the problems is that the imported lamps are deemed to be the equivalent of local lamps and are subject to a 10 per cent tariff. In fact they are not the equivalent at all and should be subject to a tariff of only 2 per cent. At the moment a submission is before the Industries Assistance Commission asking that the tariff be raised from 10 per cent to 30 per cent.

I am asking the Government to try urgently, by negotiation with the SEC commissioner and the Commonwealth Government, to see that we no longer have this spurious deeming of the imported lamps being equivalent to local lamps. The local lamps are deemed to be the equivalent of the imported lamps, when in fact they are as equivalent as chalk and cheese. I have seen

demonstrations where it has been shown that the imported lamps are much stronger; their filaments are better manufactured and can withstand higher voltages and more movement than the local lamps. Movement is one of the things which destroys filaments when they are very hot.

The overseas lamps are far superior yet are deemed to be the equivalent of the local lamps. The Government should endeavour to see that 260 filament lamps are available in Western Australia. It is not good enough merely to say they are available, because while some are available they are not available in anything like the quantity needed. If the Government is saying they are obtainable by every person who goes to a supermarket, it is obviously being untruthful. Most people hunting for 260 filament lamps cannot find them. In fact, most people do not know they should be looking for 260 filament lamps; most think that the 245 filament lamps are suitable, when they are not. The Government should look at this matter very seriously because Western Australians are being severely disadvantaged.

My next point relates to two salesmen who were operating in the Albany area. They worked for Continental Homes of 20 Lacey Street, East Perth. They called on an elderly lady in Albany who has problems with her hearing and spent five to six hours in her home bashing her ears about accepting their offer of work, and in desperation she signed a contract to get rid of them.

Mr O'Connor: Is this the one you referred to me or the Bureau of Consumer Affairs?

Mr TONKIN: I did ask a question recently and I did refer the lady to the Bureau of Consumer Affairs. I am not criticising the bureau although we are tending to shut the door after the horse has bolted. If such people came to any of our homes we would be able to tell them where to go quite easily, but it is a different matter with elderly people. The salesmen charged her something like \$1 300 to put a kind of rough cast paint on two exterior walls. When an officer of the bureau asked them about the paint they said it was nothing special. Because of the good offices of the bureau they agreed to forego about \$400. The old lady still had to pay \$900. The point was that the only way she could get rid of them was to sign the contract. That might be hard for some people to imagine, but when someone is infirm and elderly things are not so easy.

Mr Watt: How long ago was this?

Mr TONKIN: The lady's daughter came to me—because she lives in my electorate—about three weeks ago.

Mr Watt: I am surprised I was not contacted, because if there was one there would probably be more.

Mr TONKIN: I think the old lady thought nothing could be done about it. We should rid the community of people like this who prey on old people.

The Bureau of Consumer Affairs should consider ways of licensing these salesmen. This is something I have raised before in connection with Paul's Outdoor Centre, which had done a bad job on a patio in my electorate.

We must license these people in such a way that we have the power to take their licences from them if they do not operate properly. Although the woman concerned in this matter was helped eventually, she should never have been in the position of needing help in the first place. Many elderly people are not assisted in such matters because they do not even know they can obtain redress by going to a member of Parliament or the Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

We should give careful consideration to a system of licensing people carrying out so-called home improvements so that we can weed out from their ranks the unscrupulous people who act in the manner to which I have referred. Most people involved in this work are not like the person to whom I have referred, but we must give careful consideration to the system I have suggested so that we can get rid of the unscrupulous ones. It is no good our doing something after someone has acted improperly; it is too late then to correct the imbalance.

This elderly lady signed the contract, and it appears that the contract was legal. If the contract was subject to a seven-day cooling-off period, she would not have been able to use that provision because she did not realise that it needed raising until seven days after the contract had been signed; so I presume the person who did the work waived the amount owing because the Bureau of Consumer Affairs bluffed him into doing so. However, the elderly woman did have work done to her house, work which she did not want done.

I reiterate that the people carrying out this type of work should be licensed so that we can control them and help people who are treated in ways that are not proper.

Mr O'Connor: The Painters Registration Board does cover part of that work.

Mr TONKIN: That is an interesting angle; I know there is such a thing as a Painters Registration Board.

Mr Carr: Does it apply in the country areas? Isn't it like the Builders' Registration Board which is restricted to the metropolitan area?

Mr O'Connor: Yes, it is restricted to certain areas.

Mr TONKIN: I am not certain of the matters the Painters Registration Board covers, but I presume that the board deals mainly with tradesmen.

Mr O'Connor: I just made the point.

Mr TONKIN: I ask the Government to determine whether it is possible to license people carrying out home improvements so that we can give the public the protection they require. We should not just assist consumers after something has happened; we should try to weed out the unscrupulous people from the industry. If I were in the industry I would want the unfair people out of it because they would give me a bad name. I am sure most people in the industry would be keen to have the unscrupulous operators out of it; therefore the Government should consider whether it is possible to weed out the unscrupulous ones.

I accept that the Deputy Premier does not have sufficient time at this stage to make a comprehensive comment about the matter, but I hope that in the months ahead he will come to the Chamber with a report in regard to whether we can do something to stop the recurring situation of consumers being treated improperly with respect to home improvements. In that way we would not be all the time waiting for things to happen and then trying to extricate consumers from a difficult position.

Mr DAVIES: Division 27 in last year's Budget dealt with the State Government Insurance Office, but this year reference to that office has disappeared from the CRF Budget papers. Perhaps the Minister in replying can give the reason for that.

Mr O'Connor: We don't provide any funds for it.

Mr DAVIES: For years and years reference has been made to the SGIO, and suddenly we have decided to drop that reference. I wonder why. I do not have anything against the SGIO: I believe it should have a wider franchise, and that remark has been made on many occasions by members on this side of the Chamber.

Mr Chairman, before you say that I cannot mention the SGIO, I will make a few comments about the Bureau of Consumer Affairs. I am indeed sorry that the Government proposes to do away with the Consumer Affairs Council.

When the bureau was first brought into being in this State I was the Minister responsible for it. Under J. T. Tonkin the Labor Party made an election pledge that in Government it would establish a Consumer Affairs Bureau, and in 1971 when the Labor Party became the Government we set about establishing the bureau. I was honoured to be its first Minister. For a long time I was the Minister responsible for not only the bureau, but also the whole department. I answered all kinds of queries, which literally poured into my office from people who wanted to know where they should make complaints and whether they could have something done about them.

The Chairman of the Public Service Board gave me Mr Ed Russell to operate the bureau. He was the deputy commissioner for many years and recently transferred to the Department for Conservation and the Environment—no doubt chasing promotion. I pay tribute to the work he did in the bureau. Subsequently the ministerial responsibility for the bureau transferred to Mr Don Taylor and legislation covering the bureau was passed by Parliament. At that time I do not think the legislation went far enough; its powers should have been extended so that small business people could use the services of the bureau to handle problems they come up against. It is unfortunate they are excluded from being able to use those services because of the nature of their activities.

We should not do away with the council; and we should examine how to extend the scope of the bureau. The council could play an extremely important role in that regard. It is apolitical. Most members of the Chamber would have read in an article in the *Daily News* of a few weeks ago that some members of the council are pro one party or another, but the individual members have indicated that they are apolitical in their approach to problems before the council; they have purely apolitical points of view.

It is a matter of great regret that the Government has started to eat into the services provided by the bureau by doing away with this very important council. It meets only about 12 times a year, which does not necessitate a great expense. Indeed, its members have offered their services free of charge if the council continues. I would have thought the Government would be anxious—would leap forward—to accept that offer so that the community could maintain the service it has received for some time from that council.

I will not refer to the individual members of the council, but to the ninth annual report of the

Bureau of Consumer Affairs. In that report members can see for themselves just what the council has been able to do during the last 12 months, and the last nine years. The council is objective, and its members have offered to supply their services free of charge—we cannot get anything cheaper than that. If the Government maintained the council it would be able to offer the community a very good service indeed. The council operating on a no-expense basis could continue until the Government became a little more affluent. I hope the Government takes up the offer.

The Budget papers for the year ending 30 June 1981 indicate that in round figures the bureau was expected to spend \$548 000. Members would not have that figure on the papers in front of them because it is contained in last year's Budget papers. Without those papers members are unable to make a comparison.

I referred to this comparison the other night when speaking in this Chamber. One needs a great deal of time and last year's Budget papers to make a valid comparison of the figures in this Budget. As I said, the estimate of expenditure in round figures for the bureau for the financial year just completed was \$548 000, but the actual expended amount in round figures was \$508 000; so, something like \$40 000 was not spent by the bureau.

If the Government is thinking of hopping in with a razor, then it should hop into the Government departments which have overspent their budgets. It should not be hopping into departments which have underspent their budgets. It would then find that it could make a considerable saving of about 8 per cent of the Consumer Affairs Bureau budget for the year, which has been reflected in the papers before us. What justification is there for doing away with the Consumer Affairs Council?

Mr O'Connor: What is the major assessment or involvement it has had in the last four years?

Mr DAVIES: I am glad the Minister referred to that subject because the group gets together to consider matters which are of concern to the community and consumers. The commissioner refers matters to the council whenever he wishes wider information and the council can give the benefit of its experience in the community. I am surprised that the Minister should ask what it has done.

Mr O'Connor: I asked what was the major issue in the last four years.

Mr DAVIES: I cannot name anything in the last four years.

Mr O'Connor: That is fair enough; perhaps I was being a little unfair.

Mr DAVIES: I will not detail the functions and the role of the council, but its main job is to make recommendations to the Minister, through the commissioner. The council has met on 12 occasions only, but I will list some of the matters it has discussed in the last year.

One subject was the harsh and unreasonable contracts which are made and the council considered the position which exists in New South Wales which has had a Contracts Review Act in operation for the last 12 months.

The council was considering what kind of legislation could apply to Western Australia because it had received complaints about harsh and unreasonable contracts.

The council also has considered funeral costs and everyone knows the position there. Over the last 12 months I am sure many members have been aware of this matter. Funeral costs have been a worry because it has been suggested that the public are being ripped off, but no-one is making any investigation into the matter. No-one is making an attempt to find out whether or not the public are being ripped off. I am not making any charges, but I just wish to make it clear to members that certain funeral directors are able to provide an adequate service at a substantially reduced price, over and above that which is provided by many long-standing funeral parlours. I know of no other organisation which has been investigating this matter, apart from the Consumer Affairs Council.

I do not think there would be one member in this Chamber who has not had a complaint about tenancy bonds. They have been a bone of contention for many years, despite the fact that we attempt to advise people what they should do when they rent a property. However, arguments still occur as to what should happen when one tries to retrieve one's bond money. I have been pleased that the Consumer Affairs Council has dealt with this matter because it takes some of the pressure off members of Parliament.

Mr Wilson: That is why the council is getting the sack.

Mr DAVIES: As the member for Dianella has said, that is why the council is getting the sack. It is looking at some of the rip-offs which have been inflicted on the public over many years. Because the council is showing up some of the shonky deals that go on, it has been considered to be a danger and when someone is a threat, he is usually got rid of. So, the Government—which has a splendid record of legislating to get rid of its

embarrassing situations—is to do away with the Consumer Affairs Council.

If the Consumer Affairs Council did not look at the tenancy bonds and funeral costs as well as other matters, who would?

Travel insurance is another matter with which members in this Chamber would have been involved. How often do people insure their luggage or their trips and then find out the small print on the contract prevents them from receiving compensation. Again, people are being ripped off when they find out for some obscure reason that they cannot be refunded. Is this not something which should be looked at by a competent body?

Should not the public be educated as to their rights and as to what is available to them through Government agencies? Do we want these Government agencies to not have work and therefore eventually go out of existence?

The very contentious matter of computer pricing will cause problems in the future. Yesterday a question was asked of the Government on this matter and we were assured that the Government would make sure that the public would not be ripped off, but who is investigating the matter? No-one! The only body which was looking after some consumer matters was the Consumer Affairs Council and that council is to be disbanded because it has become an embarrassment to the Government. It is a disgrace that this should occur because the council was looking into matters which concern the whole community.

At the moment the Consumer Affairs Bureau is understaffed and it is having difficulty meeting the requests which are made to it to investigate certain matters. I do not blame the bureau; I lay blame at the feet of the Government.

I believe that the Council is working to capacity. However, it does not have the staff to do the work that needs to be done. It is a great shame that this part of the bureau which is able to provide some protection for the public will no longer be in existence, especially when its members have offered to work free of charge. This makes me suspicious of the Government's motives; the members say they will continue in the same capacity without any charge whatever to the Government and the Government says it does not want them.

Mr O'Connor: The Government has not said that. Do not misquote it.

Mr DAVIES: This has come through pretty loud and clear. If the Minister is able to give me

an assurance that the council will remain, I will sit down and say no more.

Mr O'Connor: I cannot do that, but what you have said is not correct. The Government has not said it will abolish the council. When the members said they would work for free, I said I would investigate the matter further and come back and discuss it with them before finalisation.

Mr DAVIES: On behalf of the public I am making a plea to the Government to keep this council. I am quite sure that the work its members do puts them to some inconvenience, but that work is invaluable. The council has investigated such matters as travel insurance, funeral costs, and tenancy bonds. These are matters about which we want some positive action taken, and here was an organisation able to do something. So in response to the earlier interjection of the Minister, I wish to tell him that there are reasons that the Consumer Affairs Council should remain in existence.

I would like to remind members that the Bureau of Consumer Affairs spent \$40 000 less than its Budget this year. I would like the powers of the bureau extended so that it can provide some assistance to small businesses. I know there are difficulties in defining the term "small businesses", but I am referring to the individuals who, if they were not in business, would be entitled to help. I also would like the Bureau of Consumer Affairs to offer some assistance to farmers. Surely farmers have legitimate complaints on occasions about the way they are treated by business houses, and surely those complaints should be investigated. However, as a farm is considered to be a business, farmers are excluded from assistance that can be given by the Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

I would like to applaud the work of the bureau, work it has carried out with extremely limited resources. The commissioner (Mr Dick Fletcher) has been fearless in making his findings public, and in attacking organisations which need to be attacked. He has taken the opportunity to bring promptly to notice matters that need attention. I know that his staff have great faith in him. There is just so much that can be done, and I cannot help but feel that the Government does not really concern itself with consumer matters. In fact, the Government feels that the bureau is an embarrassment, and it would like to get rid of it. If the Government intends to start slashing around with its razor, I will give it a few suggestions as this debate proceeds about areas where slashing is necessary.

If the Bureau of Consumer Affairs wants to help the community and businesses, it might look at the Newsagency Board. I believe this organisation comprises four members: One member represents West Australian Newspapers Limited, one member represents *The Sunday Times*, one member represents authorised newsagents, and the fourth member is the secretary of the board. The decisions of this board bind the newsagents of Western Australia.

I would like to recite to members what has happened to a constituent of mine who has a business in Forrestdale. Mr Bongiovanni purchased this business, including goodwill, about three years ago, and he works from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. every day of the year, including Christmas Day and Good Friday. He was selling several hundred newspapers from his shop and suddenly he found that he was not selling any newspapers. He discovered that someone had been allocated a delivery round and that newspapers were being delivered free for a fortnight. No-one had had the courtesy to inform him about this. The first thing he knew was when he asked a customer, "Don't you want your newspaper?" and the customer replied, "No, we are getting a free one for a fortnight and then we will have the paper delivered. I will not be buying them here any more".

The goodwill that Mr Bongiovanni had purchased included a newsagency. It is true that as a subagent he signed a contract to the effect that West Australian Newspapers Ltd. could set up agents or subagents as it wished. However, I would have thought the morality of the situation would demand that Mr Bongiovanni should be offered any delivery round before anyone else.

Mr Bongiovanni, his wife, his daughter, and son-in-law run the business. However, there is another 18-year-old son in the family and as the business will not support another worker, Mr Bongiovanni would have been glad of the opportunity to employ his son on the newspaper round. However, he was never approached about the matter.

One would have thought that at least West Australian Newspapers Limited would ask Mr Bongiovanni whether he wanted this delivery business. When I took up the matter with the company, I received a reply which I believe, because of the language used, was dictated by its solicitors. It says—

The substance of Mr Bongiovanni's complaint is that despite having acted as an agent in the Forrestdale area for this Company for some years, he was not given

the opportunity of establishing a home delivery service in that area when same was mooted by us.

"Mooted" by them—it was organised by them! The letter continues—

The facts of the matter are that on at least two occasions our representatives called on Messrs. Bongiovanni and Delborrello concerning the establishment of a home delivery service in the Forrestdale area. On the last occasion they were emphatic that they did not want to provide a delivery service for our papers.

In the circumstances our Circulation Department shifted its attention to another party who had shown interest in the proposition and who subsequently carried out a survey in the nature of a feasibility study, including the delivery of free newspapers to potential readers.

We are satisfied that we have acted in good faith in this matter and in conformity with our normal practice to offer the opportunity for a delivery round to the shop agent in the area. Having discharged all legal and moral obligations in the matter we cannot now in all conscience reverse a decision to appoint an agent who has kept faith with us merely because Messrs. Bongiovanni and Delborrello have belatedly reconsidered their position and are now prepared to act in the manner required by us under the Agency agreement.

What rubbish! Bongiovanni and Delborrello were never approached, and I believe what these people have told me. And yet West Australian Newspapers Limited say that they were approached, and this company can say it discharged all legal and moral obligations. I point out that the company did not have any moral or legal responsibilities because the agreement says it can do what it did. However, one would have thought that someone would tell these people what was happening.

Of course, once there was an official authorised agency in the area, *The Sunday Times* took the same action with regard to its deliveries. In reply to my complaint this company said—

Mr Bongiovanni has been a direct shop agent for three years and at no time has he offered to improve the service by way of home delivery, although I understand he was twice approached by West Australian Newspapers to do so.

It is true that we did not ask Mr Bongiovanni to start a home delivery which,

in retrospect, may have been an oversight on our part.

At least *The Sunday Times* has the decency to admit that it should have contacted Mr Bongiovanni. The letter continues—

However, we understand from talking to him that even after Mr Rob Fredericks had announced plans to begin a home delivery he did not believe such a service would have been viable. In this, we believe, he had ample time and opportunity to speak to us.

We are sorry Mr Bongiovanni has been upset by the manner in which the new service was begun, which was not our intention.

However, Mr Bongiovanni will continue with this company as a direct shop sales agent.

That was on 25 August. On 22 October the circulation manager of *The Western Mail* said much the same thing, as follows—

It is our policy to have one delivery agent per area, as I believe it is not viable to have two delivery agents working the same area. Mr Fredericks area has also been extended, and now takes in part of another delivery round which has several Western Mail customers.

I understand that in that case free newspapers were given away in an endeavour to establish the round.

I am not complaining about the newspaper organisations seeking to expand their circulations. They are in business for that sort of thing; and, hopefully, the more newspapers they can sell, the less they will cost us. However, I am complaining about the way that Mr Bongiovanni was treated. He bought the goodwill of the business, and part of the business was the newsagency. People coming in to buy newspapers every day naturally bought other things as well. The newsagency was a big part of his business. Then the Newsagency Board of Western Australia said, "We will establish a round there", but Bongiovanni was never approached. Is not this the type of thing that should be investigated by the Consumer Affairs Bureau?

Such a thing has caused distress in other parts of Australia. I know that the Commonwealth organisation also is giving consideration to it. I understand that eventually the matter in this State will be tidied up.

What right has the Newsagency Board to suggest that another agent should be put in an area, when Mr Bongiovanni has assured me more than once that he was never approached?

Mr Bongiovanni took the matter to his solicitor. He wanted to take court action, but there was nothing he could do about it. People are able to sit down and affect a man's livelihood, as Mr Bongiovanni has had his livelihood affected. He has worked hard, and he has been in business for about three years. He works 12 hours a day, 365 days a year. Now he finds that because of some action taken by an outside organisation, he is treated in this manner. Apparently the board has power to do what it has done. The action may be legitimate, but certainly it is not moral.

For that reason, we want the Consumer Affairs Council; and that is why we want it to consider complaints from other people.

It is for this sort of reason that we want the Consumer Affairs Council to look at travel insurance, funeral costs, tenancy bonds, and the other things which cause members of Parliament no end of work and concern. If we have an experienced organisation looking at these matters, it could make recommendations to the commissioner and the Minister. As slow as the Government might be to react, if the desire were there we could expect some action to be taken.

I do not decry the work that this Government has done in some areas. In relation to the Small Claims Tribunals, the Government has made adjustments and made it a little easier for the public and members of Parliament. If somebody had a complaint, he would not have to threaten blackmail, but he would be able to refer the matter to the Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

Hopefully, we will see positive action, if the Consumer Affairs Council remains.

Mr WILSON: In times of economic stringency, it is necessary and desirable for bodies like the Bureau of Consumer Affairs to be more vigilant than at other times. At times like this we find that a minority of leeches in the community are prepared to take advantage of the weaknesses, the ignorance, and the relative poverty of people in the community who are bombarded day in and day out in television and other advertising with the information that everything is available to them, and everything is available now, even though they cannot afford it. People are being urged to buy when they can least afford it.

I refer in particular to the practice which has been drawn to my attention on a number of occasions of a concern known as Bridgewater Importers which operates from East Victoria Park. This concern seems to concentrate on people in low income areas. It seems to concentrate on people at a time when it might be

considered they are at their weakest and when they can least afford to purchase goods.

Bridgewater Importers operates on a door-to-door basis. In some cases it issues notification by letter advising of its intention to be available for calls. The firm offers free prizes, which range from metal chains to a trip to Bali. Unfortunately, when the unwitting victim completes the deal and talks about the free gift, he finds it is a metal chain rather than a trip to Bali. By then, of course, he has been inveigled into the deal, and it is too late—not too late according to the Act, but too late according to the advice the purchaser receives from the salesperson.

This firm offers goods which appear to be very glamorously packaged. They are glamorous products, and they appear mostly to be imported. The products are highly priced.

In both cases that have been referred to me, the firm has signed up unwitting people for sums of several hundreds of dollars. Later the firm has indicated to the people that they are obliged to comply with the contracts they have signed, and there is no way they can be released from the contracts. The people are told that if they seek to take action to cancel the contract, court action will be taken against them.

I put a question on notice to the Minister, and he indicated that the Bureau of Consumer Affairs is aware of the practice in this respect. The practices have been investigated, and if any complaints providing sufficient evidence of breaches of the Door to Door (Sales) Act are lodged, prosecutions will be launched. The Minister advised that the present legislation covers the matter adequately.

It is unfortunate that in most cases in which people are taken advantage of in this way, for all sorts of reasons they are not aware of their rights to refer the matter to the bureau. We cannot blame the people for this. They are placed in a position in which they think they cannot cancel the contract.

This firm operates in direct contravention of the Act. It does not provide the people with whom it is dealing with the notice prescribed under the Act, informing them of their right to cancel within a period of seven days. The firm does not issue the statement prescribed in the schedule to the Act. Deliberately the firm misleads the customers and the potential customers with whom it is dealing.

I trust that, in accordance with the Minister's advice in answer to my question, action will be taken to prosecute these people who are blatantly contravening the provisions of the Act and, at the

same time, misleading the prospective customers in relation to those provisions.

The other practice I raised recently by way of question was the one which is indulged in by an organisation known as Australian Homelocators. I understand this is an organisation which originates outside this country—in Canada, I believe—and operates on an international basis and in other States of Australia.

The particular practice adopted by this organisation once again is one which, if not aimed at, certainly hits hardest the people who can least afford to be taken advantage of. Recently the activities of this company were drawn to my attention by a young couple who up until not long ago had been living in Quairading. The husband's employment had ceased there and he had applied for and obtained employment in the metropolitan area. As a result, they had to make rapid arrangements to obtain accommodation in Perth so that the husband could take up his employment.

This young couple were in a very difficult situation. They did not know anybody in Perth nor did they have any relatives or contacts here. They tried to find accommodation within reasonable reach of the man's employment by contacting various estate agents, but they failed to find suitable rental premises.

They then read in the newspaper amongst the extensive advertisements which are placed there by this organisation that it would be able to find them accommodation very quickly. In fact they were taken with a particular advertisement which referred to accommodation in the Yokine area which would have been highly suitable for them.

Mr O'Connor: It is a very good area.

Mr WILSON: In some respects it is a very good area and it is certainly a very centrally located one for people looking for accommodation in Osborne Park. It may have other highlights which attract people to it, but that was the particular reason in this case.

The people to whom I have referred were able to visit an office of Australian Homelocators and make inquiries about the accommodation referred to in the advertisement in the newspaper. When they arrived at the office they found that before information about the specific whereabouts of the accommodation would be divulged they would have to sign a contract and pay \$40. They were so desperate they complied with that requirement in good faith.

When these people paid their \$40, they were told, "We will look up our records to see whether the accommodation is still available". Of course,

when the records were checked it was found the accommodation was available no longer.

Those people had paid their \$40 and then they found the accommodation was not even available. They could not even look at it, because it had gone.

That seems to me to be a very low practice indeed. Of course, the story told by the person, who had a foreign accent, when I made inquiries at the office was that they entered into a contract and the contract was valid for three months. The people could keep going back to the office and checking the accommodation lists. He said they had a pretty good deal, because the company could find accommodation quicker than anyone else.

The fact is these people answered an advertisement with respect to an offer of particular accommodation and they had been inveigled into that contract and had paid \$40 which they could ill-afford to pay.

Mr O'Connor: Did they refer it back to the Consumer Affairs Bureau?

Mr WILSON: They referred it back to the company concerned and they were told that, when people referred matters to the Consumer Affairs Bureau, the bureau always referred the matter back to the company.

Mr O'Connor: That is fair enough.

Mr WILSON: It may be fair enough in a way, but the problem about that is that when unsuspecting people who are not used to dealing with officialdom are told that story, they immediately think, "What is the use of going to the Consumer Affairs Bureau if it is going to refer the matter back to the people who have inveigled us into this rotten deal? What is the use of going to the bureau?"

Mr O'Connor: They do that in the interests of the consumer who may have been taken for a ride.

Mr WILSON: They may do that in the interests of the consumer who may have been taken for a ride, but the Minister should also be able to see the point I am making that if people are told, "Do not bother to go to the Consumer Affairs Bureau, because it will only refer the matter back to us" there is a very good bet they will not bother to go to the bureau.

Since this couple approached me, I have had reports from people who have been diddled in the same manner. They have told me when they have complained to Australian Homelocators, they have found a queue of other people all of whom also have complained about being inveigled into these sorts of deals under false pretences.

I do not care whether this is an organisation with an international reputation or whether it is operating in every State, if it is getting up to these sorts of practices it is high time a serious investigation was made into it and the practices were stopped.

We all know that, at the present time, there is a very severe shortage of accommodation, particularly of private accommodation, and it is predicted that trend will continue and increase. More and more people will be finding themselves in desperate circumstances seeking accommodation.

I do not think it is fair that we should have leeches in our community, such as the company to which I have referred, which trade on that situation and make money out of young people—it is largely young people who are involved—who are desperately looking for accommodation. Such companies should not obtain money under false pretences from these people.

I was a little concerned with the answer given by the Minister when I raised this matter by way of question. He indicated the Consumer Affairs Bureau was aware of the practices being adopted by this concern. However, he went on to say that should sufficient evidence exist to support a breach of the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act, the firm would be prosecuted. I trust that does not mean the bureau is not vigorously pursuing the matter, but rather that it is very concerned about such practices and intends to do all it can to assure itself that, in view of the fact that these complaints have been made, evidence is available. It appears to me from the cases which have been drawn to my attention that there is something very much amiss in the operations of this body.

