

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 18th April, 1978

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

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: TENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 12th April, on the following motion by the Hon. W. M. Piesse—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

THE HON. M. McALEER (Upper West) [4.46 p.m.]: In rising to support the motion I would like to add my compliments to the many well-deserved compliments the Hon. W. M. Piesse received on the way she moved the Address-in-Reply motion. There are one or two points I would like to follow up, but today I will confine my remarks mainly to the situation in my electorate.

It is a well worn track, but the problems continue and they are very real to the people of the electorate. Cyclone "Alby" was the culmination of a series of disasters and we have all been greatly reassured to know the Government has been able to provide assistance for the restoration of the devastated areas of the south-west and the great southern.

I wish to compliment all those who contributed so generously towards the Lord Mayor's appeal and also those who went into the areas to work.

As one trouble succeeds another the immediately preceding trouble is inclined to be pushed out of one's mind. It is not so long ago that the eastern wheat belt was devastated by

floods, and again the Government was very quick to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government to provide flood relief for the people in those areas so that they could restore the devastated regions.

I am glad to be able to say that although the people in my province certainly suffered the effects of cyclone "Alby"—such as the loss of topsoil, damaged windmills and fences, and a few damaged crayboats and a number of craypots—nevertheless they do not regard the damage they suffered as a disaster. In fact, there is not one man or woman to whom I have spoken in my electorate who has not said, "Thank God we were not in the south or the south-west. We have been very lucky."

After two years of drought there are areas of distress and many cases of distress. It is true that from the very outset of the drought—as soon as it became apparent that we were experiencing a drought and not just a late or poor season—the Government was quick to try to provide relief; this increased in scope and quantity over two years and included concessions, such as freight concessions on fodder for agistment for sheep bought at sales to restock. Although this seemed little enough at the time, in the early days of the drought, it was greatly appreciated later on.

A great deal of appreciation has been expressed for the relief given to shires for unemployment in drought-affected areas, and it is hoped the relief granted to small businesses in drought-affected areas, which will take the form of concessional loans, will equally be appreciated when one or two difficulties in the forms are ironed out.

Most of all, the Government extended the scope of its aid in the loans offered to farmers who were affected by drought. These, which were offered as quite small amounts during the very first year of the drought, were not greatly welcomed or well received, because people felt they were inadequate to cover the needs of farming operations, even though at that time the Government promised the loans would be expanded and made appropriate to the situation. This has been done so that in fact people are able to apply for \$20 000 for each of the drought years; or, if they did not apply in the first year, they can obtain \$40 000 in the second year. This is a generous amount and the terms are also generous.

It has to be remembered that