Finally, I should like to add to a matter which was raised by the member for Victoria Park and draw attention to what is obviously becoming a need which should be met with a great deal more urgency than is being displayed at the present time. I refer to the need for reform of legislation pertaining to tenancy agreements.

A number of matters have been referred to me which indicate that, because of the movement in private rents, because of an increasing tendency for a change-over in ownership of flat and unit accommodation, and because of other tendencies whereby this sort of accommodation is changing hands and new owners are interested not so much in continuing with the properties as rental properties, but with converting them into strata title unit accommodation for sale, the opportunity

is taken to increase rents and bond moneys quite drastically.

Because of these sorts of movements and developments it is becoming increasingly important that the need for reform of legislation pertaining to tenancy agreements be examined. Earlier this year the Minister told me the matter was under examination and legislation which has been adopted in other States was being monitored to see how it is operating there.

He did tell me recently that the matter is still under examination by the senior referee of the Small Claims Tribunal and the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. It concerns me that that may indicate it is not being given the urgency it might be given with the developments that are taking place, especially with regard to the movements in rents and the change in ownership of private rental accommodation, and other matters. A more urgent approach must be adopted in regard to them. Many people who are being affected are long-stay tenants in private accommodation and quite a few of them are elderly people, either on pensions or in retirement, and those people are very vulnerable. Their incomes do not shift in tune with increases in the cost of living to the extent that is desirable and therefore they can be placed at risk if they are forced by some means to leave long-term private rental accommodation where the only recourse available is to the Housing Commission and we all know of the pressure that the commission is under now especially in regard to pensioner accommodation. I know of people in these situations who have been forced to seek accommodation in caravan parks because that is the only resort they can go to. It is a matter which is accruing to itself a greater priority and one which should be treated with a greater degree of urgency by the Bureau of Consumer Affairs. I trust that the Minister will see that these remarks are taken on board and that they may be to some effect.

Mr O'CONNOR: I acknowledge the comments made by members in connection with the consumer affairs Division in this Budget and say initially in replying to the member for Morley that in connection with globes and the voltages involved—it is not the first time he has brought this matter to this Chamber—there is justification in what he says about the problems involved.

There are many people who are buying globes that blow out more quickly than they ought to if the right globe had been purchased. This has been discussed with the SEC, and its accounts in the future will go out with advice on the correct voltage. This will help to some degree.

Mr Tonkin: Not really. The globes are not available in some shops.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am coming to that. The fact that they do give this information will be to the advantage of consumers generally. As has been pointed out by the member for Morley, consumers do not realise when they buy a globe that a problem might exist. The fact that this advice will be distributed with an SEC account will certainly assist. I have already spoken to the Bureau of Consumer Affairs in connection with the globes involved. One of the solutions suggested was that the manufacturers should have a supply of the globes. We have spoken to them about ensuring the supply of sufficient quantities to enable people to purchase them when required.

Mr Tonkin: If it is not worth their while to manufacture enough the tariff should be lowered so that overseas globes can be brought in without their being too expensive.

Mr O'CONNOR: Certainly. The problem is that they manufacture these only about once a year. They are very irregularly manufactured, if that is the correct way to put it, and because of this supplies of globes do run out in time.

I agree with what the honourable member is saying. The SEC is trying to cope with the problem and is letting people know the right type of globe they ought to use in our system. We had discussions with people to make sure they manufactured sufficient quantities for a full year so they are always available. If not, I agree with the other points mentioned and they ought to be looked at.

In relation to the Albany issue, this is the first time it has been brought to my notice, but I am not saying someone has not written to me; this is the first time I recollect its having been done. There are difficulties in this field. While it is necessary for us to protect consumers, they cannot be protected totally. Some consumers will allow themselves to run into a corner and some irresponsible people will push them into a corner to a greater degree than they ought to, but through the Bureau of Consumer Affairs we try to cope with these problems in the interests of the consumers generally.

The comment was made by two or three members in connection with the Consumer Affairs Council. I am not being critical, nor have I ever been, of that council, but when it was brought into being some seven, eight, or 10 years ago, the situation was different from that prevailing today. Now we have the Bureau of Consumer Affairs which pursues fairly strongly any issues of a consumer being disadvantaged.

This did not apply when the Consumer Affairs Council initially came into force. The member for Victoria Park commented that we had decided to abolish the Consumer Affairs Council. We did say it was our intention to do so and I discussed this with Mr Harmer, the chairman of the council, after which I agreed to have further discussions with him in an effort to see if the operation could be continued in view of the fact that the members of the council have said they would be prepared to forego their board fees. My information is not completely compiled at this stage, but while there is about \$6 000 in board fees involved in this area, the total cost of its running account has been approximately \$30 000 a year or approximately \$100 000 in that three-year period. If it can be proved that it has worked beneficially in that area, we have to look at it, and we will; however, if it is proved in the run through that it is only duplicating work normally done by the bureau, we will have to look at it in a different way. One of the feedbacks we get from the community is that we have too many boards and organisations, and I agree.

It is easy to set up these organisations. Do not think I am criticising the Consumer Affairs Council. We have so many boards and organisations set up and, while each of them might cost only \$30 000 a year, all in all this costs millions of dollars to the taxpayer and the consumers of this State. If the jobs that they do are duplicated in another area, we must in all sincerity have a look at whether it is necessary to continue them. That is how the Government feels in connection with this issue. I appreciate the work done by council members. I am not one who will retain a board at cost unless it is being justifiably worked. There are hundreds of boards in this State. Each one that we suggest could be abolished will attract a complaint from some direction, and with justification.

Members of the Opposition, together with Government members, realise that we must look into these things and that if we are going to have 50, 100, or 200 boards, the consumers—the public—are the ones who pay in the long term. There have been cries from the public in many areas and from members of this Chamber to reduce the number of boards in the interests of our economy. If we are to have them all operating—charges involved and board fees are only two areas—the public must pay for them.

As a member of the Government and as a person who is trying to respond actively in the interests of the public, I find there are boards and organisations that we could do without that will not cause consumer disadvantage in the

community. I support it in that regard. However, if a board is doing a good job and it is thought we must retain it, I will consider the situation in a different light. While the board fees for the Consumer Affairs Council might be \$6 000 a year—I think that approximates the figure with the secretariat and the work involved—it costs about \$30 000 a year, which is not a large sum of money when it is looked at as an organisation; but if we look at \$30 000, for 30 boards we are talking about \$1 million a year and we must assess whether or not the public ought to be paying for the value they are getting from it and whether there is duplication in this area.

Members referred to consumer protection. Today we have consumer protection to a greater degree than ever before.

I would like to point out that, as members know, there are a few unscrupulous business people in this State and we must legislate against them. If everyone operated as 95 per cent of the business people do, we would not have a problem. It is the other approximately 5 per cent of the business houses that cause concern. However, we also have problems with approximately 5 per cent of consumers. At times some people make false and malicious statements about business enterprises. These people, through sheer pigheadedness in some cases, come back to the bureau time and time again. While we have these people who make false and malicious statements, there ought to be some way of charging them a fee for the damage they cause.

Mr Tonkin: That is fair.

Mr O'CONNOR: These people cause damage not only to the industry concerned, but also to other people. If business firms take people for a ride they must pay for it, and if consumers do the same thing, there ought to be some way that the industry involved can recover the costs it has incurred.

Mr Pearce: It is easy to see the motivation for a company which is acting in an unscrupulous way, but what would be the motivation for the people to whom you have referred?

Mr O'CONNOR: Sometimes people wish to avoid paying a fair debt, and sometimes it is a case of individuals having too much time on their hands. The member for Gosnells may know some unfortunate people in his electorate who perhaps do not have a family and who are looking for something to do. I have known people of this type who have contacted the Bureau of Consumer Affairs with a false charge.

Mr Pearce: Do these people go to the bureau?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes they do. Always there will be this sort of person. To give an extreme example: A company may be operating very well and endeavouring to do the right thing, and one of these people might come along and because of false complaints, the company loses thousands of dollars. We must try to bring these pests—if I may call them that—into line in the same way that we try to bring into line the few irresponsible businesses in the State.

I have noted the comments made by the members. I feel that our consumer affairs operation here is better now than anything we have ever had. I do not intend to let our standard drop.

Division 27 put and passed.

Division 28—Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, \$1 204 000—put and passed.

Division 29: Agriculture, \$37 620 000—

Mr EVANS: For the third time I would like to refer to the problems associated with a spray-on agricultural chemical which is intended to kill lice on sheep. In an earlier debate I told members that I had received a copy of a report from CSIRO which indicated that no problems had been experienced, although two scouring companies and one technologist in this State had found they could not remove the particular product from the fleece.

I point out that information on this matter has since been received from two other sources. Firstly, CSIRO has brought out another report, a copy of which it has forwarded to the Western Australian Director of Agriculture. It is significant that this report is not in agreement with the report issued by CSIRO several months previously.

I would like to place on record the substance of this report so that members can compare it with the previous report and its significance will not be lost. The particular section of the report reads as follows—

The following are the far more precise details of the work carried out:

Greasy wool

The sample, about 550 g, was received in a plastic bag bearing the descriptions:

"Supplied by Private Treaty Wool Buyers, 27.10.81 Greasy Wool.

Sample from back line Gt. Southern 100 miles."

The dates of application and shearing are not known, but the staple length appeared to be about 30-35 mm.

The wool had a fairly heavy application of "Clout" which was mingled in some parts with a red brand. The application was much heavier than that on the large batch of wool processed by Mr D. E. Henshaw, and was similar to that on the small samples scoured earlier in the laboratory by Dr. G. F. Wood.

Scouring

The wool was scoured in a five-bowl conventional scouring machine using fresh scouring liquors under the conditions given in Table 1. The detergent used was Lissapol TN450. The residual-grease content of the scoured wool was 0.76%

I point out that, in the trade, conventional normal scouring entails a four-bowl process, and so the report indicates that this test involved a heavier than normal scouring. Set out in a table is the volume in litres, detergent concentration, soda ash concentration, temperature, and the time in the bowl. The report continues—

Most of the "Clout" and some of the red brand were not removed in scouring. There remained considerable tippiness in the staples.

Carding

Because of the small sample, the scoured wool was carded down a narrow strip on a Platt card, the sliver being collected by hand and laid out to form a sliver bundle of about the right weight to feed to the gill box. It was hand-sprayed with an antistatic oil to facilitate gilling. During carding, significant quantities of "Clout" were removed by the burr beaters, but there were a large number of specks up to about 2 mm across scattered through the card sliver.

Gilling

The card sliver was gilled four times, additional antistatic oil being sprayed on after each gilling. The final gilled sliver contained the same quantity of "Clout" as the card sliver.

That was not of very great value. The report continues—

Combing

A very small quantity of a single end of the gilled sliver was put through a rectilinear comb by turning the comb by hand. The top sliver contained no "Clout" particles whereas the noil contained many particles.

From that series of processes which are normal in the preparation of yarn from greasy wool, the report concluded as follows—

The operation of all the machines used was non-typical because of the small quantity of wool involved. However, we believe the results above are a good qualitative indication of how the wool would behave in practice. We would therefore expect that normal processing of wool in the condition of the sample tested would show residual "Clout" after scouring, carding and gilling. It seems probable that the top would be "Clout"-free, but the noil would contain significant quantities.

That is the point I made earlier; this is the problem which may face the trade. If the problem manifests itself to any extent, somebody will be faced with a cost, and obviously it will be the producer. It is time the producers insisted something was done about the matter.

I make the point once again that the Government went ahead and registered a chemical without its full implications being known; the Government's action was quite precipitous. Admittedly, the Minister indicated in answer to a question that the Government was undertaking tests on an improved chemical in three separate areas of the great southern district. However, I am unaware of whether further tests on the effect of this chemical are being considered by the Government or the department.

I refer members now to a letter to me from the New Zealand Consul (Commercial) in response to a telex he received from Mr H. G. Adlam, officer in charge of the animal section of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Wellington. The consul states—

Sudan red dye passed scourability tests before licensed for use but there is some doubt on its scourability when incorporated in formulation of Decacide.

Further tests being conducted to clarify situation.

So far, we have had one test from CSIRO which indicated there was no problem; three tests from local scourers which indicated there was a problem; and, a further test from CSIRO indicating there were problems. I have samples of the tests conducted by CSIRO and also samples of scouring tests which I personally witnessed; they are available for inspection by members.

It is up to the Minister to indicate that something will be done, even to the extent of withdrawing the chemical from sale until such time as there is a positive understanding of the

problems which may be faced by the producers of Western Australia. I know the Minister said that it is a commercial judgment and if the producers lose, probably they will make it up on the time saved and the ease of normal husbandry and management. That may be so. At the same time, problems could arise in the wool trade which could have been determined long before this.

The next matter to which I wish to refer—I regret there are not more sheep-producer members present in the Chamber—is the manner in which this Government is sitting back and allowing confrontation to take place within the live sheep trade. The Government has not attempted to resolve this situation. Unless some action is taken before the commencement of next year, problems could occur. The apprehension of the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union is well known and understandable. At a meeting of the ACTU meat industry employees raised the matter of the live sheep trade and its impact on the total meat industry of Australia. The matter was placed on the council's agenda of 1981, and a policy decision was made. When a body such as the ACTU supports a single union and brings down a policy decision, surely the matter should be given some credence and the Government should be appreciative of what could occur.

The response of the Government has been simply to stand aloofly aside and say, "We will not interfere in the live sheep trade". The Government could be right; I do not know; however, neither does the Government know. Nobody has carried out a detailed, analytical study of the full ramifications of this trade and its implications upon the rest of the meat industry and the ancillary, peripheral, and associated industries. The Government has chosen to ignore this fact, and the fact that the jobs of workers in skilled trades and in all other areas have been lost and more could be lost. That is the premise on which the concern of the meat industry employees is based. The following article appeared in the *Western Farmer* of 13 August 1981—

The meat union has claimed that the live sheep trade has contributed significantly to the decline in processing, and the subsequent loss of jobs.

Meanwhile the AMIEU is proposing to launch a campaign to boost mutton sales in the Middle East.

Here is a union showing its bona fides and its preparedness to put its money where its mouth is by way of the expenditure of \$20 000 on a market study on carcase sheep meats in the Middle East. Surely market research of this kind is the job of

Governments. This Government has shown a deplorable lack of initiative in that regard. It has a poor track record.

Having established that the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union is prepared to have a go, I ask: What about the other side? What about the Government? An article in the *Countryman* of 15 October stated—

The managers and owners of closed meatworks know how unrealistic it is to expect that meatworkers will not come to the conclusion that the live export trade is costing them their jobs.

That conclusion may not have a total appreciation of all the economic factors involved; nevertheless, it is a logical and understandable conclusion. To continue—

At the same time, and no less unexpectedly, producers can't see how less live sheep exports mean that we will kill more to eat here or that we will be able to export more in carcass form.

The WA flock now totals about 30.5 million, down from 35 million five years ago. This was mainly because of the drought, but there also has been a high turnoff for the slaughter and export areas. Dr Lighfoot from the sheep and wool branch of the Department of Agriculture expects the percentage of ewes kept in the State flock to rise to in excess of 50 per cent in due course. This means there will be a greater turnoff of younger sheep. That is a very profitable way in which to farm sheep in these economic circumstances confronting primary producers.

The primary producers have a very valid point which can be understood, but so do the meat workers. They have taken their submission, complaints, and fears to the ACTU, which has made a policy determination which is to the effect that after 1 January it is prepared to take action to curtail the export of live sheep. It is doing this with very understandable motives, being those put forward by the AMIEU.

But this stupid Government is prepared to sit back and allow confrontation to drift forward with the same inevitability that World War I occurred. It is not prepared to do a single thing to prevent this happening.

This Government does not know the number of young sheep which are exported. The Minister was unable to give me this information, but the DPI figures reveal that it is a fairly substantial number. I will not quote the document put out as circular 399/81 and headed "Policy Decision: Meat Processing Industry", but it contains the

intention of the ACTU to support the position put to it by the AMIEU.

It is for that reason, in the total interest of the industry, that the Government has at least to establish what the true position is and what the relevance of the live sheep trade happens to be. It has to get all these things into proper perspective with other industries and its role in primary production generally.

One thing is for sure, it would be far more expeditious and economic at least to have a study that could give the arguments, the contentions, and the precise figures than merely to roll along into confrontation. Of course, the Government will get political gain from any confrontation, and that is its motivation. It has done this before and it will do it again. It is as cold blooded and cynical as that. In the interests of the whole industry, from the producers to the transport operators, a study must be carried out. I call on the Government to do something as a matter of urgency.

I turn now to the Treasurer's financial statement and I shall make several points about its presentation and general remarks relating to agriculture. The Treasurer indicated that the department has reviewed its activities and has reduced or eliminated a number that are less important to today's circumstances. It is regrettable these are not outlined in some detail, because there is an element of seclusion about the savings resulting from these decisions and the additional funds proposed for the department which are said will enable the Government to maintain the high quality of support to our very important agricultural and pastoral industries.

The spending on agriculture is to increase this year by 13 per cent, which means the Government has budgeted for just slightly more than for 1980-81. The figure will be just ahead of inflation.

The Treasurer referred to a major increase in work associated with soil conservation and salinity. This is highly desirable. The precise details of the work will be interesting to know. Mention was made of a tree pull scheme for granny smith apples. Unfortunately this has become an inevitability. I do not know the precise details of the apple juicing factory at Capel. It was lauded as the great green hope, but it did not work out that way. If the Manjimup cannery had been given that opportunity instead of an outside firm it may have been a different story. But the problem of oversupply has been recognised and action is to be taken.

The Treasurer indicated that the mustering of cattle on the Fox and Ord River Stations will

continue to prevent degradation and to eradicate disease. He said that monitoring of all pastoral areas would be maintained. This has been an ongoing operation since 1972. It is most necessary in this region. He also indicated that work would continue on beef, sheep, and carcase classification. Again, this is desirable.

The plant breeding research is a programme for which the Department of Agriculture can properly take credit. I think any breeders' legislation will have to give this great prominence.

I did not have the opportunity last evening of asking the Minister for Agriculture whether the Denmark Research Station was to be closed or reduced.

Mr Old: I have said before, and say again, that all research stations are under review. No final decision has been made.

Mr EVANS: What about Northam?

Mr Old: No decision has been made. The only decision made has been about Avondale and Woodlands. Woodlands has been closed.

Mr EVANS: It comes back to the breeding institute at Katanning, which is still open. The Opposition posed several questions about this institute at the time it was established.

Mr Stephens: Not just the Opposition.

Mr Old: It was only the Opposition.

Mr Stephens: The National Party queried it for some time, as you well know.

Mr EVANS: I wonder whether that was what the Minister was referring to. It is still open to question whether it was a political decision to establish at Katanning the Animal Breeding and Research Institute. Strong circumstantial evidence is available to suggest the decision was political, and that evidence is in light of the important situation that could have been brought about at Muresk. In regard to this matter the Government has not established its credibility; the matter is still open to question.

At page 21 of the *Financial Statement* for 1981-82 the Government states—

The department has reviewed its activities and has reduced or eliminated a number that are less important in today's circumstances.

I cannot help wondering why many projects have had their funding cut back. The statement goes on to refer to two research stations, and a number of projects are alluded to. In all, seven areas of Government activity are referred to in the *Financial Statement*. In spite of increased expenditure generally for the Department of Agriculture it is unfortunate that these projects

have had their funding cut back. Certainly it would be of interest to know what areas of activity will be abolished. The increase of the curtailment of services is very difficult to reconcile with what should be done; it is not possible to ascertain from the manner in which the research and other services are referred to.

Only one area is not open to question, but in the overall picture of agriculture there is a paucity of available information. Much of the information we receive comes from circuitous sources, and that information comes to hand too late for the Opposition to raise meaningful points of view. I hope the Minister in his reply will give some detail of certain matters, and some explanations.

Mr OLD: I thank the member for Warren for his general support of the budget, and I congratulate him on his tenacity during this session in relation to that great agricultural aid, Clout.

Mr Evans: Do you intend to tell us what you will do about the problem?

Mr Davies: You will get a clout if you keep that up!

Mr OLD: I have just started. I listened carefully to the member's remarks, not that there was much to listen to.

Mr Evans: You are very testy.

Mr OLD: Talking about being testy, that is what we have done in regard to Clout—on several occasions we have tested it. The member for Warren raised several problems, and I have acknowledged at all times there are potential problems with the use of Clout. Also, I have brought to this Chamber data from tests conducted by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation on wool treated with Clout and sent from Western Australia. The wool had been put through the normal scouring process.

The tests indicated that no problem existed. The wool had been treated with Clout for some 10 months and had gone through a weathering period, and we realised there could be circumstances in regard to premature wool whereby the wool would not be easy to scour, or the normal scouring process would not be effective. We have freely admitted this point to the extent that we have advised growers generally that if they intend to sell sheep prior to next shearing the use of Clout is something they should consider seriously because of the possibility I have outlined.

In order to come to some firm conclusions on the present formulation it would be necessary to carry out tests at various times of the year on wool that had undergone various weathering conditions. As I said, the wool sent for testing was from sheep which had been treated prior to the release of Clout, and had the benefit of 10 months of wool growth and some weathering.

The department has honoured its commitment to the problem by giving the warning it has to producers, and ensuring that a warning in regard to mycotic dermatitis is placed on all labels of Clout containers. It is now up to the sheep producers to determine whether they wish to use Clout and under what circumstances they may use it.

I inform you, Mr Chairman, I have received representation from a large number of primary producers on an individual basis who have asked me to ensure that Clout continues to be available to them because they consider it is one of the greatest products that has become available to the industry, despite the fact that some problems have been encountered with it.

As the member for Warren pointed out, the department currently is conducting tests at three locations with a different formulation, and at this stage those tests show great promise. Unfortunately we cannot expect conclusive evidence until the tests have been conducted for a certain period. Probably early next year data will be available on the testing of the formulation. However, I believe from conversations I have had with people involved with this matter from other States there will be an entirely satisfactory formulation available, and it will be satisfactory from all points of view, and able to be used at all times.

The Farmers and Graziers Association in its recent publication refers to remarks made by the general president of the association. The article is headed "Hands off Clout", suggesting that politicians keep their noses out and hands off because Clout is of great benefit to the industry. That article is another indication of the feeling of producers. I can understand why some sections of the industry are concerned about the use of Clout, and I share that concern. However, I reiterate I do not have enough evidence even to contemplate deregistering the product.

The member for Warren spoke at some length about the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union and its attitude towards the live sheep export industry. He quoted from what I assume to be a newspaper report which stated that the AMIEU is prepared to contribute to a study

group travelling to the Middle East. It was not very long ago that the Western Australian Government financed a study group which was sent to the Middle East to investigate circumstances in regard to the live sheep export industry. That study group included a representative of the AMIEU, and it carried out a comprehensive tour. I doubt much more would be learnt at this stage than was learnt by the delegation on the previous occasion.

The Muslims still want to purchase live sheep; they are still not convinced that carcasses exported from here, even though the sheep are slaughtered under Hallel conditions and certified as such, are completely satisfactory for their requirements from the taste point of view and from the aspect of their religious requirement.

I remind the member that last year we conducted a series of tripartite meetings of the industry, the Government, and the AMIEU to discuss the problems raised by the union. These meetings were chaired by the Deputy Premier; I think three were held at various times throughout the year. At the final meeting the union undertook to go away to do some studies on plans for alternative employment for its members in periods when the number of livestock to be put up for slaughter was minimal. It was thought that if we could find alternative work at the various meatworks the people looking for work would be catered for over the period when there was a low number of livestock available. I believe we have not heard from the AMIEU since it decided to conduct those studies. The only indication I have had that the union is considering the matter is that Mr Peter Cook rang my office some six or eight weeks ago to seek the receipt of a deputation headed by him and including members of the union. I advised my secretary to make the necessary arrangements, but to date no arrangements have been made.

I can say with some degree of sincerity that it is certainly not a lack of communication on my part or that of the Government that has upset arrangements with the AMIEU.

The live sheep export industry, as the member for Warren well knows, is of paramount importance to Western Australia's livestock industry. If it were not for the export of live sheep one would not have difficulty in hazarding a guess about the situation in which the industry would be—it would be in a very difficult situation. The number of sheep being put up for slaughter has not diminished; in fact, it has increased steadily. It peaked in the years 1975-76 and 1976-77, and went down to approximately four million in the years afterwards. Prior to that period, in the

drought years, the highest number of sheep and lambs slaughtered in one year was 4.53 million, and in 1980-81 4.5 million were slaughtered despite the fact that 3.26 million live sheep were exported. Those figures speak for themselves.

The advent of the live sheep export industry encouraged the breeding of sheep for that industry, and the increased breeding has increased the number of sheep available for slaughter. Those figures are available for all to see.

Two other matters were raised, although they did not take up as much time as the others to which I have referred. One point related to the amount of money available to the orchard industry for tree pull. The member in whose electorate the canning factory lies has a great affinity for that factory, and rightly so. He suggested that if the juicing operation had been situated at Manjimup there would have been a different story to tell. We would be only guessing if we tried to work out whether or not that is so.

I believe the firm, Bulmer Australia Ltd., has acted in good faith. It received a considerable tonnage of apples in its first year with the express hope that it would double that tonnage in the second year. Unfortunately, the world market in apple juice has slumped to a degree and it has not been able to quit its stocks. It is reasonable to accept the fact that it has had to curtail its activities. I have been in contact with Bulmer on several occasions and I am convinced of its sincerity of purpose and once the world apple juicing market improves the operation will go ahead. It is a good operation which is utilising a facility in a dairy factory at Capel which now works as a 12-months-of-the-year operation.

Finally, I come to the old story of the Animal Breeding and Research Institute at Katanning and the not very thinly veiled inference that it was established at Katanning because it happens to be in my electorate. My electoral figures in Katanning indicate that I do not need an Animal Breeding and Research Institute to win the seat.

Let me reiterate the facts which I have put before the Chamber on several occasions. A committee, comprising industry people from all over the State, was formed to find a suitable location for the Animal Breeding and Research Institute. It decided that the great southern would be a good place for it and Narrogin, Wagin, and Gnowangerup were considered. However, the committee was able to buy a property at Katanning, with my blessing. I would have been equally happy to see it placed in Wagin,

Gnowangerup or Narrogin, although my colleague is doing quite well in Narrogin.

I know that there are people in this Chamber whom one could never convince that is the truth, but I have just reiterated it for posterity.

Division 29 put and passed.

Divisions 30 to 32—Agriculture Protection Board, \$6 690 000; Rural Adjustment Authority, \$367 000; Western Australian Meat Commission, \$2 748 000—put and passed.

Division 33: Crown Law, \$16 251 000—

Mr JAMIESON: I would like to draw attention to the fact that I received an assurance from the Deputy Premier last year on a matter I had raised on a number of occasions. I cannot name the person, but he was a boy who was 15½ years old when he was imprisoned, and no-one has been able to work out a way of establishing when he will be released, despite the assurances given by the Deputy Premier.

I found out as late as yesterday that things have not improved. The young man concerned has been transferred from Fremantle Prison to Bunbury Regional Prison. The last letter I received on the matter was from the Chief Secretary, who was acting for the Attorney General, stating that some negotiations were being made with the boy's family. However, I received an assurance as late as yesterday from the family that no-one has been near them. It is high time Cabinet took some positive action to have this boy released.

The boy was convicted of the crime of attempted rape and I did give the whole sorry picture to the Chamber when I raised the matter initially. Many people have been convicted of all sorts of heinous crimes and have served only four or five years before their release. In this case the boy was 15½ years of age when the crime was committed and he is now 23 years of age. It seems a long time for a person to be incarcerated and some consideration should be given to this matter because the Parole Board has, on a number of occasions, made recommendations that action should be taken to have the boy released.

I believe it was a foolish move to send the young man back to Bunbury, when we consider the circumstances of the case. His mother and sisters are now living in the metropolitan area, although one sister lives in Bunbury. If the young man is not released into society he will become very soured. While he did not seem to be a brilliant type of person, when I saw him he did not seem to be all that bad. Through judicial lines, the Government has been prepared to

release people of much less character. This crime was committed by a foolish boy of 15½ years, but it is high time something was done to have him released into the community.

His mother and sisters ring me constantly to find out whether anything has been done. I think it was a bad move to send him to Bunbury because there is not much opportunity there to get people into community activity. At one time the work release system had a good record, but because a man killed a young couple while he was on release, the Bunbury people have not been very receptive to prison working parties mixing with the community. I suppose they are entitled to be worried about that sort of thing; nevertheless we will always have a situation where we will take a risk.

I understand the young man's stepfather has made overtures to provide a job, and such information is readily available, but no-one seems to be interested. A parole officer is responsible for him in Bunbury, but his family is in the city.

His mother went to Bunbury to see him on his birthday, but as it was a Sunday and he was involved in a sporting activity she was not allowed access to him because of security reasons.

Many young people get themselves into trouble, but by the time they reach maturity they have sorted themselves out and have become good citizens. I believe this young man should be given a chance.

If the Premier would consult the file on this matter he would note that the answers to correspondence have been rather tardy; in fact the situation is disgraceful. One letter I wrote to the Attorney General's Department was lost for some time and I suggest this matter needs close scrutiny.

I do not wish to give the name of the young man concerned, but his mother has remarried and if the newspapers desire to talk to his mother, I am quite happy for this to occur. I believe newspapers take up all sorts of matters such as this. There is a desire on the part of this young man's family to see him released and as he is attached to his mother I think there is a chance for his rehabilitation.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If I may respond on behalf of the Attorney General, the particular case to which the member has referred is not known to me in detail. However, I do remember some of the circumstances and the background of the case.

I have long since learned with cases such as this that they are not always as obvious as they may appear on the surface. As a member of

Parliament, I naturally have approaches made to me of such a nature about people who have been incarcerated for a number of reasons. When one hears the family's side of the story one is inclined to take it on face value and we go in on the assumption that they are right. I think that is the best way to start, but in many cases I have had to pull back sharply. My understanding is that there is a programme being worked on for this particular person and I think the phrase is "resocialising" a person. I would not like that to be accepted as the correct technical term, but I hope I am conveying the sense of what I mean.

Mr Jamieson: A reply I received last year definitely said that the matter had gone to Cabinet.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will obtain the details on this matter straight away and the Attorney General, or I, will communicate with the member and let him know if there are any special circumstances.

If these are confidential matters, then the honourable member, who is well experienced in this field, will accept them as such. On the other hand I think it is fair enough that the family be acquainted, as clearly as they can be, with any reasons that may stop the release. If there is a timetable for the release, the family should know that because that alone would bring solace to them. However, I can do no more than undertake to determine the nature of the problem and the circumstances of the particular case. I assure the honourable member that this information will be conveyed to him.

Division 33 put and passed.

Division 34—Corporate Affairs Office, \$2 133 000—put and passed.

Division 35: Office of Titles, \$4 599 000—

Mr PARKER: I had a few words to say about this office last year as I had experienced some difficulties when operating on behalf of my constituents. The Land Titles Office had found itself in a very difficult position. Staff numbers had been, if not frozen, then kept at a much lower level than that required to enable it to undertake the work load which had grown considerably because of the number of transfers of land being effected. This was because a considerable amount of foreign capital was flowing into the purchase of both rural and urban land in Western Australia.

At that time I had occasion to speak to officers of the department who had complained in fairly vigorous terms about the restrictions under which they were working and the difficulties they had in satisfying in a reasonably expeditious manner the people who use the service.

Although the officers had devised certain systems to allow urgent matters to be followed up, and to allow people who wished to obtain security against titles the ability to do so even if the title had not been processed, it was indicated to me that the matter was of very serious concern.

I have not contacted the department or any of its officers in recent times, but there is no doubt that foreign capital is being used for a considerable number of purchases of land. The recession in terms of home ownership has not hit Western Australia yet as badly as it has hit other States, but no doubt this recession will add to the burdens of the Land Titles Office. In its ability to process these matters and its ability to reduce the waiting time for people using its services, is the Land Titles Office in a better situation now than it was last year?

Sir CHARLES COURT: In answer to the member for Fremantle, and on behalf of the Attorney General, I have to say that I cannot be precise about the exact time lag involved. From the information I have, it appears that the whole department has been under very close scrutiny by the Attorney General, and a number of studies have been undertaken with a view to introducing new systems including a degree of computerisation to speed up the processing and to reduce the time lag, as well as to reduce the irksome detail which is inseparable from such procedures.

While I cannot tell the member the exact timetable, I will let him know the result of my inquiries. If I had had some notice of the honourable member's queries, I could have obtained the information that we usually receive from particular departments at Budget time. At a suitable time, while the Estimates are still before us, I will give a more precise answer. I believe the member's question is twofold: Firstly, is the time lag being reduced, and secondly, is the present staff adequate for the task they have to perform, to adequately service the public?

Mr Parker: That is correct.

Division 35 put and passed.

Divisions 36 to 38—Public Trust Office, \$2 197 000; Law Reform Commission, \$461 000; Legal Aid Commission, \$694 000—put and passed.

Division 39: Public Works and Buildings, \$71 262 000—

Mr PARKER: I seek your guidance Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie). After the Estimates were passed last year, we changed the

system—by amending the Standing Orders—from one under which we spoke to the Parts and the Items to one under which we spoke to the Divisions and the Items. Previously, when we spoke to the Parts and the Items, it was possible to speak on the broad area of the Minister's portfolio without a specific reference to the headings in the Divisions. When the Standing Orders Committee considered this matter, and when the Chamber subsequently approved of the committee's amendments, the idea was to enable the debate to be more clearly defined, but certainly it was not the intention to restrict the debate in any way. Therefore, I ask your guidance as to whether I may speak only in relation to the Items presented in the Estimates, or may I refer to matters such as the Metropolitan Water Board?

Deputy Chairman's Ruling

The **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Blaikie): The ruling I would make would be that members are able to speak to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ended 30 June 1982, so that a general debate may take place on the Divisions as indicated, and at the moment we are considering the Division of Public Works and Buildings. Then members are permitted to refer to the Items. I again draw members' attention to the fact that the Estimate debate is on those funds to be expended to the end of June 1982. So I suggest to the member that he has the opportunity to speak to Division 39—Public Works and Buildings—or other Items contained within the schedule of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

Points of Order

Mr PEARCE: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Chairman. I am seeking further clarification of your ruling in regard to our ability to debate further matters. Like other members I was looking forward to some discussion of the ministerial responsibility in regard to the Metropolitan Water Board. Clearly it is not possible, in terms of your ruling, to debate this matter under the Division. Although I may be incorrect, it appears to me that the Water Board has disappeared altogether from the Estimates. Was it not listed previously under trading concerns?

The **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** First of all, the Estimates have not contained a reference to the Water Board for many years. The expenditure for the board does not come under the Items of

expenditure and revenue as presented to the Parliament.

Mr PARKER: I would like to take a further point of order. The whole aim of the process we are engaged in currently is to allow parliamentary scrutiny of the Estimates, and parliamentary scrutiny, in general terms, of the Government's expenditure on the public's behalf. The Metropolitan Water Board is a body which raises money from the public and expends it on the public's behalf. It therefore appears to me to be inappropriate for you to restrict the debate. This was never intended by the Parliament at the time we amended the Standing Orders. Certainly such a debate was allowed in the procedure we adopted until this year.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In reply to the point raised by the member for Fremantle, members have a free range of debate under the second reading provisions relating to the Appropriation (Consolidated Revenue Fund) Bill. Members have a similar opportunity in regard to the Loan Bill. The Standing Orders Committee has determined that members will speak to the Divisions and Items as contained in the Estimates, but that members will not have the opportunity of the free range which they may have had previously. So I put Division 39, and I call for general debate.

Committee Resumed

Mr PARKER: I will now speak on a much more mundane matter than I would have referred to if you had upheld my point of order, Mr Deputy Chairman. I will use a phrase similar to that used by the Premier today and in his internal memoranda. The problem is a somewhat irksome one from the point of view of members of Parliament. In this instance I refer to the furniture branch of the Public Works Department. I have dealt with all sorts of bodies over many years, but I must confess I have never found a body more difficult to deal with, more tardy in its response, or more unhelpful in its attitude, than the furniture branch. On numerous occasions I have made requests of this branch, and I must say that the usual ready response to my requests is a positive statement.

Mr Davies: Such as "No".

Mr PARKER: Yes, and even sometimes positive statements such as "Yes". However, when it actually comes to putting these positive statements into practice, one finds a completely different situation. On a number of occasions now I have been promised all sorts of things I require for my office, usually in unequivocal

terms such as "Yes". However, when it comes to actually obtaining the items, it is a quite different matter. I am referring to quite basic items of equipment such as filing cabinets and pin-up boards—very mundane things. It is irksome to have to pester people continually about these matters.

I experienced recently a most extraordinary situation. Some considerable time previously I had requested an additional filing cabinet for my office. I was told that it was coming, and then when I rang up to ask about it, I was told that there was no money to provide me with a new filing cabinet. This is rather extraordinary considering the price of such an item. I finally sorted the matter out with an executive officer of the Premier's Department. Members of Parliament in this State have many things to put up with in comparison with their counterparts in the Commonwealth Parliament and in other State Parliaments, but this is one area where the problem arises, to a considerable extent, from inefficiency.

I have not undertaken any private study of the furniture branch of the Public Works Department. My empirical observation reveals that it is grossly inefficient. The Minister should turn his attention to that.

I do not know whether other members, or Government departments or instrumentalities, have to put up with the same sort of thing as I have. Colleagues indicate it does not seem to be an unusual experience. It would be sad if all Government departments experienced similar sorts of attitudes from this branch with regard to their requests for furniture.

If matters have not been dealt with reasonably expeditiously—in three or four months—I have taken to sending telegrams on a periodic basis to the branch asking what is happening. From my point of view that is the quickest way to achieve something. However, that does not seem to make a great deal of difference.

I suggest to the Minister that he look into this department to ascertain whether it may be made more efficient.

Mr Davies: If you sent the department a birthday card on the first anniversary of the request, it might work.

Mr McPHARLIN: I would like to make some comments dealing with engineering services relating to the salinity control measures in the Wellington catchment area.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I draw to the attention of the member that the general debate should take place on Division 39,

Public Works and Buildings. We are now operating under a new Standing Order. The member is referring to Engineering Services. It may be more appropriate for him to continue his remarks under the Item.

Mr McPHARLIN: Yes, I will do that.

Mr MENSAROS: I cannot accept the criticism of the member for Fremantle. Does he want purely to criticise for the sake of criticising, or does he want to achieve some efficiency? If the second were the case, he would have approached me in relation to a particular complaint. Indeed, his elected leader approached me at nine o'clock one morning, and by about 12.10 p.m. I was able to go to his office and advise him of the situation. That cannot be a question of inefficiency. The Leader of the Opposition would bear out what I have said.

If a member has a complaint, he should go to the Minister, particularly when the complaint is against officers who cannot defend themselves. The member should go to the Minister and lodge his complaint in a special way. Then the Minister will look into it.

The member for Fremantle was saying that no money is available. That may well be the case. I cannot judge from his remarks in the general debate. Furniture allocations for electorate offices outside Parliament House are decided by officers of the Joint House Committee. The reason for this is that the department has budgetary items for maintaining buildings or replacing furniture in Government departments. On the parliamentary front, an allowance is made specifically for electorate offices; and as long as that allowance lasts, members' requests will be satisfied. The decision as to which of those requests should be granted does not depend on the Public Works Department. The PWD only executes the decisions of its client—in this case, the Parliament.

As far as offices within Parliament House are concerned, a distinction is made between individual offices and items which can be used commonly. Those which are used commonly are determined by the Joint House Committee which decides whether the expenditure is important or essential. Although the vote might be cumulative with other departments, the fair result is for all members of Parliament to benefit from the moneys available in an equitable way.

After the funds have been allocated and until the expenditure is made, it would be difficult for me to accept the criticism, unless I received information on a concrete case. If any member has a specific complaint, I would encourage him

to make it to the Minister. I can assure him it would receive a fairly quick response. Without bragging, I can say that the system I have introduced in my department is quicker than that in any other department; and I welcome any contradiction of that statement.

Mr Davies: It should not have to happen.

Item 8: Salinity Control—Wellington Catchment—

Mr McPHARLIN: I wish to refer to Item 8 under Engineering Services. This deals with salinity control in the Wellington catchment area. The expenditure last year was \$1 814 535, and the estimate for this year is \$1 600 000. I would like the Minister to give an explanation of how this money is to be allocated for the purchase of properties and compensation to those whose farms are being controlled under the Country Areas Water Supply Act for salinity control. Can he give any idea of what expenditure may be incurred in the future on this matter which is of great concern in many areas of the State? It is particularly important in the catchment area of the Wellington Dam because the salinity is causing many problems. It would be interesting to know the future prospects of the expenditure under the system which has been applied.

Mr MENSAROS: Much as I would like to accommodate the member, I cannot state in advance precisely what these moneys will be spent on. It is an allocation, and the actual spending will depend on the applications for compensation. Of course, we have not yet received any applications as the money has not yet been voted by the Parliament.

The balance of the money will be used jointly with the Forests Department in reforestation. According to the applications that are made, one day towards the end of the financial year I will be able to say exactly on what the money has been spent.

Despite all the financial restraints, the Government has realised the importance of this question, and the allocation under this Item is reasonably generous compared with other requests.

Division 39 put and passed.

Division 40: Country Water Supplies, Sewerage, Irrigation and Drainage, \$58 363 000—

Mr PARKER: I ask the Minister: What is the Government's current position in relation to the extension of country areas water supplies in the Greenhills-Bullaring area, the Westonia area, and the Agaton project? My understanding is that, in relation to the first two items, the Government

has decided not to proceed with those extensions. No money has been allocated, and there is no proposal to provide money for such extensions.

I understand that the situation in relation to the Agaton project is not clear. I would like the Minister to advise me of the Government's position in regard to these extensions of the country areas water supply.

Mr McPHARLIN: The extension of the Agaton project is causing a great deal of concern. A seminar on Monday at Dalwallinu will be attended by a large number of residents of the area under discussion. I hope that the seminar may find a solution to the major difficulty in these projects, which is the financial aspect.

The Agaton project has been accepted willingly by the people in the area. They are pleased that the Government made a submission to the Federal Government in 1979 and intended to use the Agaton bores in the Watheroo area. That water supply will not be drawn from Mundaring. It would not be an additional drain on the existing reservoirs in the metropolitan area; and this is an important point.

The concept of using the water supply from bore holes in the Agaton basin in the Watheroo area is a new one. A vast quantity of water is there. The amount required is far less than is available. The use of this supply would relieve some of the pressures on the Mundaring scheme, because the Agaton project will supply water to 300 000 hectares of the area already serviced by the Mundaring scheme.

In previous discussions, Ministers have said that the Agaton project will have the highest priority. However, it has not yet been given high priority to enable further requests to the Federal Government to finance it on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Originally application was made to finance the project on a dollar-for-dollar basis, and in 1979 the original estimate was about \$46 million. Now it will cost something like \$55 million. There is still a need for the Federal Government to assist on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

Various reports on the project have been released. We have seen the Commonwealth-State committee report, and the cost benefits study report. A thorough analysis of the information provided has been done to determine whether it would be an economic proposition.

At the seminar at Dalwallinu on Monday substantial argument will be produced to the effect that in regard to a project of this nature the economic aspect is not the only matter which should be considered. By the time the day is over and the seminar is completed, I hope we have

been able to find some way in which to solve the problems which appear principally to revolve around the matter of finance.

I could refer also to site selection, soil quality, dam failures, salinity and so on; but all these matters will be dealt with at the seminar. I have been associated with water supply problems in my electorate for approximately 25 to 30 years. I have tried to find suitable water on my own property and have spent thousands and thousands of dollars in that pursuit. Therefore, I can sympathise with the people who are so concerned about the delay of this project.

The other matter I want to raise is the Government funding of the shortfall in country sewerage schemes. That has dropped from a figure of 85 per cent in previous years to one of 75 per cent in this Budget. Several of my shire councils have raised the question with me, because the deficit will have to be found somewhere and the only way in which they will be able to get it is by obtaining finance by way of rates.

I know the Government is operating under a policy of expenditure restraint and we would all agree that is not undesirable. However, in some areas country people are suffering as a result of the cutbacks in expenditure and this matter has been raised with me by several shire councils. I would ask the Minister to elaborate a little on the situation and provide me with an explanation of it.

Mr MENSAROS: I appreciate the fact that the members have referred to these issues, but I point out that in fact they relate to the Appropriation (General Loan Fund) Bill as all the schemes referred to are new schemes of a capital outlay nature.

The member for Fremantle was quite right when he indicated no allocation was made for the first two projects. In regard to the Agaton project, the member for Mt. Marshall undertook to reply virtually on my behalf. I agree with all his comments except that I should like to point out the approach to the Commonwealth is still unresolved. The Commonwealth has replied that a cost benefit study should be made. A very thorough and professional study has been completed and it will be launched and explained at the seminar on Monday to which the member for Mt. Marshall referred. The seminar will be opened by the Premier, and the Minister for Agriculture will be present all day. A number of expert officers will present papers and if the member for Fremantle, who is interested in this matter, wishes to attend, I suggest he do so.

Mr Parker: I am going to be there on Monday.

Mr MENSAROS: Detailed explanations will be made and a panel of experts will provide the necessary information.

I do not want to pre-empt the effect of the study, but I emphasise an approach will have to be made to the Commonwealth which sets out the result of the cost benefits study.

We appreciate the importance of this scheme and the fact that, despite all sorts of cost benefits, or lack of them, farmers are experiencing difficulty with regard to water supplies. It is necessary to consider the future of the whole area in relation to the scheme. At the same time, however, I am sure members realise it would be virtually impossible under the present financial circumstances, and bearing in mind the size of the loan Budget, for the State to finance this scheme on its own, irrespective of the cost benefits involved.

Division 40 put and passed.

Division 41: Resources Development, \$1 909 000

Mr BRYCE: I rise to ask the Minister a brief question. Members of the Committee would appreciate that, after the last State election, the Department of Resources Development was created as an entity separate from the Department of Industrial Development and Commerce. Over the last 18 months we have received various guestimates about the cost to the taxpayers of separating those two departments.

We have also been made aware of some rather significant comment in the media about the future of the separate departments. Would the Minister communicate to the Committee which is considering the budgetary allocations to the Department of Resources Development at this stage, whether it is the intention of the Government to recombine the Department of Resources Development with the old Department of Industrial Development at some stage in the future during the course of this financial year? Could the Minister also give the Committee some estimate of the cost of separating those departments?

Mr GRILL: There are three areas I should like to canvass during this general part of the debate. The first is the need for a deep water port in the north to carry iron ore from the Pilbara to Japan and Europe; the second is the importance of the Portland aluminium smelter to Western Australia; and the third is the proposal that the

Treasurer might approach the Commonwealth with a view to reconvening the Loan Council to authorise further loan raising power overseas for this State and State instrumentalities.

In relation to the first item let me say by way of general comment that on 31 October *The West Australian* reported the comments of a British financial journalist who came to Western Australia. He was employed by the British-based financial weekly the *Economist*. After looking at the resource based economy of Western Australia and Australia generally his impression was reported as being that the economy was teetering on the brink. Indeed, he said, "... the economy is teetering on the brink, unsure whether it can manage to sustain a higher growth path or whether it will return to stagflation".

It is trite to say, although most people would agree, that resource development today is a very complicated matter. It is tied up with a number of questions which are interrelated in terms of both time and place. By and large, energy or the requirement of large amounts of energy to reprocess our minerals, is one of the biggest factors. Another factor is the cost of transporting our minerals overseas by way of exporting them.

I understand it is the Government's policy that a deep water port—by a "deep water port" I mean one which can regularly take bulk carriers of something in excess of 200 000 tonnes—is something like 10 or 15 years away and that there is no necessity at this stage to develop such a port.

I should like to put another view. In this sort of climate where the resources development "boom", if members wish to call it that, is teetering on the brink, certain new initiatives need to be taken. May I suggest one of them would be the development of at least one deep water port in the Pilbara. At the present time—I do not think there is any argument about this—the iron ore industry is in a decline. The Japanese, our major market, are taking only approximately 63 per cent of their contracted requirement. The industry in the Pilbara is also plagued with problems, not the least of which is the problem of industrial relations.

If those problems can be overcome, we still have the difficulty that the Japanese are very industriously creating an oversupply situation and the related problem that the Brazilians are taking at least a 25 per cent share of the market.

At the present time we also have a situation in which the freight differential—the freight

advantage which Australia has over Brazil and other countries in supplying iron ore which was something like \$6 a tonne and was shared initially by the suppliers and buyers—is now taken almost exclusively by the buyer; namely, the Japanese.

The advantage the Brazilians seem to have at the present time is not only that the Japanese are prepared to create an oversupply situation, but also that the Brazilians seem to have the advantage of being able to supply their ore to Japan in giant tankers.

Let me quote to the Minister and the Committee part of an article which appeared in the *Metals Bulletin* of 16 October under the heading "Japan accepting larger carriers"—

The use of very large iron ore carriers is proving particularly effective in reducing freight rates on iron ore shipped by Brazil to Japan and most of the iron ore reaching Japan from the Atlantic basin ore fields will be transported by very large carriers in the very near future, according to a report from Mitsui & Co.

As a result, Japanese integrated steel makers have been extending the capacity of their operations mainly by modifying unloading facilities and there are as yet only a few ports that can accept such carriers with a full load.

The article then indicates that, at certain ports in Japan, Nippon Steel and NKK can accept 200 000-tonners and 250 000 tonners. To continue—

About half the other vessel ports in Japan can accommodate large carriers if part of their cargo has already been unloaded by one of the larger ports since they now have barges long enough and unloaders with sufficient net length.

It would seem from the report in this authoritative trade paper that the Brazilians enjoy that advantage; namely, they can ship iron ore in giant bulk carriers. Western Australia should also enjoy that advantage. One of the initiatives this Government could be taking is to ensure that Western Australia has at least one such port.

The second matter I wish to deal with is the question of the Portland aluminium smelter. There is some doubt as to whether this smelter will go ahead, but it seems fairly clear that whether or not it goes ahead, the result will have an effect upon Western Australia. As members would know, the Wagerup alumina refinery at its peak will probably trade about two million tonnes of alumina. Half of that amount was destined to go to the smelter in Portland.

If that smelter does not go ahead—and there seems to be real doubt as to whether it will go ahead—other refineries will have to be found for that alumina. Given the present world economy, it seems unlikely that those sorts of markets can be easily found. Five years ago it was hoped—and it was accepted in fact—that Japan would be a fairly secure market for Australian alumina. The Japanese capacity has diminished considerably over the last few years to the situation where probably next year or in the future it will be looking at something like 500 000 tonnes of alumina, which is a fall of about two thirds. Now about 10 to 12 per cent of our alumina goes to Japan, about 45 per cent goes to the United States, and 14 to 15 per cent goes to the Middle East, some goes to South Africa and South America, and about 8 per cent goes to Victoria. If Portland does not go ahead, the development time frame for the Wagerup refinery will have to be extended.

Alcoa, no doubt, because of its companies and the overseas nature of some of its partners, does have the capacity to sell some of its alumina overseas, but whether the Wagerup refinery will reach its full capacity within the period first envisaged seems unlikely.

The third and last matter I deal with is this: In view of the fact that this Government has been disappointed with the loan allocation made to it by the Loan Council which is dominated by the Commonwealth Government, and in view of the fact that it would appear that the Commonwealth Treasury estimates of the capital inflow into Australia this year are far too high, I pose the question as to whether it would not now be appropriate for the Treasurer to make an approach to the Commonwealth to request the Loan Council to reconvene for the purpose of authorising State Governments or their instrumentalities to be allowed to borrow further sums of money overseas for what would be vital research developments within Western Australia and Australia generally.

I have quoted *Rydges* commentary, the Bank of New South Wales of a few days ago, and various other authorities which seem to agree with the assumption made by Bill Hayden of a week or two ago, that the figures for capital inflow into Australia in the current year were in fact placed at too high a level by the Federal Treasury. There are two or three ways of getting over this and the first would be to open to the authorities the release of the statutory reserve deposits held by the Reserve Bank; the second would be the purchase of bonds from the private sector by the Commonwealth to inject funds into the economy;

and the last option would be to allow the States and semi-Government authorities attached to the States to operate offshore. The last of those options would be very attractive for this State. The Minister for Resources Development has complained quite bitterly about the raw deal that he feels he has received from the Commonwealth, and the Treasury has made remarks along the same lines. I put it to the Minister whether he would give that proposition some consideration.

Mr P. V. JONES: So far as the point raised by the member for Ascot is concerned, he would be aware that a review of all departments has been undertaken and awareness has been made of that fact. So far as the two departments he mentioned are concerned, he ought to be aware, because publicity has been given to this fact, that attention has been given to the way in which the two departments can combine, having regard to the fact that as from May next year they will be occupying the same building when they move together into the new SGIO offices. No firm decisions have been made although a lot of attention has been given to the way in which various services such as library research, publicity, and so on can be combined in order to economise the whole operation, but also having regard to the commonality of a certain amount of the work that is undertaken.

The point made so far as it affects the Budget figures is not yet able to be determined because the result of the work being done by the Public Service Board in order to identify how we can best effect savings is not to hand. The main point is the growth of each department has been severely curbed in order to provide for their joining together in the one building. So as far as this debate and the year's finances are concerned there will be a merger in the financial year by virtue of their physically coming together. At this stage that is reflected in the fact that the member is looking at the figures of two departments, but the growth of staff and services have been severely cut.

The member for Yilgarn-Dundas referred to a deep water port. He mentioned that we need at least one, but presumably he feels there could be more. I do not know whether he is aware of the fact, but something like 100—in fact, a little more than 100—vessels are engaged in the Pilbara iron ore trade and very few of those vessels are in excess of 180 000 deadweight tonnes. There is a very good reason why there are few. First of all, it has not so much to do with the ports in Western Australia, but the ports in Japan. The Japanese industry has not come to grips with the upgrading of its own ports or the unloading and shipping

handling facilities to cope with a large number of big bulk carriers. There is no question about the fact that there is going to be a general increase in the mean deadweight figures involved in shipping with bulk carriers. I do not know whether he is aware of the fact, but in other trades such as energy movement around the world, the large super tankers that were supposed to be the be-all and end-all have suffered some recession as far as the large bulk tankers are concerned.

Mr Grill: They are not using as many, but they are using them.

Mr P. V. JONES: I am not saying they are not using them. I mean there is no great race to get them in as there has been a fall-back in the usage of those large vessels.

Mr Grill: Fall-back?

Mr P. V. JONES: So far as we in Western Australia are concerned, there is a myth about the necessity to have a new deep water port immediately. To begin with, someone is going to have to pay for it, and that will inevitably have to be the companies. The member has indicated how the companies are having to bear a recession and a lowering in the prices that they otherwise would have been able to accept because they are being asked to bear certain effects of a recession in the steel industry—not only a restriction in the amount of contractual tonnage that is actually being shipped, but also as far as prices are concerned and the percentage of the steel dollar that has gone to the Pilbara iron ore companies after the steel mills have allowed for the various factors; and shipping is one of those.

We move on to a situation where we can have the so-called deep water ports operating quickly. Many studies have been done and indeed some are actually finalised; cost estimates have been produced in order to ensure that the existing facilities in the three ports operating now can better take their bulk carriers. I use the words "better take" because they are taking them now. I mentioned to the member the other night that I thought it was in the last week of April when the *Fort Lauderdale* loaded up a fraction under 200 000 tonnes at Cape Lambert. Large bulk carriers are nothing new and we can move towards the provision of deep water ports by dredging rather than have a completely new port with a new infrastructure, railway lines, and ship-loading facilities. How the member can suggest we have it now, in view of the depression in the steel industry, escapes me.

Mr Grill: If we don't, we are left behind. It is as simple as that.

Mr P. V. JONES: He has been quoting various industrial and trade magazines relating to ports and shipping in general. In case he is not aware, the shipping from Brazil to which he referred is a highly subsidised business and it is not being borne, as he mentioned, by the buyers, but is being borne largely by the financiers of the Brazilian iron ore developments because the Brazilian Government gets into the act and Brazilian suppliers are in fact getting what is termed a "political" price factor and that is caused by two or three things. Brazil is able to qualify as an emerging nation for financial purposes which include not only quantities of money, but also preferential interest rates from the World Bank and national monetary funds.

Indeed, the railway line that is bringing most of the iron ore and the products from the West Amazonian projects down to the ship-loading terminals is being funded largely by the World Bank. The Brazilian Government is hungry for foreign earnings, and it is backing the CVRD—the Brazilian iron ore company—in meeting the freight price to Japan. So, far from saying it has been because of the Budget—

Mr Grill: I did not say that.

Mr P. V. JONES: —the Brazilian price per tonne of iron ore did not increase to the same degree that the Pilbara iron ore companies achieved after negotiation. I know what they did receive was cold comfort in view of their expenditure. This is something the member might like to pursue a little further in regard to the exact facts and the factors that contribute to the end price of Brazilian ore delivered to a Japanese port.

The other point referred to was the so-called trade bulletins. In case the member is not fully aware of it, the steel mills are very heavily involved in promoting anything they would like suppliers to read about through the trade bulletins. Indeed, we are well aware of the sort of matters in which they would like us to become involved. I have been involved in dealing with one or two Japanese steel mill companies on occasion, and I have read the next day about the matters we had discussed. The view that a company would like to spread can be easily incorporated into a trade bulletin, and this is one of the ways that the Japanese work.

If a Japanese company wishes to implant in the mind of Opposition members that we want a deep water port, we will read that in a trade bulletin if it suits the company. What suits us is a far cry from a commitment to a deep water port. We have complete faith in the capacity of

Hedland, for example, after it is upgraded, dredged, and the berthing facilities improved.

The companies and the Japanese industry have been able to cope with the number and size of the ships which deal with this trade, and I believe this will be the situation until the end of this decade and into the 1990s. Nippon Steel is still building vessels of 150 000 tonnes, and the port can cope with those.

The current problems at Portland were referred to. It is true that Alcoa of Australia Ltd. is very concerned about Portland, and quite rightly so. This emphasises a factor referred to by the member for Ascot last night, and one which the community is concerned about—the credibility of the Government. In the case of Portland, the Victorian Government, for reasons of its own, saw fit to make decisions that will cast this project into doubt, and we are caught up in the whole situation. We are following the matter up, and this evening I will take part in discussions relative to ensuring that our position is safeguarded whatever happens. We have every reason to believe that we will be safeguarded. Notwithstanding that matter, the member for Yilgarn-Dundas referred to its relativity with Japan, and again the situation is not quite as he suggested. Certainly the Japanese market for alumina is diminishing, but it is not diminishing because of a reduced requirement for aluminium. I am not sure that the point was being made because of a reduced demand for aluminium.

Mr Grill: Certainly not.

Mr P. V. JONES: In that case then it is quite right. The smelting capacity of Japan is being diminished steadily, and in a few years' time it is expected to be down to about 700 000 tonnes. That situation is being offset by the considerable interest which the Japanese have in an equity in offshore smelting in such places as Australia. The demand for aluminium is rising, but the Japanese would like to process it offshore because of the cost of energy in Japan. Currently it is between A6c and A7c per kilowatt hour in Japan, and in Australia the cost is between 2c and 2.4c per kilowatt hour. So it is well in the interests of the Japanese to look at such offshore equity.

The message about the Premiers' Conference and the loan conference borrowings is not lost on us. The comments made by the member seem to indicate that nothing is being done. However, the member would be well aware from the Premier's statements, as well as from my statements, of the effects of the conferences on the operations of the SEC in not being allowed to build the Bunbury power station. The effect of that on the south-

west is little short of catastrophic. This morning I visited Lake Grace where it is possible to keep a programme going, but under some difficulties because of the problems in relation to loan fund approvals.

These problems relate to the whole question of the Budget strategy, and in this regard I agree with the member for Yilgarn-Dundas. Last financial year approximately \$6.3 billion of overseas capital came in, and although this was of considerable benefit in providing project finance as well as equity project finance, people like Mr Hayden and Mr Keating were very critical of the fact that this foreign capital was coming in. Now this flow has been reduced to a dribble, and the same people are critical that it is not coming in. I am not sure what the attitude of the ALP will now be on the question of foreign capital. I can only agree with the member that it is not as projected by the Federal Government in its Budget strategy. We would like to see this finance; it is providing the capacity to gain access to project finance. However, it is diminishing. As soon as the Federal Government wakes up to itself, the sooner we will be able to get on and do what needs to be done.

Division 41 put and passed.

Divisions 42 and 43—Mines, \$16 072 000; State Batteries, \$3 246 000—put and passed.

Division 44: Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia, \$500 000—

Mr BRYCE: I would like to question the Government's Budget allocation to solar energy research in Western Australia. This is a matter of very real concern.

Members may not realise that the Government has decimated the solar research effort in Western Australia. Last year a Budgetary allocation of \$880 000 was made to this institute, and it was spent. This year, SERIWA applied for an allocation of \$1.2 million. The figures before us reveal that the Government slashed that to \$500 000. This indicates the Government's intention to savagely cut back on the money going into solar research, and we have had no explanation from the Government about it. Those of us sitting on this side of the Chamber can imagine no justification for the severity of this cutback.

From the inquiries I have made I understand that last year the administrative expenses of this institute approximated \$600 000, and another \$280 000 was allocated to research projects. This year the total allocation is only \$500 000, and the implications are fairly obvious. There will be some pretty severe cutting back and retrenchments in

the administration of the institute, and goodness only knows what will happen to the actual research projects.

I would like to challenge the Minister at this stage to tell the Chamber the precise amount the Government has in mind to allocate to the research projects of SERIWA.

I would like to comment on the way this research institute has developed in Western Australia in recent years, and my comments will have some relationship to its long-term future. It is a great pity that SERIWA has developed as a creature of the SEC rather than as a reasonably obvious independent statutory authority. The long-term ambitions and needs of the SEC have been the paramount determining factor in setting the objectives, and in my view, and in the view of many of my colleagues with whom I have discussed the matter, this is the reason that the institute has gone astray. What was intended to be an independent statutory authority has become a *de facto* department of the SEC.

The Government has savagely slashed the allocation of resources to this particularly important endeavour—solar research.

The institute is located on the 11th floor of the SEC building and there has been a great deal of staff borrowing between the SEC and the institute. After this period of years, the very close relationship between the SEC and SERIWA has meant that the independence of the institute has been suffocated.

Unfortunately, one of the implications of that has been that many of the very worth while smaller projects have suffered and been ignored while a few very large concepts which have studied the needs of the State Energy Commission have been proceeded with.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not right.

Mr BRYCE: It is, in terms of effort and energy applied. At a later stage I will give the Minister some examples.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr BRYCE: I move—

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

Motion put and passed.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

LOTTO BILL*Second Reading*

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary)
[7.30 p.m.]: 1 move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to regulate properly the actions of the Western Australian Lotteries Commission in the conduct of the game of lotto.

On 9 October 1980 Western Australia entered into an agreement with Victoria and South Australia to establish a liaison known as the Australian lotto bloc. The Queensland Government was at that time considering the introduction of lotto in Queensland and subsequently entered into an agreement to join the Australian lotto bloc on 24 June 1981. These agreements allowed for each State to retain its autonomy and for only the prize money to be pooled.

One of the advantages to Western Australia is that subscribers are participating in a game with a more attractive prize pool. The increased entries make more funds available for distribution by the Lotteries Commission to hospitals and charities. After eight months' participation by Western Australia in the lotto bloc this has proved to be the case. Whereas the subscriptions for February 1981, when the commission last operated lotto within Western Australia, were \$864 031, in October 1981 subscriptions reached \$2 254 285 of which 60 per cent is distributed as prize moneys.

The Lotteries Commission was of the opinion that the Lotteries (Control) Act provided for the conduct of lotto and participation in the Australian lotto bloc. However, I have sought confirmation of this, and in light of questions raised, it was decided to seek an opinion from the Crown Solicitor.

This Bill is now before the House as a consequence of the Crown Solicitor's advice to validate the agreements of October 1980 and June 1981 and the conduct of the games of lotto by the Lotteries Commission. I wish to make it very clear that the Bill authorises nothing that is not done now by the Lotteries Commission. The Bill is purely for the purposes of validation. It also consolidates lotto operations into one piece of legislation.

Mr Jamieson: You said earlier in the year it didn't need validation.

Mr HASSELL: I have received further advice since then.

In the Bill a reference to a game of lotto is a reference to a form of game in which the subscribers choose or attempt to forecast or select, from a group of numbers, a smaller group of numbers to be drawn on a random basis.

An illegal game of lotto has been defined as a game of lotto in respect of which a permit has not been granted. No person or body other than the Lotteries Commission shall be granted a permit to conduct lotto.

The Bill provides for the Lotteries Commission to be permitted to conduct games of lotto and to raise money for charitable purposes. Clauses 6 and 7 impose on the Lotteries Commission duties in regard to its operations and payment of prizes in respect of games of lotto conducted by it.

The Bill also confirms the supervisory powers of the Auditor General in relation to the operations of the Lotteries Commission in the conduct of lotto.

Clause 9 authorises a member of the Police Force to take action if he suspects an illegal game of lotto is being carried on. The Lotteries Commission is indemnified against any consequences of its operations provided a permit has been granted. Provision is made for an appropriate penalty for persons convicted of an offence for conducting an illegal game of lotto or hindering a member of the Police Force.

The Bill allows for the making of regulations to provide for the disposal of unclaimed prizes, the forfeiture of moneys seized by a police officer, and the conditions governing the employment of agents by the commission.

Clause 13 of the Bill validates the actions of the commission in the conduct of games of lotto since 1979 and ratifies the agreements of October 1980 and June 1981 which provide for the Western Australian Lotteries Commission to participate in the Australian lotto bloc.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Parker.

ACTS AMENDMENT (LOTTO) BILL*Second Reading*

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary)
[7.35 p.m.]: 1 move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before members is for the purpose of amending three Acts: The Criminal Code, the Police Act, and the Lotteries (Control) Act.

Changes are necessary to include in the Criminal Code and the Police Act a reference to the Lotto Act 1981. At present these sections

refer only to the Lotteries (Control) Act. Alteration of the Lotteries (Control) Act is required to remove games of lotto from the definition of "Lottery" in that Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Parker.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL

In Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Blaikie) in the Chair; Sir Charles Court (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Division 44: Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia, \$500 000—

Progress was reported after Division 44 had been partly considered.

Mr BRYCE: Prior to the tea suspension I expressed my concern about the fact that the Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia has developed in recent years as a creature of the State Energy Commission rather than as an independent statutory authority which in an independent fashion researches important developments in the field of solar energy. Almost immediately prior to the conclusion of that remark I made the comment that the institute has concentrated on the needs of large projects associated with the long-term objectives of the SEC rather than on the needs of the entire State. I was about to cite some examples when the Minister interjected to indicate he had a different opinion. I wanted to point out that a great deal of the work SERIWA does is devoted to projects such as industrial process heating and country town energy supply.

I remind the Minister that a number of my colleagues and I had the opportunity a few months ago to spend an entire day with representatives of the institute. We were thoroughly appreciative of the intensive and first-hand examination of the programmes the institute is engaged in, and of its objectives. In the eyes of many people associated with solar energy research in Western Australia—particularly some of the scientists—a lack of interest in quite a range of small products has been shown by the institute. Many people have expressed concern about this lack of interest. By small projects, I mean projects such as the investigation of a solar house design. It is a concept which involves the laws of architecture, a study of the methods of minimising heating costs in conventional houses,

and minimising air-conditioning costs in those houses. All this is related to the environment in which we live and how we can adapt some of the basic elements of our very sunny environment to minimise heating costs at one stage of the year and air-conditioning costs at another.

Too little attention has been given to home hot water systems, although I concede some has been. The lack of attention surprised me on the occasion I visited the institute. I was surprised that so much consideration had been given to proving the design and effecting the development of large projects in line with the efforts of the SEC. Home hot water systems seem to have been almost forgotten. I do not want the Minister to stand up and tell me that in Western Australia we are proud of our important home hot water systems industry.

Mr P. V. Jones: I won't mention it.

Mr BRYCE: I want to emphasise to the Minister that a great deal of research work can be done in regard to that area of solar energy development, research which has not been carried out by the institute. I understand from some of the scientists involved in solar research that this lack of attention to home hot water systems basically is because such attention is not in the interests of the SEC; it is not in its interests to have the institute spend human and financial resources in that direction. A very small amount of work, if any, is carried out in the area of biogas production which again would be research perhaps not in the long-term major interests of the SEC.

I understand from inquiries I have made that the institute has been directed to give priority to short-term development work associated with simple inventions rather than direct money and resources to long-term research that may not produce tangible evidence of progress in the short term.

The inquiries I have made in this solar research field suggest to me that at the moment a fairly significant amount of long-term and serious scientific research is necessary, and that we cannot expect glamorous or spectacular breakthroughs in the short term if money is not devoted at the right time to that long-term and serious scientific research. It seems that in some areas of research we have gone as far as we can in relation to achieving short-term spectacular developments. I suggest to the Minister that we are at the worst time in our development for his ministerial colleagues and him to take the decision to slash the budgetary allocation to the Solar Energy Research Institute back to a level

where this year the total budget will not match the amount spent last year on administrative matters. As I said before the tea suspension, members on this side of the House are concerned that this statutory authority has lost its independence; it has become a *de facto* department of the SEC.

This would be an appropriate occasion to refer to the particularly serious blow to the efficiency of solar energy research in this State which has followed the resignation of two senior officers associated with the Solar Energy Research Institute in recent months. Dr Booth and Mrs Saunders did a great deal of important work and I think they are a great loss, not only to SERIWA, but also to Western Australia.

Mr Barnett: I would like to know why they were removed.

Mr BRYCE: It appears there is some doubt about whether the Government will fill these positions with people of the same calibre. I would appreciate it if the Minister would indicate to the Committee that the position which Mrs Saunders occupied will be filled. I understand it has been advertised, but no decision has been made. I hope that it will not mean that people with first-class expertise in this field will witness their contributions suffering because of the austerity campaign.

I suggest that the Government's decision to reduce severely the amount of funds available for this important project in Western Australia may indicate the appropriate time for the Government to dismantle the Solar Energy Research Institute and start from scratch. I do not want that statement to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, or misused, because the institute has become a creature of the SEC. The Government is financially crippling the scope of the work which could be achieved by that institute.

In 1981 we have this absurd position where so many other countries in the world, with climate and industrial resources similar to ours, are devoting significant efforts towards research into solar energy development, but in Western Australia we will spend less on solar energy research than we will spend on postage.

Mr P. V. JONES: Let me make it quite clear that there is no intention to accept the invitation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to dismantle anything. The Solar Energy Research Institute in this State, at this time last year, was severely attacked by the member for Swan for being given so much money and for the wasteful amount it had been given. I am not sure whether he mentioned this during the Budget debate. As a

result of his comments I arranged for him to visit SERIWA to inspect what was being done.

The points which were made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition demonstrate that he does not know what he is talking about. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke about the piddling commitment, when measured against what is being done in other countries in the world. The commitment to solar energy research in Western Australia *per capita* has been on occasion greater than has been the commitment by the United States.

Mr Bryce: At \$500 000 a year!

Mr P. V. JONES: Up until the last year or so it was greater than the commitment made by the United States on a *per capita* basis.

Mr Bryce: We need some figures to prove that.

Mr P. V. JONES: This year, the funds have not been slashed as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggests; however, the amount being spent is significantly less. He has not mentioned that funds were used last year to build and equip a solar testing research centre and we do not have to build that again. He has not mentioned the fact that a few of the projects came to fruition in the last financial year and he has also not mentioned, while talking about the institute becoming a creature of the SEC, the fact that it is completely controlled by persons other than the SEC.

Mr Barnett: Are you trying to say they have solved all the problems.

Mr P. V. JONES: I am not saying that at all. As with the State Energy Commission, the board composition of SERIWA was approved by this Parliament and is chaired by a commissioner of the State Energy Commission and two persons from outside. Similarly, the Solar Energy Advisory Council is chaired by Ron Douglas and includes people from the business community. It is very much associated with the State Energy Commission and indeed, I have taken positive steps in the last year to make certain it is more associated than it was in the past.

The reason for that is simply that the SEC is not a State "Electricity" Commission, it is a State "Energy" Commission, and there is a need to ensure that the wasteful expenditure of funding which occurred in the administration of SERIWA in the past will not occur again. For that reason, I have taken positive steps to make certain that SERIWA has the resources of the State Energy Commission available to it. At present it has people such as engineers seconded to it and a former senior executive of the State Energy Commission, Mr Max Shean, has been recruited

from his retirement to assist until the appointment of a new executive director.

I assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that an appointment will be made, though not necessarily from within the State Energy Commission. The position has been advertised outside.

Mr Barnett: Good.

Mr P. V. JONES: The work being done by SERIWA does have a relationship with the work of the State Energy Commission and I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does recognise that fact. Projects such as the RAPS project, Meekatharra, and Rottnest Island, are just some of the projects which are part of the development which is taking place.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned that there had not been a commitment to solar energy in domestic housing. That is completely wrong because the State Housing Commission in Forrestfield has provided a research area which has been set up where people are living in the normal way. Two houses are involved in the research; one has been fitted out by SERIWA and the other has not. The whole aspect of solar power for heating and cooling has been constantly monitored with equipment placed in the house which has been built to certain designs to make the most use of solar energy. It is completely wrong to say there has been no commitment in the area of domestic housing use.

In my view the amount of funding which has been made available to SERIWA has resulted in too much of a commitment to administration. The member for Swan was very critical of that point and he was right.

Mr Bryce: You were knocking him a moment ago.

Mr P. V. JONES: I said he was critical of the amount of money being spent on SERIWA on research programmes and I disagreed with that, but when he suggested that the commitment to administration of SERIWA was too great, I agreed with him. For that reason, there has been some adjustment and we will continue to monitor the adjustment in order that the work done by SERIWA reflects the maximum benefit from the funds made available. The administrative costs can be contained by providing assistance from other sources, and in that way the relationship with the State Energy Commission is a real way of assisting the use of funds in the best way.

If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition looks at the disbursement of funds he will notice the reason that there has been a reduction this year. The amount provided for research projects and

other funding shows an increase for those two items. The funding for new projects is \$107 000, but there is a lessening of payments to other bodies such as the University of Western Australia where work which was undertaken there has been completed, wound down, or funded from other sources.

I do not think it is reasonable to advance the argument that there has been a slashing of funds. There has been a reduction in funding, but it ought to be noted by the Committee that the reduction has been in certain areas and an analysis does not lead one to believe that the work of SERIWA itself, as distinct from the work of the university and other outside research bodies, will suffer.

Mention was made of the former chairman and former executive director of the institute. I would not choose to question their professional competence, but the Government and I do not share the suggestions made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that SERIWA will be the poorer for their passing.

Mr Davies: That makes it sound as though they are not living.

Mr P. V. JONES: So far as this particular body is concerned, they are not, but their professional competence is not in question. It is not in any way to the loss of SERIWA that they are no longer associated with it. I can only suggest that we are now able to move into areas which were not apparent to us before. While I thank the Deputy Leader for his attention to this matter, I can thank him also for allowing me the opportunity to correct his comments.

Division 44 put and passed.

Divisions 45 and 46—Government Employees' Housing Authority, \$6 286 000; Rural Housing Authority, \$169 000—put and passed.

Division 47: Regional Administration and the North West, \$2 010 000—

Mr BRYCE: Could the Minister indicate to the Committee whether there is any substance in the concern within this department that it is to be completely wound up? As I understand it, there has been some fairly straight talking by senior departmental heads to some officers of the department about its being wound up. Since we are allocating money for the continued existence of this Government department, could the Minister comment on this matter?

Mr DAVIES: My query is along much the same lines. Considerable concern has been expressed in the region regarding the future of the regional administrators and the committees which

have been established. To a large degree, they seem to be fairly well organised now, and making a useful contribution. The committees are representative, and its members feel they are making an input and probably have some line to the Government.

I have never been very happy about them inasmuch as I believe they have been only post offices or clearing houses and that the real decisions in regard to the government of the State are made in St. George's Terrace. Certainly, they are not made in Harvest Terrace.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you referring to the committees or the administrators?

Mr DAVIES: The administrators, with their committees; I suppose they go together.

Mr P. V. Jones: They do not; I will explain it in a minute.

Mr DAVIES: I do not know whether the committees would continue to operate in the same way if they did not have the administrators working in the way they do at present. I have been contacted several times by people who have expressed concern as to the future of this department.

If we look at Division 47, and compare it with last year's figures—I must remind members again that this is the only way we can read some sense into the document—we find that this year's Estimates provide for the appointment of an additional assistant regional administrator, bringing the total number of such officers to seven. Provision also is made for a liaison officer and an extra four clerks and typists. One additional north-west tree adviser is provided for—he hardly comes under the Department of Regional Administration, but he is part of the debate—and an additional three nurserymen and gardeners. I note there are three less temporary assistants in this year's listings; I suppose that some of those who last year were listed as "temporary" this year have taken up some of the additional appointments to which I have referred. Nevertheless, the total staff has increased from 61 last year to 68 this year, an increase of seven. The vote last year was \$1.795 million while expenditure was \$1.832 million, whereas this year the vote has increased to just over \$2 million, an increase of about \$170 000.

So, we are going through the exercise of expanding the department at a time when it is being freely rumoured that the razor gang is to slip into the department and save a bit of money. I said the other night that the handling of the Estimates was a bit of a farce. It certainly is in this instance, because in introducing the Budget the Treasurer said he intended to slash about

another \$20 million from the grand total and we still do not know from where he intends to slash it. This could be one of the departments where heads are likely to roll.

Although I have not spoken to any of the regional administrators—my contact has been more with the people who serve on the committees—considerable concern is felt in these areas about the future of the department. These people do not feel isolated; they believe they have a contribution to make, and believe the department should continue.

If I had my way, and because Western Australia is such a large State, I would give the regions increased power. I would also make them responsible for the decisions they made. However, of course, we do not have the opportunity at present to do that. I believe the operations of this department are showing some improvement on what existed some 12 to 18 months ago. Unless there are very good reasons to the contrary, it would be a pity to do away with any of this department.

Mr SIBSON: The Office of Regional Administration was established by the Government in 1974 and, over the years, has developed into a very successful and worth-while adjunct to government. Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie), as a country member you would be aware of the need to ensure regional areas have the opportunity to have government at first hand.

Mr Bryce: Have they put a bar on their telephones?

Mr SIBSON: It is a pity that sometimes we cannot put a bar on members of the Opposition so that members on their feet can get on with their speeches.

Mr Bryce: You are forever barring me when I am making a speech.

Mr SIBSON: Order, please! This department commenced as the Office of the North West. I am sure all members know the history of this department and what a great job it did. It allowed people in the north-west to have a better understanding of what government was all about and, more importantly, it enabled an input by the Government at the regional level, whether it be in the Kimberley, Pilbara, or even the Gascoyne.

Over the 1960s and 1970s, great strides were made in this area and development took place which probably would not have occurred had it not been for the establishment of this office.

We then saw an extension of this very worthwhile and successful Government policy into the present department, a policy which should be

encouraged and widened. We have seen the department extend into other regions of the State. In fact, I believe there are now seven offices of regional administration throughout Western Australia.

I refer in particular to the Office of Regional Administration in the south-west. Members would be aware of the great development which is taking place in the south-west of Western Australia, not only in the field of mining—as most people seem to think—but also in forestry, agriculture, and in the manufacturing, light industrial, and commercial areas. The projections for the future in the south-west, as in many other areas such as Albany, Esperance, and Kalgoorlie, is that this growth will continue.

A matter which concerns me greatly is that we as a Government should be seen to be encouraging proper development within those areas. By "proper development" I mean we should be encouraging the development within those regional areas of the appropriate Government instrumentalities. I realise we already have the Main Roads Department and the Education Department, and that various other departments such as the Public Works Department also have a significant role to play in regional areas.

However, many other departments such as the Town Planning Department, the Department of Consumer Affairs, and the State Emergency Service also have a role to play. Many of these departments have not been considered as ones which could viably operate in regional areas.

It is my firm belief that if we are ever to stop the drift of population from the country to the city, we must approach this problem in a strong and direct way. It is well known that 80 per cent of our population lives within the Perth metropolitan area.

Mr Bryce: They do not get many political representatives, though, do they?

Mr SIBSON: It frightens me when I see the continued growth of the metropolitan area. I realise it is healthy to have such growth, but it should not be at the expense of growth in the country. Many people will argue that the growth in our country areas is continuing; however, it is not accelerating at anywhere near the rate of the metropolitan area.

I commend the Government for the way it has encouraged the Office of Regional Administration and all the things for which it stands, including the regional development committees, to the members of which I pay tribute for their dedication and the time they spend working for their areas. The input provided by these

committees in investigating and bringing about decisions which affect regional areas is most commendable, and should be encouraged.

It is my firm belief that unless we continue to support the Office of Regional Administration and in fact expand the department and give it more teeth, we will fail in the course we have taken.

Mr Bryce: Are you advocating bigger government?

Mr SIBSON: We should start seriously to look at where we are going in this State. We should start to dismantle some of the hierarchical structures in the metropolitan area and shift them to the country. That is not bigger government; that is keeping government at the existing level. We should shift some of these people from their ivory towers and place them in regional areas. They would soon realise how nice it is to live in the country. The member for Ascot would agree with me on this point, because he comes from the country, and is always telling people how nice it is to live in the country.

Mr Bryce: Do you have any ideas as to which departments should be shifted?

Mr SIBSON: We could talk about this all night.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I suggest that the honourable member will not debate it all night; I ask him to address his remarks to me.

Mr SIBSON: Just for the benefit of members who do not understand what I am talking about, I believe the time has come when the Government of the day should make a conscious effort to ensure there is a delineation of the departments within the hierarchy of the metropolitan area and consider shifting some of those officers to country areas. It is quite ludicrous, for example, that the engineers employed by the various departments actually reside in the metropolitan area. They spend much of their time travelling from the city to country areas. That expense could be removed, because travelling and accommodation are very costly.

There is a need for engineers, architects, and tradesmen within the Government sector—whether or not they be professional people—to live in country areas so they can know the areas and understand them. It is not good enough to have officers going into the country areas for a day or two, or a week at the most, staying at expensive hotels and giving advice. The Government should work towards establishing public servants in the country towns on an equal

per capita basis. It frightens me that the greater percentage of public servants live in the city.

Mr GRILL: Have you had a look at the number for this department stationed in the city? It is 42 per cent.

Mr SIBSON: We are starting to achieve a balance between the metropolitan area and the country towns. However, the Government has come to grips with this problem.

It is not good enough for people in service departments to say that they do not want to go to country towns. If the proper approach is made and the people are made aware of their responsibilities as professional officers, they will go to the outer regions and become part of the society there. They will be able to perform the functions of government within the regional areas.

I know that from time to time it has been said that Bunbury and the south-west do not need this sort of thing, because they are close to Perth. What a lot of rot! It is true that Bunbury is close to the metropolitan area, but that is a good reason for the decentralisation of Government departments.

People should not drive to Bunbury, Busselton, Donnybrook, or wherever it might be for a day to confer with the local authorities or the people in the private sector and then drive back to Perth. They should become part of the communities with which they are dealing. At least if an officer goes to the north-west, he goes for a week or so and he becomes acclimatised to the local area, the local communities, and the local people.

We can probably find a good example in education. The member for Ascot would have to agree with me on this point, because education is an area in which teachers, principals, and regional staff live in the region and become acclimatised. They have a better understanding of the areas in which they live.

Despite the restrictive funding problems that Governments have, we are faced with a challenge. Lack of funding should not be used as an excuse not to expand the Office of Regional Administration. As I have said before, it is not just a matter of expanding that office; there is a challenge to ensure that we remove some of the conglomerates from the Public Service and send the people into the regional areas.

Let us consider the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. We have 122 people working in that domain, and most of them work at Perry Lakes. Why are not more of those people working in the regional areas? They should be making decisions and dealing with the local authorities, organisations, and general public in

those areas. If that were the case, they would do a lot more good for this State than they do.

I would like to leave a thought with the Committee. The Government should look very closely at the possibility of moving more of the professional public servants into the regional areas, to give them the opportunity to develop their roles and to take responsibility for making decisions. They should be responsible for the expenditure of funds.

Unless we accept this challenge and start to move in this direction, we will find that the metropolitan area continues to grow, and the regional areas will become more frustrated.

Mr TUBBY: I support the remarks of the member for Bunbury. In my electorate, regional administration is based in Geraldton. Over the past 12 to 18 months, the concept of regional administration is beginning to work and show its worth. The role of regional administration in the co-ordination of developments in regions is tremendously important.

If the Government feels that regional administration is not working as effectively as it anticipated, that is only because of the lack of decision-making powers in the regional administrators. They have a tremendously important role; and the Government should be looking to them to deal with the development and co-ordination of the regional areas.

The local authorities are beginning to accept the regional administrators as the lifeline between the local authorities and Government departments. It is disappointing that, when regional administration is beginning to work, it may be dismantled in any way. I express my disappointment if it is downgraded, because I know such a move would not be accepted readily by the people of Geraldton and the mid-west region.

Mr GRILL: I support the vote on this Item, and I join with the member for Bunbury and the member for Greenough—

Mr Davies: And the member for Victoria Park!

Mr GRILL: —and the member for Victoria Park, but not in the sense that he might think—in supporting this vote for the Office of Regional Administration and the North West. I support this vote because it demonstrates clearly this Government's unswerving support for Parkinson's law; this Government's wholehearted support for a burgeoning Government bureaucracy; and this Government's commitment to the redundant.

If ever there were a salutary lesson for the people of Western Australia about big

government, about bureaucracy, and about Parkinson's law, the Office of Regional Administration and the North West is that lesson. For a start, the name is a misnomer. The office has no regional administration powers whatsoever. It has no authority to make decisions. What is more, it has absolutely no responsibility.

Mr Davies: We would give them more authority, and they would answer for their decisions, if we were in Government.

Mr GRILL: Yes, I accept that point.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I suggest that the member addresses the Chair and stays with the matter of the debate.

Mr GRILL: I am glad to see you are interested, Mr Deputy Chairman. I know you have a deep commitment to these sorts of things, too.

The Offices of Regional Administration are post offices. At very best, we could call them public relations offices. This Government, however, is well blessed with public relations officers. As I understand it, the Premier has 66 of them at his fingertips.

Sir Charles Court: Don't talk rot!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If the member wishes to debate that item, he will have an opportunity to do so. I draw his attention to Division 47, and I ask that he confine his remarks to Regional Administration and the North West.

Mr GRILL: I may have touched a nerve.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member is touching Standing Orders.

Mr GRILL: It is rather ironic that the Government's commitment to decentralisation is centred around the Office of Regional Administration and the North West, because if one looks at the Budget one sees 68 positions for people in the office who will work in country areas, and 26 people who will be involved in the central administration. It appears that a factor of 42 per cent of this marvellous decentralised office is committed to working in the metropolitan area!

This office is so important and so vital to this State that in Kalgoorlie the regional administrator resigned more than 12 months ago, and he has not yet been replaced. That is the status the Government gives to regional administrators.

Mr Stephens: Perhaps the representation by the local member up there is so good that there is no need for the regional administrator.

Mr GRILL: There is something in that argument.

In terms of a commitment to the useless, this vote is a salutary lesson for the people of Western Australia; and for that reason I support it.

Mr WATT: I want to make a very brief contribution to the debate on this Division. I can talk about regional administration only as I have experienced it in my electorate of Albany.

Mr Grill: Well, you have a telex. Why do you need another one?

Mr WATT: I inform the member, for his edification, that I have never used the telex in the regional administrator's office.

Mr Grill: I know that does not apply to the member for Greenough, because he uses theirs. Do not tell me you do not use their electric typewriters!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): The member for Yilgarn-Dundas has had his opportunity.

Mr WATT: For the information of the member, I have bought my own electric typewriter.

The name "regional administration" obviously means different things to different people. Some people become uptight because the officers are not administrators within the strict meaning of the word.

Mr Carr: The only thing they administer is their office.

Mr WATT: Perhaps there is value in that; and I will explain that point.

Mr Pearce: Is your name "Parkinson", by any chance?

Mr WATT: If members opposite were serious and listened, I could explain. The Albany region is not as large as some other regions; and because of that a whole range of Government services could not justifiably be established in their own offices. Therefore, the Office of Regional Administration has been able to provide facilities for visiting officers to come on an occasional basis, to use the premises and secretarial facilities. They have the convenience of the secretarial staff for making appointments for people to visit the officers when they are in the town.

A whole range of these people use the office. The consumer affairs people use it quite regularly, as does the Legal Aid Commission which sends people down to work through that particular office. The Department of Labour and Industry comes down from time to time and the office does a great deal of work for it. The Small Claims Tribunals and the corporate affairs people work through this office as do the Public Trustee

and the town planning people on occasions and there are numerous others.

I shall return to the Department of Labour and Industry. A few years ago the Commonwealth Employment Service kept a whole range of salary and award conditions for many awards. People in the town who wanted information about salary levels or award conditions for their employees were able to go to the Commonwealth Employment Service and obtain that information. In its wisdom, or lack of it, it chose to discontinue that service. That placed a very great burden on the people who live in a region far from Perth, bearing in mind the considerable telephone costs which can be incurred. Members would be aware that, when one telephones Government departments, frequently one is left hanging on the end of the telephone for quite long periods before one speaks to the right person.

Reference has been made to the telex facilities of this office and it has been able to obtain information and provide a very useful service. I give that as one practical example of where there is value in having a regional administrator administering that part of his office. If the member for Geraldton thinks it is of no value, I can tell him many people in my electorate would argue seriously with him. The Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation and the National Parks Authority—

Mr Grill: The information you are talking about can be obtained from the Chamber of Commerce or the local union office.

Mr WATT: Fortunately the union movement in Albany is almost non-existent and has no local office, so people would not obtain information from the union office. The Chamber of Commerce has a part-time office and, in any event, why should the Chamber of Commerce provide a facility at considerable cost to people who are not members? Of course, it can be said the Chamber of Commerce could impose a charge.

Mr Grill: It is readily available in Kalgoorlie.

Mr WATT: I am talking about Albany, and the Office of Regional Administration has provided a most worth-while service. The work it does with the regional development committee is most valuable and worth while.

Mr Grill: Regional development committees can run without a regional administrator and they run in Kalgoorlie without one.

Mr WATT: The regional development committees have run much more effectively since the Office of Regional Administration was established and the secretarial and research

facilities which are made available have been of great value to them.

The Office of Regional Administration has given tremendous support to local government in the whole region—not just in Albany—and the Albany Town Council is 100 per cent behind regional administration. It has received great value from our particular officer. Through the research facilities and staff of the Office of Regional Administration a considerable service has been provided to local government by way of assisting in the preparation of reports and similar sorts of work, especially for small shires which have limited staff numbers and which do not have the expertise to carry out this sort of work.

To a large extent, the success of the office hinges on the quality of the regional administrator appointed in the particular region. We are very fortunate in that a very good regional administrator (Mr Ken Marshall) has been appointed in Albany and I give him great credit for the work he has done.

Some people, including members of Parliament, have opposed this scheme, because they are concerned that the regional administration system may in some way detract from their particular positions in the community.

Mr Grill: I do not have that concern.

Mr WATT: Neither do I. Frankly, I have found that, by trying to work with the regional administrator for the common good of the community, far more is achieved than if the member of Parliament and the regional administrator pull in different directions. Therefore, I add my support to the Division.

Mr STEPHENS: I should like to make a few comments with regard to regional administration.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Could the member speak up?

Mr STEPHENS: I do not say regional administrators are of no benefit whatsoever, but we must be conscious of the costs involved and, on a cost benefit analysis, regional administrators come out very poorly. At a time when we are being exhorted to practise economy, this is an area in which such economy could be practised and the office could be largely dispensed with without any serious disadvantage to country people.

Mr Sibson: What would happen to the staff?

Mr Grill: They would do something productive!

Mr Sibson: What would happen to the staff, because they make up most of the cost?

Mr STEPHENS: If the Government changes its thinking, it might overcome this problem by

natural wastage and redundancy. I do not suggest that all the staff be dispensed with automatically. Indeed, some of them are public servants and that would be impossible. However, through natural wastage one could achieve a reduction in the overall level of the staff.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Bunbury has made his speech and I did not interject constantly on him and it would be appropriate if he intends to interject that he do so from his own seat. Indeed, it is rather unusual for the member for Bunbury to be awake during the course of debates.

I shall return to discussing regional administration. We must be very cost conscious and, since 1971—I mention that date, because that was when I entered Parliament—

Mr Bryce: 1971 was a great year!

Mr STEPHENS: It was a very good vintage. Since 1971 we have seen the establishment of the Consumer Affairs Bureau. This department does excellent work, but it will cost the taxpayer approximately \$724 000 in the current Budget. The office of the Ombudsman will cost \$236 000 in the current Budget. The cost of parliamentary officers in the current Budget is \$832 000 for clerk-typists and the rent for the parliamentary office will be another \$372 000.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest the member for Stirling is digressing to the discussion of other items. The Committee is discussing Division 47 and the Office of Regional Administration and the North West. I would ask the member to relate his remarks to that Division.

Mr STEPHENS: If you, Sir, would be a little patient, you would see in a couple of minutes that I am trying to relate my remarks to the Office of Regional Administration. All those services to which I have referred, which have been provided by Government, make the work of the parliamentary member that much easier. The total cost of those services is in the region of \$2 million and they will make the work of the politician easier. In addition to that, we now have the Office of Regional Administration which has been allocated \$2 million in this Budget.

As the work load of politicians has been reduced considerably, it is not necessary further to reduce that work load.

Mr Sibson: I would not say it has reduced my work load.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Stirling is developing an argument

and incessant interjections are making it extremely difficult for him to do so.

Mr STEPHENS: Of course, we now have this additional sum of \$2 million for regional administration. Much of the work in which regional administrators are involved is that which previously was carried out by politicians and, in many cases, still is carried out by them.

I can cite instances where members of the public go to the local Legislative Assembly member, to the Legislative Council member, to the regional administrator, and then, for good measure, to the local officer of the Department of Industrial Development and Commerce. That is only multiplying the work required and the final result will be the same.

Mr Watt: Do you mean members of the public go to all those people with the same problem?

Mr STEPHENS: Yes.

Mr Watt: It is very frustrating, isn't it?

Mr STEPHENS: It is exceedingly frustrating and very costly to the Government. It is also quite unnecessary. The member for Albany referred to the fact that work for Government offices which do not have a base in country areas can be performed by the Office of Regional Administration. He mentioned the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation, the legal aid people, and the Department of Labour and Industry, to name three. This area is one which local government could handle easily.

In my position as a parliamentary representative, at any time I have approached local government for office space on a temporary basis for meetings and that type of thing, the facilities have been provided very readily. I am sure local government would be quite happy to make office space available, and would even supply a certain degree of secretarial assistance to cover the situation referred to by the member for Albany.

Let us bear in mind the Government has indicated approximately \$1.5 million will be taken away from local government and yet we are providing \$2 million for regional administration. If we had another look at the situation, perhaps we would find that the funds allocated to the Office of Regional Administration could be reduced and those funds could be returned to local government. The benefits to the regions concerned would probably be greater than the benefits obtained from the regional administration service.

I know in regard to regional development committees do an excellent job, but the

committees were in existence a long time before regional administration came onto the scene and they did an effective job then.

Since the controversy has erupted in the Press about regional administration, the officers concerned have tried to justify their positions. I have no argument about that, but in the last edition of the *Great Southern Regional Newsletter* reference was made to "five years later" being five years after the Office of Regional Administration started.

Mr Carr: What is the document?

Mr STEPHENS: The *Great Southern Regional Newsletter* which is issued by the Office of Regional Administration in Albany. The edition I am referring to is volume 2, issue 11. One paragraph reads as follows—

Prior to 1976 many enquiries and requests for departmental assistance could only be made to offices located in Perth. This centralisation of departmental activity and effort, in general terms, was considered by Government and rural residents alike as being largely ineffective, and in some instances most inefficient.

It was regrettable that inquiries were being made in Perth, but through the function of my parliamentary office, on many occasions I made those inquiries on behalf of various constituents. That is the work of the local member and that is what I have been doing. I assume other local members have been doing that also. Why duplicate the position with the Office of Regional Administration?

Another comment made in this newsletter reads as follows—

Because of major differences in population, topography, climate and resources from region to region, each regional office had the initial task of identifying the problems and needs of each regional area and to devise strategies to deal with those problems.

I suggest if a local member is doing his job, this is his role in consultation with the local chamber of commerce, local groups which have an interest in a particular subject, and the local authority. Once again we see a claim being made which, as far as I am concerned, is simply a duplication of the job a member of Parliament should be doing.

The article continues—

One of the first tasks tackled by the Great Southern Office of Regional Administration was to identify the degree to which departments could comply with the

regionalisation programme and to formulate ideas on how best the programme could be put into effect.

It goes on as follows—

In broad terms it was found that Government agencies fell into four main categories, as follows:

1. Those agencies whose responsibilities required them to have a significant presence in the region.

e.g. Main Roads
Public Works
Housing
Police
Westrail
State Energy Commission.

As far as Albany is concerned, those facilities already exist.

I admit that one other item was education and that, to my knowledge, did not exist at the time. There is a degree of regionalisation and administration in the Education Department completely separate from the Office of Regional Administration. Within the last couple of weeks a senior officer in the Education Department said that there was no way they would get involved with regional administration and the administration of the Education Department.

Mr Sibson interjected.

Mr STEPHENS: It may be a lot of rot as far as the member for Bunbury is concerned, but I am quoting the words of a senior member of the Education Department. We see a lot of work being carried out by the Office of Regional Administration which is work that should be done by the local members of Parliament and for which a considerable amount of the taxpayers' money is already being allocated.

Mr Pearce: You think it takes in fact a weight of responsibility off local members? The member for Albany made a speech the other night about the non-catering for gifted children in the country and it turned out, embarrassingly for him, that there was such a programme at the Albany Senior High School that he was not aware of.

Mr STEPHENS: I cannot comment on that.

Mr Pearce: It is true.

Mr Clarko: It is true in a very small part only.

Mr Pearce: You did not know there was a gifted children programme in your local high school.

Mr STEPHENS: Perhaps members could make their speeches at another time?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I can assure you they will.

Mr STEPHENS: Summing up, I say there may be limited benefit from regional administration, but certainly the costs far outweigh those benefits and most of the work could be done by local members of Parliament in some areas in co-ordination with local government which would certainly appreciate \$1.5 million. I support the words of the member for Albany when he referred to Mr Ken Marshall, the regional administration officer. I have no argument with the man whatsoever and have confidence in his ability to do the job. In fact, I mentioned to him in discussions about two years ago that, as far as I was concerned, he was in the fortunate position of being virtually a member of Parliament without the disadvantage of having to face the people every three years.

Mr BRIDGE: My association or knowledge of regional administrators goes back a long time. Many years ago a visit was made to Halls Creek by Mr Bill McWilliam who became the Administrator for the North West. I think the other gentleman accompanying him was Bill Gordon. This is going back some years and I am not certain of the other name, but the purpose of that meeting was to discuss with the Halls Creek Shire Council the whole concept of setting up the administration in the north-west which subsequently became a position which is now known as the regional administrator.

We looked at it with considerable interest because we felt at the time that any plan that was set up which would provide an input of local opinion into Government planning and deliberations had to be of benefit to regional areas.

The council then took a position on this concept which was to support the formation of the body and the Administrator for the North West was charged with looking after it and administering it. Since then there has been much public comment about the merits of the type of work that the administrators have performed in regional areas. I want to say here tonight, that, generally speaking, people in regional areas ought to support regional administration.

Government members: Hear hear!

Mr BRIDGE: The reason is that through the regional administrators there is always the hope that regional and local ideas will be an input into Government planning and deliberations. There are many times when the pipeline, for want of a better word, is blocked; we all recognise that, but mostly that blockage occurs at the city end of the

pipeline. In other words, through the administrators, there is always a capability to put forward ideas generated from public comment and deliberations within those regions and to feed them into the system, but the type of activity which it was hoped would come as a result of those sorts of capabilities have not always come to fruition, but it has not entirely been the fault of the administration or the people responsible for those decisions being taken at local level; by that I mean within the regions. We are constantly saying in this Chamber, outside this Chamber—wherever one likes to go—that there is the greater role for local decisions to be made.

Mr Grill: They never make any local decisions; that is the problem. If they did, there might be an argument for them.

Mr BRIDGE: Views are expressed, but they are not necessarily being followed or accepted down here. The regional organisation cannot be blamed for that. What we must realise is that the structure of the regional organisation is vital to enable a position to be reached whereby the central bureaucrats, if I can use that terminology, will eventually listen to the points, elements, and propositions being fed into the system from regional areas.

I do not think our criticism can be directed fairly at regional officers. If we are needing this system we must accept this concept with interest and we should say the bureaucrats based in the cities are the ones causing problems.

Government members: Hear hear!

Mr Grill: A Government will not respond to two regional administrators.

Mr BRIDGE: Any Government ought to look to the long-term success of giving regional administrators greater autonomy. That is the proposition we have just spoken about and is one that I would support at all times. If we look at the restructuring or improvement of the present system, what we ought to be looking at is greater autonomy, and that is regional administration, not a joint growing party policy or position, but a propping up of their position within this whole structure, because when all is said and done, it is part of a proposition which we in rural areas believe is important, and that is the input of local opinion into the system so that the Government at this end, through its advisers—the bureaucrats—will give some credibility to the measures put forward.

I want to make it clear here tonight that as a rural member representing an area where local needs are so vital in the future planning of that area, I believe the role of the regional

administrator will continue to be an important one because very good points of view are put to the areas of Government planning by these administrators, even though we recognise that many of them do not get anywhere. As I made the point earlier, the blockage in the pipeline almost always happens at this end.

A Government member: On this side of the freeway.

Mr BRIDGE: That is right, and not in the areas themselves. If that system exists, surely no blame can be attributed to the administrators who are doing their part, but they reach a deadlock situation at this end. What we ought to be acknowledging is that regional administrators should be retained, but we should give them a greater measure of autonomy as they provide very practical and real input of ideas into the system.

They consult with local organisations and look at the needs of local shires and consult with them on many issues. To that end, it is a valuable system which we should continue to support and, as I say, to strengthen rather than to downgrade. My position on it is that I support the sphere of regional administration and my call is that it be given a lot more meat than perhaps it has got at the present time.

Mr CARR: My view on regional administrators is fairly well known, but as tonight it appears that every country member is expected to say his little bit, I want to spend about 60 seconds repeating my position. The discussion tonight has been as to whether the regional administration system as it presently exists is satisfactory, and whether we believe in the concept of an effective regional administration system. I want to make it very clear that we need an effective system of regional administration. I have all sorts of reservations about how effectively this system has been allowed to operate and have no doubt that a senior State Government employee in the region who can identify with the problems of the region is a considerable advantage in terms of dealing with the bureaucracy in Perth.

Mrs Craig: You have never suggested that before in this Chamber.

Mr CARR: I have indeed.

Mrs Craig: No.

Mr CARR: I have been very critical of the way this Government has set up this little showpiece to pretend that it is doing something about regional development when it is doing very little about decentralisation and regional development. I have certainly never said in the Chamber that I am very wrapped up in the way this Government is using this system in the country.

Mrs Craig: Now you are saying you think it is all right.

Mr CARR: I am saying the general concept of there being more local decision-making power is a very worth-while principle to support.

Sir Charles Court: You could have fooled me from your attitude.

Mr CARR: The Premier can harp if he likes, and so can the Minister for Local Government, but I have never in this Chamber suggested there should not be greater local decision-making power. In fact, my strongest criticism of this system has always been that the regional administrator does not have the power to make important decisions.

Mr Pearce: That is exactly right.

Mr CARR: He does not have the power to make important decisions.

Mr Pearce: He is like a human telephone.

Mr P. V. Jones: What sort of decisions are you referring to?

Mr CARR: We have had reference to the regional development committee and that is a concept we should look at. At the moment regional development committees also have little power. They have on them significant people from the local community, people from local government, and people from industry, but they do not have wide enough terms of reference. The limitations placed on the regional development committees, mean they do not have the ability to make decisions concerning a whole range of local issues. In fact, it is most disappointing that those regional development committees are so restricted in their powers. It is ridiculous to me that regional development committees are under the responsibility of the Minister for Resources Development because that just emphasises the point that those regional development committees are related only to one sphere of influence.

A Government member: No they are not. That is rubbish!

Mr CARR: Every regional development committee is allied therefore to the Minister and every project it wants to undertake must go through the Minister for Resources Development. It is true.

A Government member: What a lot of rubbish!

Mr CARR: They are not allowed to write directly to the Minister for Education or a Federal Minister if there is an issue before them of Federal concern, but must go through this Minister. I make that point.

Mr P. V. Jones: Could I ask you to give me some advice? What sort of decisions do you want them to make?

Several members interjected.

Mr P. V. Jones: Decisions that local government should make? What sort of decision?

Mr CARR: A State Government decision. I am not talking about general policy decisions, and I am not saying that the local regional administrator should be a person who sets Government policy. I accept the right of the Government to set its policy, but a whole range of decisions needs to be made locally and these would fit within the context of that system. At the moment the decisions are being made in Perth. Someone referred to the Education Department as an example of this regionalisation and decentralisation. However, any decision of any consequence is made in Perth. It is not made by the regional officer of the Education Department.

So I am most concerned about the whole concept, and I am disappointed that we have this office with very little power. It is basically a public relations agency for the Government. It has been said frequently that it is just a post office that connects up the region and the city. It has no decision-making power.

I support the concept of this office being a strong, locally identifiable, autonomous decision-making body in the region, but I am disappointed that the regional administration, as presently operating, has not fulfilled the potential which exists for it.

Mr P. V. JONES: One could be excused for not being sure whether we were talking about an Item under Division 47—that is, the Office of Regional Administration and the North West—or regional administrators, the principle of regional administration, or regional development committees.

Mr Davies: The whole lot!

Mr P. V. JONES: The member for Victoria Park referred to regional development committees first. I would like to draw his attention to Item 5 in Division 41. As most members who have had anything to do with regional development committees are aware, these committees have been strengthened in their work by the appointment last year of an officer in Perth. This officer provides the committees with a Perth contact, a clearing house. When I met all the chairmen and visited committees, these people made it quite clear that what they were seeking was one person in Perth to whom they could relate and with whom they could be associated. That is what they were given. Similarly, they were

asked under what area of responsibility they would like their work load to be, and the committees and their chairmen who, in all cases except two, are regional administrators, indicated quite clearly that they wished to remain where they are at the present time.

So I think that the work addressed by the committee is supported, quite clearly, not only by the committees themselves, but also by the principle of regional administration. The committees have areas where they act very responsibly, and in which they can be of considerable assistance. However, there has not been a great role for them to play when they move into an executive sphere of becoming administrators themselves. Indeed, they have asked for that.

The question of the terms of reference under which they operate has been referred to them. Not all the committees have as yet responded, but those which have, as the member for Kimberley suggested, requested a pipeline so that they can be consulted and have an opportunity to add their own input; they do not want any more.

Members opposite talk about decision making, but what decisions are they to make? The Education Department was referred to, and we were told that all the big decisions are made in Perth.

Mr Carr: And a lot of little ones, too.

Mr P. V. JONES: I can well remember the wish to give to the regional education officers a great deal more decision-making power. This suggestion had the support of the Education Department itself. However, we were prevented from doing this, and quite definitely prevented from doing it, by the Teachers' Union.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

Mr P. V. JONES: When we wanted to give some decision-making powers in regard to the deployment of teachers and the appointment and movement of staff at local level, we were prevented from doing so. No support was to be given to any system that did not allow the movement of teachers "in accordance with the wishes of the Teachers' Union". We were very keen that the regional superintendents should have a greater capacity to move teachers around. They have some of this capacity, but not as much power as I was trying to give them.

The principle of regional administration, as outlined by the member for Kimberley, is really what we are talking about. The situation is different in different areas of the State, and I think that the member for Bunbury and the member for Albany would admit that the sort of

situation as outlined by the member for Kimberley is very different from that prevailing in the south-west. The problems are entirely different, as are the pressures.

As I understand from visiting the Bunbury office, a considerable part of the work load in Bunbury relates to aspects such as consumer affairs; the office also does work for the Ombudsman. The member for Stirling said that the staff of the regional office should not have to do that; other people could do the work. That may be so.

Mr Stephens: I said it was a duplication. There is such a work load in consumer affairs that there could be a full-time officer for this alone in most regional centres.

Mr P. V. JONES: If the member will wait until I finish, the point I was trying to make is that the pressures and the work load are different in the Kimberley and the Pilbara from those in Bunbury and Albany. The work load in the eastern goldfields is probably different again. Certainly the remarks of the member for Yilgarn-Dundas when he suggested that the office is a commitment to the useless, or words to that effect, show that he does not have the same sentiments as his constituents, certainly not the sentiments that were expressed to me when I visited the area.

Mr Grill: Only one person expressed a view to you, and that was from—

Mr P. V. JONES: The acting regional administrator and the regional development committee telexed me a few days ago to draw attention to the fact that they were at variance with the member for Yilgarn-Dundas. They felt he had no commitment to regional administration.

Mr Bryce: He sounds like a Liberal Party spokesman. He sounds like a cipher from the city—a special pair of ears.

Mr P. V. JONES: We are talking about the particular provision in terms of the Budget. This Division relates to the Office of Regional Administration and the North West and the member for Ascot, who was the first member to speak, asked about the future. We have now been right around the full circle, and I will reply to his question. I hope it will clarify the situation for most other speakers who raised queries.

The Office of Regional Administration and the North West is like other Government departments and indeed, like the other two bodies the member for Ascot asked about the other night. He asked whether this had been subjected to considerable scrutiny. In this case the matter has not been determined.

Mr Carr: You certainly cleared it up!

Mr P. V. JONES: It is certainly valid to say that some functions are being carried out at the present time in the various regional offices which could well be carried out by other persons or other departments. However, do not let there be any misunderstandings; the work must be done. The Opposition would be the first to criticise if someone wished to make a complaint about a consumer affairs matter or an electoral matter, and there was no-one in a country town to attend to it.

The review is virtually completed, and it has been one of some great detail. We want to ensure that although there may be different pressures in the Kimberley and Pilbara, the people in this particular office are employed in the best way possible, and more particularly that the work they do is carried out in the best way possible. I am thinking particularly in terms of the regional administrator's office in Karratha. There have been considerable pressures in this area because of the expansion and growth caused as a flow-on from the North-West Shelf.

When the Government has some particular recommendation before it, we can come to grips with the future. However, at the present time we are being asked to consider a Division which addresses the work of this office in its traditional sense. It is fair to say that some of the offices listed there are not filled at the present time. Although there is an item for the manager of the Ord River project, the position is vacant and I understand it is not intended to fill it at the present time. Similarly, people who are engaged in forestry activities in the north-west may be brought under the control of the Forests Department instead of the office we are discussing; for example, there is a nursery at Broome. It is also fair to say that this office covers a whole range of matters such as satellite communication and the work at Wittenoom and Camballin. It is entirely different from the work in Bunbury and Albany. I suggest that the Division here reflects a continuation of the present situation. I want to signal the message that it might not last for the full time—it is being offered in the financial year.

Division 47 put and passed.

Division 48: Tourism, \$4 622 000—

Mr PEARCE: I do not intend to make a lengthy contribution to the debate. However, I would like briefly to thank the Department of Tourism in this State on two counts. Firstly, I was an organiser for the national debating championships held in Perth during August of

this year. At my request the Department of Tourism provided folders for the interstate visitors. The department did a spectacular and an expeditious job in providing tourism material.

I would also like to extend my personal thanks to the Director of the Department of Tourism (Mr Semmens) who gave me excellent tourist help when I was in London earlier this year on a CPA trip.

It was commented on during the course of the debate that although the Department of Tourism does a good job with regard to entrepreneurial activities in advertising, producing glossy brochures, and so on, one wonders whether the Government itself has a significant commitment to the tourist industry in providing facilities for tourists in areas other than Perth.

In June and July I went for a weeks holiday to Shark Bay. The facilities to get to the area are pretty poor. For instance the road from the Great Northern Highway turnoff to about Denham is, for the most part, red mud. Even in July—when many tourists visit the area because of the better weather—it is very muddy and quite dangerous. The lack of Government participation in the provision of tourist facilities and tourist access to many areas of Western Australia where Western Australians wish to go for holidays is pretty poor.

We are all aware that the cost of travelling to Western Australia is such that the provision for tourists here must largely be outside the Perth metropolitan area; it is for other Western Australians to tour in the State. The Government has not made particular provision for this aspect, but there are many ideal holiday and tourist places in the State which Western Australians would visit if the Government would make the facilities available or encourage the development of facilities in those areas; that is, it should provide the roads or other transport facilities for people to get there.

We are all aware that if we want a cheap holiday it is cheaper to fly to places such as Bali, Indonesia, Malaysia, or Singapore than to fly to towns in our State. In Asian cities accommodation can be provided which is cheap and of a much higher standard than that available in many tourist centres in Western Australia.

Mr Shalders: Are you suggesting people in our tourist areas work for wages like those paid to people in the Asian countries?

Mr PEARCE: It may be the case that they do not, but let the member for Murray reflect on two significances about this point. For a start, the places I go to on holidays are not bothered by wage components, because all that is supplied and

all that is needed are a few shacks suitable for people who might stay in the area for a week or two. People who visit these places are not looking for serviced accommodation, so there is no wage component to speak of. Further, if we consider the wage component in the Asian countries I mentioned, we cannot expect to depress the living standards of Western Australians to that extent. So we have a problem.

Mr Shalders: It is a factor.

Mr PEARCE: The problem is in the cost structure. It is ironic that we can fly to Bali for just a third of the cost to fly to Derby. No-one can tell me that the wage component of Qantas flights to fly to Bali is more than it is for flights to Derby. This is the crux of the tourist problem. Unfortunately too many Western Australians go to Bali because it is much cheaper than it is to go to Derby. The point is that the cost incentive to fly to Asia works against any incentive to fly to areas in our own State. That is the crux of the whole problem.

What is the Government doing to overcome this problem and to promote tourism in Western Australia? Like other members, I am too busy to do a lot of touring, but when I do go anywhere I prefer to tour my own State rather than go overseas. Unfortunately many Western Australians are finding it too expensive to tour their own State; they find it much cheaper to go to Asia. That is a very unfortunate fact of life and one the Government is not coming to grips with.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not right.

Mr PEARCE: What is the Government doing to overcome the problem?

Mr Sodeman: What do you suggest?

Mr PEARCE: There are two things that need to be done. The first is to increase the expenditure on roads to desirable holiday locations.

Mr Shalders: That is not the function of the Department of Tourism.

Mr PEARCE: It is the function of the Government. Tourism cannot be confined to the advertisements and promotional functions of the Department of Tourism. I am not decrying the department. It has its hands and feet tied behind its back.

Mr Shalders: The black top road has gone a long way north during the life of this Government.

Mr PEARCE: It has a lot further to go.

The Shark Bay area should be the subject of a classic development for tourism. It is a very desirable place to visit—especially during the winter months—for people living in the south of

the State. Good tourist facilities in areas such as this could help break the Western Australian tradition of holidaying in the main only in December and January. One problem preventing people visiting this area is the disastrous and dangerous condition of the road.

Mr Shalders: The locals believe the tourists are raping the fishing grounds.

Mr PEARCE: That is another matter again. Areas like Denham will have to rely more on tourism in the future than they now rely on fisheries, because they are having a problem with the fisheries there.

The second point is that if people are to go to these places in numbers, facilities need to be provided in greater numbers. There is a lack of a good water supply in Denham despite the construction of the desalination plant. Denham cannot cope with any more tourists than it has now, but as a tourist area it should be able to take a lot more. If we had decent roads more people would travel to areas such as this. The Government is not doing a great deal of work in this area. I would be pleased to hear from the Minister or the member for Murray any information on Government policies about tourism.

Mr SIBSON: Firstly, I commend the part played by the Travel Information Centre in promoting tourism in my electorate. Since the centre has adopted its new name the Bunbury tourist bureau has also changed its name to the Bunbury Tourist Information Centre. That ties it in with travel information centres throughout the State.

I am pleased to see the appointment of a regional tourist officer to the Bunbury region. This has given the area a great impetus. This is another facet of Government which has extended into a regional area, and people in the area are very pleased. This officer will work in with the Office of Regional Administration in the area.

This morning I took part in the launching of a new dimension in tourism—a first in Western Australia and probably Australia. I refer to a recorded message that will be available to people who visit the area from other parts of the State or from the Eastern States. The tape recording facility is sponsored by local people from the Bunbury area. It will be a very extensive recording which will give people information about activities in progress or to be commenced in the area over the next few days or weeks.

If anyone rings 386 1722 he will hear a recorded message itemising various activities in the Bunbury area. The tapes will be changed

regularly so that the information will be up to date at all times. If anyone wants to know what is happening in the area he merely has to ring that number. It will give information on functions to be held and perhaps even information of an impending visit by a prominent member of the Opposition. A member from another place and I were present at the launching of this facility this morning.

Mr Maurie Williams—a former member for Bunbury—is the Director of our Tourist Information Centre and I commend him and his committee, which have been supported by the Bunbury City Council, in doing so much to assist tourism in the area.

The Bunbury City Council has recently agreed to build new premises for the Bunbury Tourist Information Centre. This will allow the centre to expand its tourism activities. As the member for Gosnells said, certain areas of the State need to concentrate more on tourism than they did in the past because of the declining industries in their areas. Bunbury, like any other area, needs to accept this challenge because tourism is a very important industry.

In the past I have heard a fair amount of criticism of the way in which we in Bunbury tackle the question of tourism. We are working very hard to get our percentage of the tourist industry. In recent times we have seen the expansion of existing motels and hotels and the building of new ones. The Admiral Motel-Hotel is a very good example and it has facilities to cater for conventions and so on.

Mr Parker: Would you like to see a casino in your electorate?

Mr SIBSON: If the member will wait I will answer his interjection.

Despite much criticism at the time, Mr Roman Kozerski undertook the very successful enterprise of establishing the Bunbury Lighthouse Inn. It has proved to be a very successful move and is well known throughout the nation and many parts of the world. That same gentleman is now contemplating the building of a 16-storeyed motel-hotel of world class. It will certainly have a five star rating. It is perhaps ironic that he proposes calling it the Bunbury Lighthouse Casino.

Mr Parker: He obviously knows things we do not know.

Mr SIBSON: I suppose there is no reason that he should not use that name.

Mr Pearce: The trade practices tribunal might be interested.

Mr SIBSON: He highlights the fact that we have people in the community who are prepared to accept challenges. Members can imagine that such a building could cost a good deal—probably between \$8 million and \$10 million. He took a gamble on the last one. Everyone said that he was a fool to contemplate building the Lighthouse Inn. In fact, the site has been chosen and the plans have been approved.

Mr Bryce: Where is it?

Mr SIBSON: The member knows that the site is right beside the Bunbury Life Saving Club. The member has had the opportunity to read local newspapers which every week refer to this matter. He is well aware of the facts.

I round off my remarks by saying that in the coming years tourism offers this State one of the greatest challenges of all times.

Mr P. V. JONES: After listening to the member for Gosnells one could be excused for assuming that nothing whatsoever is being done for the betterment of tourism in this State. His remarks were an implied indictment on the Director of Tourism—

Mr Pearce: I was not.

Mr P. V. JONES: —and an implied indictment on the Government.

Mr Pearce: That's right, I aimed my remarks at the Government.

Mr P. V. JONES: If the member refers to the Budget he will notice that the allocation for country tourism facilities has been increased, as well as the allocation for the improvement of grants and other tourist facilities. He suggested that there needs to be various facilities provided in country areas such as roads and so on. I do not know why he was trying to make that point. Firstly he tried to say that we were not aware of the need, and, secondly, that nothing is being done about that need. A considerable allocation is being provided for the development of roads such as those referred to by the member for Murray. The member for Murray referred to the black-top road connection to Broome and Port Hedland, which will mean a tremendous advantage for the north. It will be more accessible for the motoring public, and will provide opportunities for tourism which previously did not exist.

After listening to the member's remarks one can be excused for thinking that nothing is being done. We are encouraging local authorities to provide caravan parks and additional facilities. The Tourist Development Authority, and the Government through that authority, have increased grants and assistance that will do much

for the benefit of tourism. It would be unreasonable for me not to admit that we would like more facilities provided, but within the constraints of finance the Government is doing a great deal to encourage tourism.

The assertion was made that people ought to travel to Bali instead of to Derby because of the problems associated with internal and external air fares. We would be the first to agree that internal air fares are high. The member would be well aware that the Federal Minister for Transport has done a great deal and is trying to do more to obtain a proper internal air fare structure for this country. It is hoped that this structure will reflect a fairer and better opportunity for the people of this State to travel intrastate than exists at present.

In regard to internal air fares versus external air fares, I am sure the member would be aware that international airlines enjoy a privilege in regard to the excise on fuel, a privilege which is not available to internal airlines. International airlines therefore are able to offer cheaper package air fares.

Mr Pearce: That is Commonwealth Government policies responsible for that.

Mr P. V. JONES: The member said the State Government should do something about the situation.

Mr Pearce: That's right.

Mr P. V. JONES: I am answering the member's comments by saying that the Minister for Transport as well as the Honorary Minister for Tourism have been assiduous in their attempts to draw attention to the air fare imbalance and the disadvantage Western Australia suffers because of it.

Mr Carr: They haven't done much about intrastate air fares.

Mr Pearce: They have been making it cheaper for people to go to Sydney, but not to Derby.

Mr P. V. JONES: I think we all agree that the Federal Department of Transport, through its officers in this country and in this State, has done a great deal to promote tourism, and the department should be commended for its efforts.

Item 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances—

Mr PEARCE: I refer specifically to the salary of the director. I make it very clear that in my speech to the Chamber I directed no criticism whatsoever to Mr Noel Semmens or his staff at the Department of Tourism. I made it clear that he and his staff do a tremendous promotional job. In fact, Mr Semmens was very helpful to me when I was in the United Kingdom. The

department did a good job in promoting Western Australia to people attending a convention of an organisation I represent. The point is that it is not enough to pay good people to do a job and then say, "That is the end of our job in tourism". The member for Geraldton made that point effectively.

We have too much promotion directed towards interstate and overseas people instead of having it directed towards Western Australians. If we can get Western Australians to tour their State more there will be less necessity—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Crane): The member for Gosnells rose to speak on Item 1. He is straying from that Item, and I ask him—

Mr PEARCE: I am not at all.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: —to confine his remarks to salaries and wages.

Mr PEARCE: I am talking about the role of the Director of Tourism.

Mr Sibson: It has nothing to do with salaries.

Mr PEARCE: My speech does have something to do with salaries.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member's remarks should have nothing to do with east-west airways. I ask him to confine his remarks to salaries, wages, and allowances, or sit down.

Mr PEARCE: I am speaking about the role of the director. It was implied that I cast some aspersions upon that gentleman. I think he and his staff do a good job in promoting tourism, and I believe tourism promotion must be directed towards Western Australians as much as it is to people from overseas and interstate. The great pool of potential tourists for Western Australia is within Australia.

Division 48 put and passed.

Division 49: Industrial Development and Commerce, \$4 237 000—

Mr BRYCE: I take this opportunity to express my disappointment that no allocation has been made in the Budget for the establishment of a technology park in Western Australia. We should have a technology park, and might I say, speed is of the essence if we are not to languish behind the rest of the world and the other capital cities of Australia when it comes to the establishment and encouragement of high technology industries.

The experience of other parts of the world demonstrates beyond any shadow of a doubt that very real benefits can accrue to communities which establish the research infrastructure that enables academics, and leaders of industry, and Government to work together effectively to

develop high technology industries. This idea is not original as far as I am concerned. Many parts of the world have taken up the concept; particularly a number of important cities in the United States. The idea has spread to Britain and Canada where it has proved to be most successful.

I put a constructive suggestion to the Committee. I understand there exists an area of land of some 100 acres lying between the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Department of Agriculture facilities. It is vacant land, and I know that the Treasury and other Government departments have their eyes on it for other purposes. However, the location is ideal for a technology park; it is alongside the WA Institute of Technology, which would be beneficial to its development as a technology park.

The land gives an opportunity for the Government to provide the basic infrastructure for private companies to be attracted to the concept of a technology park. Similar action has been taken in other cities. There is nothing so sophisticated about it that means we could not follow the same course. If we want Perth to be the leading city in Australia in regard to technology, we can make it so, provided the leadership and encouragement for that course is given by the State Government.

It is a great pity that an allocation has not been made by the Government to demonstrate that it is interested to take up this concept at an early stage.

Sir Charles Court: There is nothing new about this.

Mr BRYCE: I know that.

Sir Charles Court: I want to let you know that this matter has been under negotiation for quite a while, and that doesn't mean to say an allocation has to be in this year's Budget for it.

Mr BRYCE: The precise point I make is this: I have been urging the Government for more than three years to do something about the establishment of the sort of research infrastructure to which I have referred. For the information of the Premier, he has resented the interest I have shown in high technology industries; he has alleged that I believe I am the only person informed about the matter or interested in it, which is absolute folly.

Sir Charles Court: You assume no-one has done anything about it. We don't oppose the idea, but don't think you are the only one—

Mr BRYCE: How long must we wait? For the last three or four years—

Sir Charles Court: There is a lot to be done in this city. How much do you know about the WA Institute of Research, about the work it has done and its sophistication?

Mr BRYCE: I know that the technology group has been studying the matter I have raised.

Sir Charles Court: Do you know the work has already been done in Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE: I know the people who form the Systems Research Institute of Australia.

Sir Charles Court: The institute has its headquarters for Australia in Perth. You don't seem to think there is anything in your own State.

Mr BRYCE: If the Government was acting with the same speed with which it allegedly has acted over all the years it has been in office, we would have seen an allocation in this Budget for a technology park programme. The South Australian Government has beaten us to the punch by allocating \$4 million for this purpose.

The Minister of the South Australian Government responsible for these matters was in the group with which I travelled overseas last year. We looked at some of the technology parks developed overseas, and I was not surprised when I heard that South Australia beat us to the punch. Obviously for some time I have suggested in this place that we take direct action, and I make the point again—we should have our own technology park.

Sir Charles Court: Do you know what the institute in this State does and already has operating?

Mr BRYCE: Such matters are not involved in the establishment of a technology park.

Sir Charles Court: No-one said they were.

Mr BRYCE: Very well.

Sir Charles Court: But the work is a part of the technology advances in this State.

Mr BRYCE: Not for one moment did I suggest that meaningful research is not being carried out in an applied or scientific way.

Sir Charles Court: It is in a practical way.

Mr BRYCE: Of course, this research has been going on irrespective of whether this Treasurer or another has been in Government. I suggest it is a pity that the Budget brought down this year does not have an allocation for the establishment of a technology park.

Sir Charles Court: You don't need an allocation.

Mr BRYCE: Some people are not aware of what a technology park involves. I will spend a couple of minutes outlining the type of

infrastructure required and the sort of industries that would be involved. I will indicate also the purposes of a technology park such as those developed in a number of important cities in the United States and Britain. The purposes involve research into aero technology, solar development, information processing, the electronics industry itself, biotechnology, and many other matters relating to futuristic industries. Such things can be and should be encouraged in this city by the establishment of a technology park.

We ought to have one of these parks to attract science-based industries and to boost job opportunities in the high technology field. There is no doubt that we could broaden the base of our own manufacturing industry if we had a technology park.

I am 100 per cent behind people in Western Australia who have advocated such a park—some of whom are academics and scientists in this community—but unfortunately their pleas have fallen on deaf ears; they certainly have not been well received.

I gain the distinct impression that the Government's tardiness in this area has been the result of its own ideological commitment. So blind has the Premier and some of his Ministers been over the years that they have refused to see that there is Government involvement in industry throughout the rest of the world.

Sir Charles Court: We have been highly interested and have been doing something of real practical value.

Mr BRYCE: Is the Premier suggesting that a technology park would not be a real practical move of lasting value?

Sir Charles Court: Anyone would think that you are the only one who thought about technology. We do things about it and do not talk so much about it.

Mr BRYCE: I say to the Premier, in the twilight of his career, that he has never admitted that he was wrong nor has he ever been able to concede that anyone else has been capable of developing and promoting a worth-while idea.

Sir Charles Court: It is unfortunate you have not had the opportunity of working with me in Government. If you talk to some of my colleagues they will tell you what has been done.

Mr BRYCE: The Premier's colleagues are well aware that he believes himself to be the sole repository of good ideas.

The point is the Government seems to have been very tardy and it has lost valuable years in the electronics industry because the Premier and

the Minister alike have been inclined to take the view that it should be left entirely to the private sector. There is no ignoring the reality that throughout the world there have been important and meaningful relationships between the Government, the academic world, and the private sector in regard to high technology industries. High risk capital has been necessary and a tremendous amount of co-operation has been essential between the academic institutions, Government, and industry, and this has enabled the knowledge breakthroughs and the application of that knowledge.

Why is it, therefore, that this Government in this State has found it beyond its imagination? Why is it that the Western Australian Government has lost three or four years in regard to this important question of the proper encouragement and leadership in high technology industries?

I suggest to the Premier that the most meaningful way that encouragement and involvement can be provided would be by the Government's reserving the land which is necessary to provide research infrastructure for the concept of a technology park.

People have forgotten or romanticised the view of the silicon park in San Francisco. They have forgotten that it is a technology park which started as a park shared with the Stanford University. The benefits which have flowed to the rest of the world from a simple concept have been great and for some years I have been asking the Government to consider it. However, the Premier sits in his seat and says, "We are looking at it".

Sir Charles Court: We have done plenty. You keep putting these ideas forward as though no-one has thought of them and actions have been taken ahead of you.

Mr BRYCE: If it sounds that way, then I say to the Premier, in the twilight of his career, that he has been the very best lecturer or teacher so far as that method is concerned. If I am parroting the Premier's procedure and he finds it galling, then I suggest that maybe I have learned the method from the Premier.

Sir Charles Court: I would not like to think you are modelling yourself on me if what you are saying is a reflection of it. You are worrying me.

Mr BRYCE: Unless the Government acts with more speed and determination in this area we in this community are destined to be the purchasers, users, installers, and maintainers of other people's technology. It is not necessary for us to compete with the massive high technology companies of the world. So multi-faceted are these high

technology industries that it is possible for us to specialise and select certain facets of the high technology industry such as the electronic industry or the aerospace industry. We should get right in there to carve out a section of the world market for ourselves.

If we are to overcome the massive Australian inferiority complex—and it is a pity there are people on the Government back benches and possibly some of my own colleagues who feel that at this stage they could not imagine many of these things being done because they are too sophisticated for us—we must do something as soon as possible. I have complete confidence in the ability of our own scientists and leaders in our business sector to put their act together, if they receive the encouragement and leadership necessary from the Government.

Sir Charles Court: We have some who have done that already internationally.

Mr BRYCE: I know, in some cases despite the lack of sympathy from the Government.

Sir Charles Court: With the help of the Government.

Mr BRYCE: Ask the people concerned, especially the founders of Delta Pacific, how much meaningful assistance they received from the State Government after repeated representations to the former Minister for Industrial Development. That proud Western Australian company, which was eventually sold out to Mayne Nickless because it could not obtain enough capital and assistance when it needed it, finished up marketing products of incredible value to the rest of the world. However, it found that its requests for assistance fell on deaf ears.

I suggest to the Committee it is a real pity that South Australia beat us to the punch and established a technology park. We should and could have put the ingredients together to have a park in Western Australia. I should like to refer to three brief paragraphs which outline the nature and purpose of the technology park in South Australia just in case the Minister is prepared to listen to a constructive suggestion.

In Adelaide the technology park will be comprised basically of three companies: Firstly, a research and development precinct designed to accommodate a wide range of individuals and organisations undertaking research and development from the base level to product development and testing for established organisations; secondly, an industrial precinct for organisations involved in high technology science-based industry where a significant degree of research is undertaken in association with

industrial production; thirdly, a mining-oriented research and development precinct for organisations undertaking natural resources and energy projects.

In the context of this general issue, I have some concern about the future of the Western Australian Petroleum and Minerals Research Institute. There is a danger that that body, in the way it has been established and evolved, at this early stage could well become a creature of the Mines Department, in the way that the Solar Energy Research Institute has become a creature of the State Energy Commission and failed to fulfil the genuine long-term research programme for which it was designed and established.

I urge the Minister to accept that speed is of the essence with regard to the establishment of a technology park in Western Australia. If we want Perth to become the technology capital of Australia, it will not happen; it most positively will not occur if we leave things to the law of the jungle and do not provide the leadership from Government which is absolutely essential in this industry.

Experience the world over has demonstrated that this fairly unique partnership between Government, industry, and the advanced institutions of learning is absolutely critical if high technology industries are to be established.

I urge the Minister to accept that speed is the essence. I am disappointed there has been no allocation in this year's Budget which would indicate that no funding has been set aside for the creation of a technology park in Western Australia.

Mr A. D. TAYLOR: I wish to speak about a matter which I mentioned the other night and that is the possible closure of the blast furnace at Kwinana. I wish to make an appeal to the Minister and the Honorary Minister to stay with this problem as long as possible in an effort to save the work force in that area.

Western Australia has not had such a disaster before and it is the function of the Department of Industrial Development and Commerce to become involved and find ways to utilise the capacity of the work force in the area. We have had mining towns close down or whittled away and the population moved to the rural areas. We have had major shutdowns in the metropolitan area, and most recently with the closure of the David Jones store. Again, the number of people who were stood down at that time belonged to a large community. The impact was not felt to any large extent, other than by those who were directly affected.

Even the shut-down at Kambalda was not of such importance as the projected closure of Australian Iron & Steel. The houses and, in fact, the town belonged to the company. Although the stores were leased, they, too, belonged to the company. The same impact did not apply. People left the community and were absorbed into a larger community elsewhere.

However, that does not apply in Kwinana. We will find that, within five months, 700 people within a very small community will be unemployed. It will have a massive impact in the south-west corridor. In those five months, the Government has the opportunity to do something to alleviate the very real problem which will develop.

I was asked the other night by the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce what I would do. I often think about that type of thing and I have thought about that matter. I put two points to the Honorary Minister; probably, they were quite fortuitous. However, they did occur during the term of the Tonkin Government, when a somewhat similar situation applied.

At that time, because of the credit policies of the McMahon Government, there was substantial unemployment in the Rockingham-Kwinana area which was the result of construction running down. It was put to the Tonkin Government within a few months of its taking office that it should do something about that unemployment. It was due to the work of Treasury officers and a great deal of goodwill that a major project—the Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited installation at Kwinana—which was scheduled for some years ahead was brought into fruition at that time.

It was a very labour-intensive project which involved excavations, concrete work, and steel structures. CBH built that establishment many years ahead of the time it had planned, and it did it with some assistance from the Government.

Mr Evans: The Government gave a guarantee of \$42 million.

Mr A. D. TAYLOR: Yes; it was done by co-operation.

Mr McPharlin: There was only a guarantee by the Government.

Mr A. D. TAYLOR: It was probably fortuitous that the opportunity occurred at that time; however, the project was completed, and it utilised skilled labour available in the area.

The second matter concerned the construction of the oil rig *Ocean Endeavour*, which was substantially subsidised by the Australian

taxpayer. There could be quite a debate and argument as to whether that subsidy was warranted.

Certainly, during that period those two projects were able to keep a large, skilled work force in operation in the area.

Apart from the social advantage of keeping families and the community together, the contribution by the Australian taxpayer would have been more than saved by keeping the work force ready and available so that as the nickel refinery came into construction; as Pinjarra came on-stream; and, as BP expanded its operations in the area, a skilled work force was available, a work force which had remained intact as a result of decisions of the Tonkin Government. Whatever contribution there may have been by Governments, either State or Federal, during the few years those projects were under way has paid for itself over and over again, and it has meant a great deal to this State.

Just putting aside for a moment the human cost of the unemployment of 700 people—that figure is only approximate; because of the multiplier effect, with the number of ancillary industries in the area, it could go much higher—let us consider what their unemployment will cost this nation. It is not the type of social arithmetic one likes to carry out. However, working on the basis of an average family of a man, his wife, and two children, and using the married unemployment benefit rate of \$111 a week, with an additional \$10 a week for each child, we see that each average family unit would receive \$130 a week which, when multiplied by the 700 to 730 people unemployed, gives a figure of about \$100 000 a week being paid to people in the area by Commonwealth Treasury. If we multiply that \$100 000 a week by 52 we find the annual social cost to this country will be \$5 million. This amount will be simply to keep 700 families at a base level, despite all the skills they have, all the work they have done, and all the dreams they have.

Of course, some of these skilled men will find work elsewhere, but the flow-on effect will mean that at least that number of jobs will be lost to the area.

It is staggering that \$5 million a year could be paid by the taxpayer to support these people. The Government should be assisting the company in some way to maintain these jobs. It seems that to produce more pig iron at this stage is a waste of time; it cannot be sold. However, I hope the Government is as sure as it can be that this in fact is the case because there is a sneaking feeling

about that some excess capacity in the Eastern States will be providing, not pig iron in the true sense, but furnace feed similar to pig iron which will absorb the available market.

If the company cannot sell its product and cannot be helped, some cognizance must be taken of the cash resource of \$5 million which will be spent annually on maintaining these people at a base standard. The expertise of that work force is something we cannot obtain from immigration or from training tradesmen or apprentices. It has been in the area for 20 years. The people involved are instrument fitters, electricians, boilermakers, and fitters. They are skilled in every sense of the word and they are going to be just sitting there, virtually wasting unless something can be done.

Because of the length of time the industry has been in the area, the work force is not particularly young. They were mostly young when they came to the area, and when suburbs such as Calista, Orelia, and Parmelia came into existence. Many of these people were invited from overseas. I can recall pointing out during my maiden speech that only about 25 per cent of the work force in the area was Australian born.

The Government of the day was very proud of the Kwinana area, and so it should have been. It is a fine community, and a lot has been done in the area. It has all the services. It has a fine high school which is academically higher than most metropolitan high schools, surprising as that may be. The Government has invested a great deal of money in the area; in fact, the largest landowner in the area is the Government, and it also has a large investment in sewerage and power works. Everything is there, including a trained work force.

As it stands at the moment, nothing is going to be done. The only comment we have had from the Honorary Minister is that he talked with the management last December. In fact, he intimated he had talks a little earlier than that, but presumably—because no other comment has been forthcoming—the talks were insufficient to prevent the closure of the company from going ahead.

Sir Charles Court: I can tell you from personal knowledge and involvement there has been a lot of very close consultation. It is not just a matter of our having superficial talks with the company.

Mr A. D. TAYLOR: That is the type of comment both I and the community want. The community needs to know and to be reassured that everything which can be done has been done.

I hope the Premier will follow up that matter, or that his Minister will follow it up. I hope they

will go into it in as much detail as they possibly can. The work force and the community can accept hardship if they understand why it is imposed on them. However, they need to understand that.

As far as I am advised, the Government has done what it could. I refer to the two examples I gave earlier. I do not know whether they were fortuitous—perhaps there was some element of luck at the time the Tonkin Government was in office—but nonetheless we had an inherited unemployment figure of 300 or 400, and it was a political embarrassment to us. We had been in Government for a few months only; and then the two projects were found. I use the word “found” because they were the result of our moving around and trying to find some way of overcoming the problems. One of those projects was the *Ocean Endeavour*; and the resultant value to the State in maintaining the work force at the time was incalculable.

If the dreams of the Government and the hopes of the Opposition are to reach fruition, something must be done now. The natural gas on the North-West Shelf will bring a degree of prosperity to this State; and until then the work force should be maintained intact, as far as possible.

The reports in the Press this evening indicate that the men at AIS have accepted the five months lead-up time. The men who were working there have agreed to go back. They will lose something like \$60 a week, but they will stay for the five months and see the job through.

Members would be interested to know that as the AIS furnace has wound down, men have gone off shift and lost production bonuses and allowances of approximately \$60 a week. The loss of those things has brought their wages down to about \$160 or \$170 a week. They are living on that wage at the moment.

The men will live on that wage for five months, when they earned a wage of \$230 a week previously. At \$160 a week, a worker will not receive much more than he would if he were on unemployment benefits, so he is not working for very much. He does not have much of an incentive.

The workers have always had the base wage paid to them; and production bonuses have been paid. Because extra shifts have been available with extra hours, they have been able to earn more money. However, the company has said, “You will go back and work at this level for five months, or we will shut it down now”. The workers have agreed that they will stay. That is not a bad gesture for the “terrible workers” of

this State who are attempting to “ruin our economy”.

A further problem in terms of State finances will arise for the Government. If these men lose their employment—most of them are long-standing employees who have worked for 10 or 15 years and who have their own families—they will have problems with the homes they have been purchasing. Within five months, the number of people applying for homes from the State Housing Commission in the Kwinana area will jump by between 100 and 200. They will need homes urgently; and the pressure will be on the Government and the building societies to take over their homes, or to give them some assistance. Of course, the resources to meet that expenditure are not available.

Of course, many people will approach the State Housing Commission for rent subsidies; and this will be an extra cost for the Government. In one way or another, the \$5 million will grow considerably unless something can be done.

At present the men will earn about \$20 or \$30 above what they could receive as unemployed workers. They will receive that money for five months, to keep the works going. The department, the Minister, and the Treasurer have to move in and, with the co-operation of the Opposition, the unions, and the men, do something about the problem.

These men are living in a community, and suddenly they will be thrown out of work. I do not want to be dramatic about it; but the tenor of the meetings I have attended is that, as far as their homes are concerned, if there are any moves to evict them there will be civil unrest. I do not say that as a threat. The Premier should be aware that the people in that community went there as idealists, looking for a new life. An opportunity was given to them, and they took it. They have worked for 20 or 30 years. They will not see something taken away from them as easily as that.

At this stage, the men are still hopeful. The work is still there. The work force will stick to the job, and give it a go. However, it behoves the company and the Government to play the game.

The work force lives in the community, with all the families. The Government, the Minister, the Opposition, the unions, and the workers have to get together and, in the next five months, do whatever they can.

Mr Barnett: Hear, hear!

Mr MacKINNON: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comments related to the technology park concept. I remind the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition of the studies that he has undertaken overseas, of which I have not had the benefit. He would know from those studies that not all of the technology parks around the world have been successful. Many of them have been unsuccessful.

I remind him also that the South Australian experiment is in its earliest days, and it has not yet proved its success. In fact, academics in this State have commented that the South Australian example may prove to be a disaster. I hope it will not be, because technology and technological development should occur throughout Australia, and not just in Western Australia.

I wish to remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition of what we are doing in Western Australia about technology. In 1979 we announced the formation of the Systems Research Institute of Australia, which recently celebrated its first anniversary. All the people involved in the institute would say that it has been an outstanding success—so successful, in fact, that an office is to be established in South Australia, and the establishment of an office in New South Wales is being examined.

I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that because this Government had the courage to stand behind a new technological development and the institute in relation to software programmes, the development has been extended to new technology, including hardware that is now being marketed in the United States of America.

Obviously the Government has not been sitting around doing nothing about technology. He would be aware that we recently appointed a technology review group that is now working very well under the chairmanship of David Richardson. The only unfortunate aspect is that Mr Richardson is about to be transferred by his employer to the Eastern States; and we will have to find a new chairman.

The technology review group has got on with its job, and it has appointed several subcommittees, one of which was appointed two or three months ago to examine the question of technology parks, not as the member for Ascot would believe, to be established at WAIT only, but other areas of Western Australia will be considered as well.

We believe we should look at all the tertiary institutions in this State to ascertain where the best location would be for the concept of a technology park. Personally I do not believe a technology park is the first step to take. The first step should be along the lines of developing a technology centre. We could have a building in which to locate all the agencies from within the community involved in technological development. For example, the Systems Research

Institute, the CSIRO, and perhaps the Solar Energy Research Institute could all be located in the one area. The best place would be adjacent to or on a campus. Obviously in those circumstances all these groups would already pay rent for their premises, so building something to house these groups together seems to be a logical development which would involve the least possible cost to the Government and the groups involved. I do not want to pre-empt any decision of the review group, but I think it will probably come up with such a suggestion.

It seems a very hollow argument when we hear Opposition members lauding the benefits of new technology, while at the same time producing a policy statement saying that before anyone introduces a new form of technology, when someone stumbles on a new idea, we must first research the relative merits of the idea. I quote from the policy documents of the ALP as follows—

18. judgements about the relative merits of technological innovations can only be made on the basis of full disclosure of all information, prior to its introduction, by all groups potentially affected by it;

In other words, before the technology was introduced we would have a host of Government officers trying to find out what the merits of the idea were. By the time they did all that the technology would be outdated.

It seems to me that the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition ignored the fact that we have taken great steps forward in this State. As the Premier has said, we do not believe in words, but in action. We are taking action right now.

I believe the technology review group which, in the words of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, is a partnership between industry, academia, and the Government, will come up with a successful solution—not a pie-in-the-sky suggestion, but a practical, common-sense, workable solution which will once again prove that this State is leading other States in this area as is already shown by the Systems Research Institute of Australia.

I would remind the member for Cockburn that the BHP factory at Kwinana is not directly under my portfolio and is more directly the responsibility of the Minister for Resources Development. I will pass on the member's comments to the Minister.

Nevertheless, the member has no mortgage on the feelings for people in the area or the desire to help them. The Government is painfully aware of

the time, effort, and contribution given by workers in the area over the years to ensure the success of the plant.

As I said previously, the Government does not believe in words, but in action. We have been closely working with the company for the past five or six months to find a solution to the whole problem. I totally enforce his comment that we should have co-operation between the Opposition, the unions, the workers, the company, and the Government. With all due respect, I do not think the member should have spoken about \$100 000 a week or civil unrest. It was irresponsible of him to do so. We should examine his suggestions and the examples of what a previous Government has done and what this Government may also be able to do.

Before I conclude I should like to remind the member for Cockburn that over the next 10 years this Government's policies will be providing employment at such levels that I am confident that any person displaced at BHP—I hope none will be—will soon be placed in a job should the plant not recommence. However, I am confident that in the next five months the Government will find a solution to the problem in the area.

Mr Davies: You do not believe that.

Item 8: The Western Australian Film Council—Includes Transfer to Trust Fund—

Mr PEARCE: It is no secret that I and other members of the Opposition have a sincere desire to see a film industry established in Western Australia. Therefore we were pleased early in 1978 to see the establishment of the Western Australian Film Council. As I said at the time, it seemed to be very much a belated effort on the part of this Government to appear to be doing something for the film industry, because most other States had already shown a very significant lead in this area. The South Australian Film Corporation played a very important pioneering role in developing Australian films in the early 1970s. The film corporations in Victoria and New South Wales also played significant roles.

The situation in the Budget speaks for itself, but the truth underlying the Budget figures is a lot worse. The allocation of \$231 000 last year is a fairly paltry sum in terms of the amount of money required to make films. In fact, almost none of that money was spent last year. The Budget papers show that the \$231 000 allocated was spent. But a member would not need to be an accountant to distrust the sight of figures balancing like that. The fact is that the allocation to the Western Australian Film Council includes an amount transferred to the trust fund. Members

may think that perhaps the \$31 000 was transferred, but in fact it was an amount of over \$200 000.

In answer to a question I asked of the Minister in September he sent me a letter which included a very interesting breakdown of the amount of money the council spent last year. In 1980-81 it spent the grand sum of \$16 761 on equity investment or loans to film makers in this State. So of that \$231 000 only \$16 761 was spent. That is hardly a significant contribution to the film-making industry in this State. There was an equity investment of \$6 675 in a project by John Beaton. Mr Colin McEwan received a loan of \$5 000. An amount of \$5 086 went as a grant to a trainee scheme jointly administered by the WA Film Council and the Australian Film Council. If I remember correctly, that grant was for a single student who went through the media section of the Mt. Lawley College of Advanced Education.

Out of all the money allocated hardly any was spent in order to help film makers. In one way that might seem bad, but I could advance a contrary argument that if the Government were to spend money in much the same way as it spent it last year at least we might be pleased to know the money is still in the bank. Only four projects were funded by the council. Two of these were major equity activities of \$100 000 each. One was the film *Harlequin* and the other was *Road Games*. It is arguable that these are two of the worst films produced in Australia in the last couple of years.

Harlequin was filmed in Perth, but in such a way that car number plates were blanked out to disguise the fact that they were Western Australian cars. The actors' voices were dubbed over so that they had mid-Atlantic or trans-Pacific accents rather than Australian accents. The \$100 000 equity investment did not help the film at all. All it did was to transport people to Perth from the Eastern States.

In fact the transfer costs of making this film in Western Australia were \$104 000, so the equity investment of the WA Film Council merely ensured that a lot of foreign and Eastern States people were brought to this State to make a film in Western Australia in which any reference to Western Australia was carefully blanked out. Indeed, anyone seeing the film would have been forgiven for thinking it was made in the USA and I would hope they would think that, because it was the sort of film one would associate more with the American way of life than with this State.

I would not be so critical of *Road Games*. An American star (Stacey Keach) was brought over and the film was about a journey across the Nullarbor Plains from Western Australia to South Australia. It is not a film over which anyone would want to lose any sleep, and if one did not go to it, one would quite happily have saved the \$5.

Mr Bryce: Unlike *Caligula*—you at least had the option.

Mr PEARCE: I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that at least one could choose whether one went to see *Road Games* which was not the case in respect of *Caligula*.

Mr Watt: Do you think *Caligula* should have been available for viewing?

Mr PEARCE: I would not go and see *Caligula*, because it is a bad movie, but I would not tell the member for Albany he should not go. I would advise him not to go, but I would not stop him from going if he were foolish enough to spend his money in that way.

The point that needs to be made with regard to this equity investment is not that Western Australian money is being wasted, because in fact, as indicated in the answer to the question, most of that equity investment will be returned. Indeed, these cheap "B" movies like *Harlequin* and *Road Games* tend to make a reasonable return and the WA Film Council estimates it will get back approximately three-quarters of its equity investment in *Harlequin*. I would say that over the next three to five years it will probably recover all of it. With regard to *Road Games*, no estimate has been given, but it is likely again that, within the next three to five years, there will be a reasonable return on that film to the extent that the State will recoup the money it put into the project.

However, what is the point in having the WA Film Council if its sole purpose is to put WA money into a high-risk enterprise which involves making films which have no intrinsic worth in themselves, which do not develop film talent in Western Australia, and in regard to which the chances of financial loss are relatively high? It cannot be argued the small number of minor technicians who worked on *Harlequin* learnt anything or had any great involvement with the project. The same is probably true of *Road Games*, although there might be a slightly greater argument in favour of that film.

The only decent investment made by the WA Film Council was the \$40 000 put into the Channel 9 production of *Falcon Island* which is a children's television series. That series has

received a reasonable amount of acclaim. It is quite possible that television sales of *Falcon Island* will reclaim a good part of the equity invested. That series involved local stars, it was locally written and produced, and, through the facilities of Channel 9, it helped to build up expertise in film-making and television in this State which is badly needed.

I salute the expenditure on *Falcon Island* and hope we will see more films of that nature. However, in 1980-81 no such expenditure has occurred and in 1981-82 the only projected expenditure is on a joint venture with the British Broadcasting Corporation and Channel 7.

This evening I attended a function where I spoke to a BBC executive who is over here to negotiate that joint venture. I understand it is in trouble because Channel 7 is dragging its feet in the matter. The State Government has committed \$300 000 to the venture, but it has not allocated that anywhere. It is to be appropriated in the future. However, the trust fund must be full to overflowing, with virtually no expenditure of funds over the last few years, so there must be \$300 000 in it.

I am certainly not opposing that joint venture. One would like to see it get off the ground, but the point which needs to be emphasised is that no serious effort is being made to develop a film industry in Western Australia on any sort of scale appropriate to this State or to do anything other than to attract people to Western Australia to make tax rip-off films which are of little intrinsic merit in themselves, bearing in mind the fact that the equity investment of the Western Australian Government strengthened what might otherwise be doubtful enterprises in the first place.

In developing a film industry, a State like Western Australia should attempt to develop the ability of our actors, technicians, writers, and directors and, most importantly, it should initially make films for television. There is much more of a market and a much reduced risk in making films for television in the early stages of developing a film industry, rather than in trying to make high-cost feature films.

It is true that it may be said many more people are competing for the television market than for the feature film industry; but television is a very voracious medium and a tremendous amount of programming is required. In some ways, that makes that area less competitive and it is a good place at which to begin.

In this State last year we had a very well-known Australian writer for film and television (Mr Cliff Green) as artist in residence at WAIT.

He scripted *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and the television series *Marion*. He put forward strongly the idea that it was necessary firstly to develop technology, skill, and expertise by working in the area of television. It is the cheapest way in which to get into the industry and provides a good basis for building up one's performance in the industry. That is an appropriate first step for Western Australia and I am sorry that, with the relatively insignificant amounts of money being given to the WA Film Council, it is not even managing to do that.

I appreciate that recently changes have been made in the management of the WA Film Council with the appointment of Mr David Addenbrooke and it is possible that body will be more active in the future and that it will play a greater role than it has in the past. I can only hope so.

It seems strange that private enterprise has shown more initiative in this regard than has the WA Film Council. I refer here to the Film Corporation of Western Australia which exists essentially to marshal funds from people who are looking for tax relief rather than for anything else. I criticised that organisation for channelling its funds into making films in the Northern Territory and Queensland rather than in Western Australia. However, the company has recently appointed a director of production and it has indicated it has every intention of making films in Western Australia. I have had discussions with representatives of that firm and its long-term aims seem to be laudable; but it is strange that the WA Film Council, which is a Government body totally dependent on Government funding, does not have the same commitment to making films in this State as does a private corporation.

A bomb needs to be put under the WA Film Council with regard to this and perhaps also a bomb needs to be put under Cabinet to make sure that it does something about film development in Western Australia rather than just throwing out \$200 000 a year as a sort of gesture to people so it can say, "Look what we are doing".

Mr MacKINNON: In answer to the member for Gosnells I should like to refer to a number of matters. The first comment I should like to make is that, like many of his colleagues, the member for Gosnells is the master of the half truth. What he says sounds very plausible, but unfortunately he ignores the facts and does not bother to tell us the complete situation. The facts are that the film industry in Australia, and, in fact, probably world wide, has been going through very rapidly changing times. The member for Gosnells would be well aware of this and it is evidenced by the

major changes to taxing legislation implemented last year by the Federal Government.

The member for Gosnells also ignored the fact that, although the South Australian Film Corporation was highly successful, it cost the South Australian Government an enormous amount of money and it still does not alter the position that the film industry, both in regard to television and feature films, is based in Sydney, not in South Australia. The member for Gosnells would be well aware of that, but he did not mention it.

When the member for Gosnells told us about the investments made by the WA Film Council he overlooked the fact that they were made well prior to the change in the taxation legislation introduced by the Federal Government. In other words, the WA Film Council's role at that time was to try to encourage the production of films in Western Australia—be they television or feature films—by direct equity investment.

In fact, at that time there was probably no other way for the council to encourage the making of a feature film in this State. As the member would be well aware, that position has now changed. This morning's edition of *The West Australian* referred to Barron Films marketing films on a professional basis. I was at the function last evening at which the statement was originally made. Paul Barron was the director of *PIFT*, and has formed a company to market and produce films on a professional basis. He has the co-operation of the Department of Corporate Affairs in forming a prospectus to invite investors to provide money for these films. The investors will be able to consider the budgets and ideas of certain films in order to determine whether they should invest on a unit basis. The film corporation, Paul Barron Films, and small film makers in this State will enjoy a healthy future because of the Federal Government's tax changes in regard to film production. I had some reservations about those changes, but it is now evident that there will be a channelling of investment money to the film industry.

It is probably new information to the member for Gosnells that changes have been made to the Western Australian Film Council. We did not overhaul the council because the people on it were not doing a good job; we made changes because the role of the council has changed; the people on the council were replaced so that we have new people who can follow the new role. The rules and regulations under which the council has been operating have been changed to the point that investment will play a secondary role, not a primary one.

As the member for Gosnells rightly said, the role of the council is to encourage people in Western Australia to obtain more skills related to the film industry. I believe, as I am sure does the member, money is available for investment, and all we need now is the skilled people to use that money wisely. In the long term the industry will be developed properly; it will be established on an on-going basis.

With those few words I reject totally the comments made by the member, and I once again reject totally the specific comments he made about and the reflection upon the members of the council. He reflected upon the work they have done. I ask him to refer tomorrow morning to the *The West Australian* to read the comments I have made.

Many sections of the film industry have contacted me to laud the changes we have made to the council which will enable it to continue its good work. Perth will not be developed as the Hollywood of Australia—there will never be such an animal—but we will see the industry grow steadily and develop to the benefit of its future and its profitability.

Mr PEARCE: There is a degree of contradiction in the remarks of the Honorary Minister. He said that sections of the industry had contacted him to laud the changes. They would not have done so if they were satisfied with the previous position.

Sir Charles Court: He has explained there is a change in circumstances in the industry, and he has rightly reacted to it.

Mr PEARCE: At least we are getting intelligent comments; not from the Honorary Minister, but from a little higher up. I hope the Treasurer will continue to take part in this debate instead of hiding amongst his papers.

The Honorary Minister referred to the tax schedule changes. A strong belief in the film industry is that 150 per cent tax deductibility will cause one of the biggest disasters to befall Australia's film industry.

Australia's industry has reached the stage of producing world-class films, but it is likely that the industry will go the same way as did the Canadian film industry. In that country film production was used as a tax haven; investors wanted a certain number of cheap films to be produced in the course of each year so that certain tax deadlines could be met. The best way for film makers to save money is to make low-budget soft-pornographic movies.

Mr MacKinnon: Have you seen any example of that in Western Australia.

Mr PEARCE: No, not yet.

Mr MacKinnon: Well, why talk about it?

Mr PEARCE: I have referred to what has happened with the Canadian film industry because it is relevant. I wonder whether the Honorary Minister lives in the same world as the rest of us. Surely one of the things we must do in an industrialised world like ours is to consider what happens in other countries which develop industries slightly ahead of ours. We do that to learn from the mistakes of others.

At some stage in my university career I studied history. The reason for history is that—and many of my colleagues share this view—it is a wise man who can learn from other people's experiences. The point of history is to learn from the experiences of others and then draw ones own analogies. It may be a wise man who learns from his own mistakes, but it is a wiser man who learns from the mistakes of others.

It is foolish for the Honorary Minister not to consider the development of the Canadian film industry. Its industry is possibly a decade ahead of ours, and the same things that have happened to it will happen to ours if we do not learn the lessons.

Initially Canada was swamped with films from the United States, as happened to Australia from the 1930s on. Before the 1930s Australia had quite a good industry, but after that period we were swamped by the British and United States film industries. In Canada we saw the development of films related specifically to Canada, some in particular relating to Canada's history. Originally these films were watched by most Canadians because of their local flavour instead of their intrinsic merit. We saw the similar development of the Australian film industry in the 1970s. After a while the Canadian industry reached the point where its films were not only first rate, but also profitable. Later the same situation came about in Australia. Five years ago it was possible to invest in an Australian movie and have a one in four chance of its making a substantial profit whereas in Hollywood it is one chance in twenty. We have seen a flood of money for investment in Australian films, but with taxation benefits the investors will be less concerned with the quality of the films and about the talents of the people making those films.

Mr MacKinnon: Give concrete examples of that, where people have shown they will make films just because of the taxation benefits. Do you have any examples of that?

Mr PEARCE: I am reporting to the Chamber the likely effects of the tax changes. Very few films have started under the guise of these changes because the lead time for the production of a film is not short. The Honorary Minister is aware of the previous tax ripping-off process whereby investors had to produce the money for and obtain a return from a film before the script was written. The Honorary Minister was critical of this situation. He went to the Film Corporation of WA and was apologetic.

Mr MacKinnon: I wasn't apologetic; I criticised the changes.

Mr PEARCE: He was apologetic. The people involved were Liberals, the same as he is. He can understand the point being made.

When money pours in from investors who are concerned only with obtaining tax benefits we have films such as *Harlequin* and *Road Games*.

Mr MacKinnon: Both of those were made before the tax changes.

Mr PEARCE: The tax changes largely are irrelevant to the point I am making. The Honorary Minister is hung up on tax changes, which shows the difference between the two sides of this Chamber. I am talking about the building up of the Australian film industry, and the increasing of skills held by directors, technicians, and writers. However, the Minister is talking about tax deductibility; he is concerned only about taxes, but I am concerned about films. To some extent tax deductibility will play a role, but I wonder why he did not talk about tax deductibility when he referred to the Australian iron and steel industry or technology development.

He has referred to the Australian film industry as being developed purely on the basis of a tax rip off, but in regard to other industries he refers to the building of viability. We should build up a viable industry. There will be no viable film industry in Australia, or Western Australia, that is based on extravagant tax deductions which give people deductibility for more money than they invest in a film.

Mr MacKinnon: Are you saying we should not have the current taxation incentive system for films?

Mr PEARCE: I am saying the current taxation incentive system is not in the long-term interests of the film industry of Western Australia. It needs to be changed.

A Government member: Subsidised by taxpayers.

Mr PEARCE: I am not saying it needs to be subsidised by taxpayers at all, but we are making a mistake if we believe tax deductibility of this type is not a kind of subsidy by the taxpayer because it means less tax is being paid. If one allows people 150 per cent deductibility on their tax, those people are being allowed to have money which otherwise would be paid to the Commissioner of Taxation and they can put it into a film in the hope of making a personal profit, and those subsidies are raised by the taxpayer. We are not quibbling on that aspect of the matter, but the Minister or anybody else is making a bad mistake if he believes a vital film industry can be based on fly-by-night operations which enter because of the tax deductibility aspect. It is widely believed in the film industry here and elsewhere and even by those people who are largely involved in the taxation aspects of it, that the 150 per cent tax deductibility is not in the best interests of setting up a vital industry. This comes to the point I am making which the Minister has totally misunderstood—failed to understand or cannot comprehend—and that is, that the role of State film corporations ought to be to establish the basis of a vital industry which has talented and qualified people with experience in the making of films.

Mr MacKinnon: Exactly. I agree with you entirely.

Mr PEARCE: Then the role of State film councils or corporations is one which has not been taken by the WA Film Council. The Minister may say with his new realm that it will do so and I hope it will. His speech tonight has not given me any confidence that he at least understands the nature of the problem or of what needs to be done to establish a film industry. One can only hope that the new people he has appointed to his corporation have a knowledge which surpasses his own.

Division 49 put and passed.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Shalders.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: 150th ANNIVERSARY

February 1982 Sitting: Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read as follows—

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the following resolution—

That this House doth resolve—

That on the last sitting day during 1981, the Leader of the House be requested to move that the House adjourn until Monday, 8 February 1982, at 8.00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving from His Excellency the Governor a message from Her Majesty the Queen relating to the 150th Anniversary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council in Western Australia and to enable both Houses of this Parliament to move an address of loyalty to Her Majesty.

That the Address should be moved by the Leader of the Government and supported by the

Leader of the Opposition in each House.

That for the meeting of the House on 8 February 1982 so much of Standing Orders that allow of any additional business being transacted be and are hereby suspended, and that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly acquainting it thereof.

**MACHINERY SAFETY
AMENDMENT BILL**

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WITTENOOM

Monitoring

2581. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What types of monitoring equipment were used at Wittenoom?
- (2) Were other types considered?
- (3) If so, what were the costs of each?
- (4) Is it possible to advise the accuracy of each type of monitoring equipment?
- (5) Have monitoring checks been made on the proposed townsite?
- (6) If so, what are the readings for the townsite?
- (7) What are the maximum possible levels for human exposure in relation to the readings?
- (8) Is the proposed townsite intended to be a tourist complex?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) The National Health and Medical Research Council membrane filter method for estimating airborne asbestos dust was used for personal sampling. The National Health and Medical Research Council method was modified for ambient sampling and a vertical elutriator added with advice from the School of Tropical Medicine and Industrial Hygiene, University of Sydney.
- (2) Yes, but the only acceptable methods of sampling are for the occupational situation; i.e. eight-hour, five-day week. There are no internationally acceptable standards for measuring airborne dust in the environmental situation.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The estimate of the 95 per cent confidence levels for sampling and analysis with the National Health and Medical Research Council method is about ± 30 per cent for samples collected in the work place. In the environmental situation, as at Wittenoom where fibre counts will be lower, the level of confidence will be lower.

The US Connecticut method suggests a reproducibility of ± 50 per cent, but the results are expressed gravimetrically as nanograms per cubic metre and not as the number of fibres per cubic centimetre. As yet there are no recognised standards with which to compare this method.

- (5) No. The area has been inspected by Health Department officers and there is no apparent reason to do monitoring checks.
- (6) Not applicable.
- (7) Not applicable
- (8) Yes.

LAND: RESUMPTIONS

Armadale

2582. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

On what dates and in what newspapers did the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority advertise its intention to resume land for the widening of Ranford Road, Armadale?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has never advertised any intention to resume land for the widening of Ranford Road, Armadale.

The authority first advertised its intention to change zones and reservations in the south-east corridor of the region in December 1978 under section 31 of the then Act. This amendment included a proposal to reserve Ranford Road, Armadale, as an important regional road.

The amendment was advertised as follows—

Government Gazette — 15.12.78, 22.12.78 and 29.12.78

The West Australian—16.12.78, 23.12.78 and 30.12.78

Daily News—20.12.78, 27.12.78 and 3.1.79

The Sunday Times—17.12.78, 24.12.78 and 31.12.78

Sunday Independent—17.12.78, 24.12.78 and 31.12.78

Following consideration of submissions and as the result of further studies, the Authority resolved to proceed with a new amendment.

The new amendment also reserved Ranford Road, Armadale, as an important regional road. It was advertised as follows—

Government Gazette—16.5.80, 23.5.80 and 30.5.80

The West Australian—17.5.80, 31.5.80 and 21.6.80

Daily News—19.5.80, 26.5.80, and 2.6.80

The Sunday Times—18.5.80, 25.5.80 and 15.6.80

Sunday Independent—18.5.80, 1.6.80 and 8.6.80

LAND: RESUMPTIONS

Lord Street

2583. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

On what dates and in what newspapers did the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority advertise its intention to resume land for the widening of Lord Street?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has never advertised any intention to resume land for the widening of Lord Street. As stated in a response to Mr T. J. Burke, MLA, on 3 November 1981, the authority advertised an amendment under section 33 of the Act to reserve 12 metres on the eastern side of the street from the city northern bypass to Bulwer Street. As a consequence of this, Claisebrook Road would be deleted from the scheme as an important regional road. The amendment was advertised—

Government Gazette—Friday, 31.7.81; 28.8.81 and 25.9.81

The West Australian—Saturday, 1.8.81; 29.8.81 and 26.9.81

Daily News—Thursday, 13.8.81; 9.9.81 and 14.10.81

The Sunday Times—2.8.81; 30.8.81 and 27.9.81

TRAFFIC: ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

Roadblock Campaign

2584. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

I refer to his answer to question 653 without notice of 1981 in which he advised that "some generalised information about the effectiveness of the RTA's campaigns . . . can be made available to him", and I ask him whether he will please table any information which may assist in assessing the effectiveness of the so-called "road blocks" campaigns?

Mr HASSELL replied:

In answer to the member's question, I seek leave to table a document entitled, *An Evaluation of the 1980-81 Christmas/New Year Traffic Enforcement Blitz*.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 575).

APPRENTICES

File System

2585. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Are individual apprentice files maintained on a manually-operated card system or a computer file basis?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Individual apprentice files are currently maintained on both a manually-operated card system and a computer file basis. The information contained on the computer file relates to such matters as the trade, the commencement and completion dates, term of indenture, and current employer. Information concerning previous employers is not available on the computer file.

HOUSING

Boulder and Kalgoorlie

2586. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

(1) With reference to question 2452 of 1981 relating to housing at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, would he confirm that the

State Housing Commission plans and specifications for both the rental homes and the pensioner units do not exclude the use of locally manufactured bricks?

- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Subject to price and quality comparability, would he be prepared to instruct the State Housing Commission to give preference to locally manufactured bricks in the construction of the proposed dwellings?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) The plans and specifications referred to provide for the use of clay or concrete bricks and do not exclude approved locally manufactured bricks.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Consideration would be given where quality and supply are adequate and there is an overall cost advantage.
- (4) Answered by (3).

RECREATION: OFFICERS

Local Government: Funding

2587. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Recreation:

- (1) What rationale was used in reaching the decision to cease the recreation advisers scheme and devolve its function to local government?
- (2) Why is it proposed to prune the recreation advisers scheme from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation in preference to head office functions?
- (3) Has consideration been given to the devolution of the elite sport function of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation to a statutory body partially funded by private enterprise?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The changed financial relationships between Federal, State, and local government require the State

Government to devolve to local government those responsibilities which are within the arena of local government. The objective is to provide a relevant and effective State wide recreation service at less financial cost to the State.

- (2) Recreation advisers are attached to local government authorities and are engaged in recreational issues which are the responsibility of local authorities, whereas head office staff operate at the State level and are involved in responsibilities which are within the domain of the State Government.
- (3) It is not the intention to create a statutory body to undertake the elite sport function of the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. Our objective, as expressed by the Premier in March this year, has always been to encourage maximum participation so that our few elite sports persons emerge from a sporting community which is at the same time objective and supportive. The department has contributed to its cost effective operation in this area by attracting additional funds from private enterprise.

DOOR-TO-DOOR CALLERS

Religious

2588. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

What restrictions, if any, are placed on the activities of persons calling door to door in representation of various religious groups, particularly in circumstances where a residence has a sign over the door specifically stating that representatives of religious groups are not welcome?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

None, unless the callers are making unsolicited calls for the purpose of making credit sales. However, in the situation in which a sign directs religious callers to leave and they persist with the call there may be a case to be made out for trespass.

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND
INSTRUMENTALITIES:
APPOINTEES**

Retiring Age

2589. Dr DADOUR, to the Premier:

- (1) How many people past retiring age are still occupying offices of profit in Government and semi-Government boards, tribunals, advertising committees, etc.?
- (2) What is the estimated cost by way of salary, allowances and other pecuniary benefits?
- (3) How many of these people are also in receipt of State Government superannuation payments?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) The information requested by the member is being collated and when it is available he will be advised in writing.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Medina

2590. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) With respect to the Medina Primary School, will a special class or classes, for students requiring extra educational assistance again be established in the 1982 school year?
- (2) If "Yes"—

- (a) how many students were in that class or classes this year;
- (b) how many students are expected to attend the class or classes in 1982;
- (c) how many teachers are expected to be involved directly in such class or classes?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes, the existing junior special class and senior special class will continue at Medina Primary School.
- (2) (a) Currently there are ten students in the junior special class and 16 in the senior special class.
(b) Definite enrolments for 1982 are ten in the junior special class and 15 in the senior special class.
(c) Each class will have a teacher and share a part-time teachers' aide.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Yangebup

2591. Mr A. D. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

With respect to the new Yangebup Lakes Primary School scheduled for opening at the beginning of the 1982 school year—

- (a) how many students is it anticipated may attend;
- (b) how many classes is it anticipated will be established;
- (c) how many students presently attending the Jandakot Primary School is it anticipated will attend the new school as from the opening day?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (a) 20 pre-primary and 85 primary.
- (b) Three primary classes and one pre-primary.
- (c) 21.

**RAILWAYS: GOLD AND LIFE
PASSES**

Ex-members of Parliament

2592. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many ex-members of the Western Australian Parliament hold a life pass on railway services after 12 years' service?
- (2) How many made use of their passes in 1980?
- (3) How many ex-members of the Western Australian Parliament hold a gold pass for travel on all Australian railways?
- (4) How many gold pass holding ex-members made use of their passes in 1980?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) 23.
- (2) Westrail does not record this information.
- (3) 24.
- (4) As in (2).

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Child Care Centres

2593. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware of the recommendations of the report of the review of the Federal children's services programme (the Spender report)?
- (2) In particular, is he aware of reported recommendations of that report that private child care centres should be subsidised, and that admission be subjected to a means test?
- (3) Has the State Government been consulted with respect to these matters?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), what form has this consultation taken, and what is the State Government's attitude to the recommendations of the report?
- (5) If "No" to (3), what attempts has he made to place the State Government's views on this matter before the Federal Government or the Spender committee?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) to (5) Although the Spender report has been widely circulated, it has not yet been officially released by the Minister for Social Security and until then, I am not prepared to answer the questions raised by the member.

2594. *This question was postponed.*

HOUSING: RENTAL

Rents: Rebates

2595. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In view of recent rises in social security pensions and benefits, will the rebated rents of State Housing Commission tenants be reviewed as a result of these increases?
- (2) Have tenants on rebated rents, dependent on social security benefits, been issued with forms for the purpose of such a review of rent?
- (3) What will be the new rate of benefit and the assessed rebated rent applying to the following:
 - (a) single and married aged and invalid pensioners;
 - (b) supporting parent beneficiaries with one, two, three or four children;

(c) unemployment beneficiaries with one, two, three or four children?

- (4) If no rent increases are proposed, why are some tenants on rebated rents being asked to complete review forms?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) (a) to (c) Not applicable.
- (4) Each rebate is approved for a maximum period of six months. A new application form for a continued rebate is then required.

HOUSING: SHC

Land: Warwick Grove

2596. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that at an auction on 31 October 1981 at the State Housing Commission Warwick Grove estate, a family home building lot was passed in by the auctioneer at a bid of \$22 000?
- (2) In view of the fact that the auctioneer invariably tried to obtain a first bid of \$20 000 plus for lots at this auction, was he under instructions from the State Housing Commission to set initial bids at this level?
- (3) If "Yes" to (1) and (2), does not this action on behalf of the commission raise doubts about the Government's desire to keep land prices at a reasonable level?
- (4) Why does not the State Housing Commission adopt the system used by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority in selling residential lots it had created, of upset prices based on independent valuation advice whereby the upset prices were published in the auction brochure and reflected the price below which a bid would not be accepted thus preventing the auctioneer from trying to obtain a first bid pitched at too high a level?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).
- (4) Reserves are based on independent valuation advice. However longstanding commission policy is to sell residential lots by auction on the basis of undisclosed reserves.

TRANSPORT: UNEMPLOYED PERSONS

Concessions

2597. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to the submission of a proposal for travel concessions for unemployed people and special and sickness beneficiaries by the Unemployed Citizens Service and the subsequent reception by him of a deputation in support of this proposal, what response has he made to the proposal?
- (2) If a final response has not yet been made, when may it be expected?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) and (2) I met recently with representatives of the Unemployed Citizens Service on this question. The discussion was worth while and I believe helped for a better understanding of the whole situation. Representatives of the UCS indicated their intention to pursue the matter further and are to provide some additional information to assist consideration of the submission.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE FINANCE

Loan Funds

772. Mr GRILL, to the Treasurer:

In view of the curtailment of State Government loan funds by the Commonwealth which is having the effect of stifling vital development in this State, and in view of the fact it is now generally considered capital inflow into Australia during the current financial year has been overestimated by the Federal Treasury, and that a credit squeeze could develop unless correct measures are taken, would the Treasurer give consideration to calling for the reconvening of the Loan Council with a view to the authorization of the raising of further loan funds offshore by the State Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The member makes a few assumptions, and states them as though they are fact.

I know there has been some speculation about a possible credit squeeze. Of course, that forecast has been questioned in a number of quarters, while in other places it is being said it is true. Like all such things, the matter is subject to inevitable conjecture; it is inseparable from this sort of thing.

Mr Grill: Your Minister said it right up until—

Sir CHARLES COURT: Does the member want an answer, or not?

Mr Bryce: You used to be tough.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am just trying to give the member the background about the fact there is conjecture on this question, and that no firm prediction can be made.

In regard to reconvening the Loan Council, the member would know I have been trying to get the Loan Council reconvened for an altogether different purpose; namely, to get the authority presently vested in the Commonwealth Government for fixing the interest rates relating to tap stock taken away from the Commonwealth and revested in the Loan Council, where I believe it always should have been. That request is still before the Commonwealth. Why the Commonwealth has not held the meeting is beyond me; if I were the Federal Treasurer, I could not hold this meeting fast enough to return the responsibility where it belongs and get the Commonwealth off the hook.

I can assume only that the reason the Commonwealth is not pursuing the matter relates to the statement made by the Federal Treasurer that he is confident interest rates are not going to rise further. I hope he is right. Whether interest rates are not going to rise further or whether in fact they will remain constant or show a slight drop in the next few months, I still believe we should have the meeting.

We do not need to reconvene another meeting of the Loan Council to pursue the matter to which the member for Yilgarn-Dundas refers because in fact, the matter constantly is being pursued by the State Government with the Federal Government. I am hoping the Commonwealth will decide that the time

has come to completely review the programme for 1981-82.

I point out to the member that it is useless having such a meeting as he suggests unless we have a clear indication from the Commonwealth beforehand that it will go along with what we want.

Mr Grill: You agree there is a need for it?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am trying to explain to the member that we do not have to wait for such a meeting to canvass the question of additional borrowings. We want additional borrowings. We are not satisfied with the allocation we received in respect of approved projects and additional projects. However, these matters are being canvassed continually.

I repeat it is a waste of time our having another meeting for the purpose the member suggests unless we obtain a predetermined commitment from the Commonwealth that it intends to go along with us on the matter because if it will not go along with us, we would be wasting our time.

IMMIGRATION

Immigrants: Illegal

773. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

My question concerns the arrival of six Indian illegal immigrants in the north of Western Australia.

Mr Blaikie: You are not going to blame the Premier for that, are you?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have not heard the member's question. I would just ask him to state to me that he has satisfied himself that the question is one which can properly be asked of the Premier. He would know the Premier is not responsible for immigration, and it seems that the question may be related to that matter.

Mr BRYCE: With the greatest of respect, Mr Speaker, it can concern the Police Force—

The SPEAKER: I want to know that it does concern something like that.

Mr BRYCE: If you will allow me to ask the question, Mr Speaker, you will appreciate—

The SPEAKER: I ask you to tell me that you are satisfied it falls within the ministerial responsibility of the Premier.

Mr BRYCE: I believe it does, as leader of the Government. I have sat here tossing up whether to ask the question of the Deputy Premier or the Premier. Since the Premier is the leader of the Government and communicates with the Commonwealth Government more often than any other member opposite, it is on that basis alone that I ask the question of him. My question is as follows—

- (1) Have the circumstances surrounding the arrival of six Indian illegal immigrants been relayed to the State Government?
- (2) Does he have any idea of how many illegal immigrants arrive each year in Western Australia?
- (3) What surveillance system exists in Western Australia to detect and control the arrival of such immigrants?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The question falls mainly within the administration of the Federal Government. However, in view of the fact it does impinge on us in some ways, I am prepared to try to give the member for Ascot a partial answer to his question. My answer is as follows—

(1) I hope the member will appreciate it is not very easy for either the Commonwealth Government or the State Government to be quite as expansive as it might like to be in releasing information about these people. It is well known—indeed, it is now public knowledge—that these people have proved difficult to extract information from. We know they were carefully interrogated after they were brought to Perth, and we know the result of that interrogation has gone to the Commonwealth Government. The best information we have at the moment is that the matter is far from complete, and more work has yet to be done. The Commonwealth Government has not indicated to us the whole of the circumstances of the matter. Quite frankly, in view of the special conditions in this case I am not surprised at that, nor am I critical of the Commonwealth, because in matters of this kind it generally lets us know all we need to know, as a matter of good sense. My understanding is that the Commonwealth is not yet in a position to be precise, and provide the information the member seeks relating to the circumstances under which these people finished up on our shores.

(2) Any answer to this question would be a straight-out guess. We hope only that most of them are detected. However, it would be a completely irresponsible person who said that the number was known. We can only guess, otherwise they would not be illegal immigrants. However, between the Commonwealth and the State, everything possible is done to minimise these occurrences. I do not think there ever would be a time when there were no illegal immigrants. Even when fences and walls are built between east European and west European countries, people still get through. So, I do not think the member for Ascot could expect an answer to this part of his question.

(3) It generally is known there is a combination of air, sea, and local surveillance, which is being stepped up.

POLICE AND RTA: PERSONNEL

Manpower Levels

774. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Would the Minister advise the total number of—
 - (a) policemen;
 - (b) Road Traffic Authority officers; in Western Australia?
- (2) What is the number of policemen in—
 - (a) drug squad;
 - (b) river police; and
 - (c) other specialist police services?
- (3) How many police stations are located outside the metropolitan area and what is the strength and locality of each police station?
- (4) Since 1974, how many police stations and/or quarters either have been closed down or funds for buildings not proceeded with in country areas and would he provide details?
- (5) Since 1974, what has been the relative strength of the —
 - (a) Police Force;
 - (b) Road Traffic Authority;
 in each year and in—
 - (i) the metropolitan area; and
 - (ii) country areas;
 for the same period?
- (6) Since 1974, what has been the number of resignations other than by age or illness from—
 - (a) police;
 - (b) Road Traffic Authority;
 in each year to date?

Mr HASSELL replied:

I thank the member for some notice of his question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) (a) Approved strength to 30 June 1982—2 671.
Actual strength as at 11 November 1981—2 605.

In addition, there are 50 in training at the Police Academy for wastage replacement.

- (b) 572 as at 11 November 1981. This number is included in (a) above.
- (2) (a) 21.
- (b) 5.
- (c) Appendix 1 of the 1981 Police Department annual report sets out the distribution of the force throughout Western Australia as at 30 June 1981, and includes the various specialised categories.
- (3) to (6) The details required will take several days to collate, and I will inform the member when these are available.

EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

Teachers: Retrenchments

775. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

Further to the plans announced by the Treasurer in answer to a question I addressed to him last week that the Government intended to dispose of the services of 55 of the 204 pre-school teachers in this State, I ask the Minister—

- (1) Is he aware that the pre-school teachers' award contains a requirement that teachers may have their positions terminated only by the giving of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the current school term, and that the last day by which notice would need to be given to terminate the employment of such teachers at the end of this year was last Wednesday, but that no such notices were sent out to any teachers?
- (2) Is he further aware that if the Government intends to put pre-school teachers on part-time work, as announced by one of his departmental officers, under the

conditions of the same award the department still would be obliged to pay those teachers as if they were working full time?

- (3) In the light of that information, and as the Government has taken no action to comply with conditions of the award, can the Minister explain how the Government intends to achieve the diminution of 55 pre-school teachers by the end of this year?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (3) The Government is well aware of the facts referred to by the member. We have quite a large number of retirements of pre-school teachers each year.

Mr Brian Burke: How many?

Mr GRAYDEN: A very large number. We would naturally give priority to the pre-school teachers to whom he referred.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Rockingham Electorate: STD Bar

776. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that this week a bar was placed on the telephones of nearly all—if not all—the schools in the Rockingham electorate, thereby precluding staff from ringing the Perth metropolitan area, in particular the Education Department and the Public Works Department?

Mr Parker: This is the metropolitan electorate of Rockingham.

- (2) Could he tell me who authorised the placing of the bars?
- (3) If he is not aware of this, would he please investigate it with a view to removing the bars to enable the satisfactory functioning of my schools?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (3) I assure the member that I am not aware of the situation in the particular schools to which he referred. We are economising generally throughout the State. We have had instances of individuals using school phones to ring up, say, a stock exchange service in the Eastern States—not just once a day, but several times a day, many weeks on end—by dialling one of the services so that they can establish the latest price of their stocks. To overcome this sort of thing all sorts of economies have been introduced. I will look at the situation obtaining at the schools in question.

whether the publication is ever to appear and, if not, will he ask the Minister for Health to answer my questions?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

My understanding is that at the time the member asked his questions he was told that a general statement was contemplated in about six weeks—I could not be precise about the time.

Mr Hodge: In the next few weeks.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will check on the progress of that statement. I know it is intended that a statement be printed and I would be surprised if it were not in an advanced stage.

HEALTH: HOME CARE SERVICES

Mt. Barker and Cranbrook Areas

777. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the urgent need for a home care service in the Mt. Barker and Cranbrook area.
- (2) Is he in a position to indicate whether finance is available for the service to commence. If so, when will the service commence.

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes. Finance has now been arranged for this much needed service, which will commence as soon as the necessary staff can be recruited.

LIBERAL PARTY: 1980 POLICY

Progress: Publication

778. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

On Wednesday, 14 October I directed a series of seven questions to the Minister for Health requesting information on progress the Government had made implementing a number of promises made by the Premier in his 1980 policy speech. The Minister for Health refused to answer any of the questions and referred me to a publication the Government was planning to publish giving a progress report on its policy implementation. A month has elapsed and I have not received an answer to any of my questions or seen the publication referred to. Can the Premier advise me

POLICE: PERSONNEL

Manpower Levels

779. Mr CARR, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that the special general meeting of the Police Union held on 25 October carried a resolution, "That this meeting considers the morale of the Police Force is low"?
- (2) Is he aware that the main reasons for the low morale are the Government's low recruiting programme and the associated slow down of promotional opportunities?
- (3) In view of the fact that the WA police manpower survey, which the Government commissioned, demonstrated that Western Australia has the highest level of serious crime in Australia, will he please give urgent reconsideration to the increase of only 60 policemen allowed for in the Budget.

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) I did see reports of the meeting held by the Police Union. I do not agree that police morale is low, because while I know the union secretary and others, speaking for the union, occasionally bandy this idea around, it is not in keeping with the indications I get from members of the force themselves.

Mr Carr: This was the general meeting of the union.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I know. I am responding to the member's question. So far as that part of the question referring to low recruitment and low promotional opportunities is concerned, it should be

realised that the Police Force is no different from any other department. There is just so much money available. Members will recall that last year the force received a very high percentage increase in its Budget allocation.

Mr Carr: There was no increase last year.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Members cannot have it both ways; they cannot have an increase in emoluments for the Police Force together with an increase in police numbers. The Government would like more police recruited and trained and promotional opportunities to grow with this, because this is the natural indication we expect from a State such as ours that has a progressive outlook and a steady programme for development. The number of police officers will increase in due course. I remind the member, as I have had to remind the union, that there are certain limitations. One of the member's colleagues was speaking earlier about a reduction in a certain vote to a particular institute. However, he did not tell us which department was to have its Budget allocation reduced so as to make available more money for the institute to which he was referring. I can say only that in producing its Budget the Government has endeavoured to find the maximum number of additional policemen—that number being 60—on the assumption that there is to be a better deployment of manpower following amalgamation of the Police Force with the RTA. I am not suggesting that this will be the panacea for all our ills. Before the next financial year the Government will be reviewing the impact of such a move.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Emergent: Leonora

780. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that a family of seven people including a baby and an older woman with a heart condition, who were

allocated accommodation by the Kalgoorlie office of the State Housing Commission in Tower Street, Leonora last Friday, are now being required to vacate the house?

- (2) Did an officer of the commission's office at Kalgoorlie make a special trip to Leonora yesterday to inform the family of this requirement to vacate the house?
- (3) What is the reason for this unprecedented action in requiring a family, which has been formally allocated accommodation, to vacate that accommodation within a matter of days?
- (4) In view of the desperate accommodation problems of this family, whose case for allocation of adequate housing has been supported by several doctors' letters, will he agree to reverse the commission's decision and, if not, why not?

Mr P. V. Jones (for Mr LAURANCE) replied:

- (1) No family as described was allocated a special trip to Leonora.
- (2) The question received by the Minister had the words "Did the manager of the commission's office at Kalgoorlie make a special trip to Leonora?"
The manager of the central region, with the building supervisor, was on a routine trip, not special trip, and in the course of inspecting a vacant property found a family illegally occupying. The house is required to be in a vacant state to enable contractors to complete maintenance.
- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).
- (4) Investigation reveals that the older woman in occupation is the current tenant of another commission Leonora rental property.

The remaining family numbers were pre-allocated rental accommodation in Leonora approximately one month ago and they will be able to occupy the selected house in approximately one week when maintenance is completed.

In view of the expected short time before their legal occupation of the correctly allocated property is possible, they will be allowed to remain in the present house until then.

WATER RESOURCES: MWB

Chairman: Travel Expenses

781. Mr PARKER, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Chairman of the MWB formalised his report on his overseas trip into what could be termed "something of a professional report" and the results of that work with its implications for the future of the Metropolitan Water Board?
- (2) If it has not been done, why has it not been done?
- (3) If it has been done, will he table the report in the House so taxpayers may see what they got for their \$8 494?
- (4) If not, why not?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) The Chairman of the MWB did formalise his report on the matter and it was considered by Cabinet on Monday, 2 November. I was not there myself, as the honourable member will realise, but nevertheless it was considered by Cabinet, as was right and proper.
- (3) No, because it is essentially a report to the Government and, as far as we are concerned, it is an internal document and would be treated as such by any Government.
- (4) Answered by (3).

**HOSPITAL: ROYAL PERTH
(REHABILITATION)**

Orthotists: Industrial Dispute

782. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) For some days now an industrial dispute has existed between the management of Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital and orthotists employed by that hospital. What steps has the Minister or the hospital administration taken to settle the dispute?
- (2) Has the dispute been referred to the WA Industrial Commission and, if not, why not?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) The matter has been referred to the Industrial Commission and I understand it is before the commission right now. That being the case, I do not intend to interfere with that process at this time by intervening before a decision has been made.

The member for Melville and everyone in Western Australia should be aware the orthotists are required, as part of their duties, to manufacture and repair appliances which are supplied to disabled people. The orthotists are refusing to do that now in the International Year of Disabled Persons. They are refusing to carry out that work for industrial reasons.

I will meet with the orthotists if they are prepared to return to work and work as directed on behalf of the disabled, which they are supposed to be doing at the present time.

CLOSE OF SESSION

Legislative Programme

783. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Would the Premier indicate to the House what further legislation he intends to bring before the Parliament during the current session?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Later this week, certainly no later than Tuesday of next week, I shall convey the legislative programme to the Leader of the Opposition. We have virtually finalised it, and as is not unusual, some Minister's ambitions about certain legislation will probably not be met. As the member knows from his own experience, there has to be a cut-off point and we have just about reached that point now. I shall then convey the legislative programme to the Leader of the Opposition and in consultation with him, the Deputy Premier, and myself, we will be able to arrive at a method of handling it.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Station: Bunbury

784. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) For what purposes is it envisaged that the major part of the electricity from the proposed new Bunbury power station would be used?
- (2) What priority does the Government give to the construction of the new station?
- (3) When is it envisaged that construction may start on the station?
- (4) What other important Government energy or resource projects are being held up through lack of loan funds?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) I thought the member would have been aware as a result of comments and publicity from time to time that the Bunbury power station is critical if we are to move onto the next plateau of

usage of coal-generated electricity in this State. It is a key part of our industrial expansion. Two or three large contractual agreements were proceeding and negotiations have been conducted to a reasonable stage. The Bunbury power station is a key part of our industrial expansion and the high priority we have accorded to it has not been questioned. The only limiting factor is finance. As the member would be aware, we have in train now some alternative arrangements which involve the private funding of the Bunbury power station in the absence of loan funds.

- (4) No other projects are being held up as a result of lack of loan funds. Does the member refer to generating capacity?

Mr Grill: Yes.

Mr P. V. JONES: Other generating capacity has not been held up as a result of lack of loan funds, because the Bunbury power station was the only matter in question.

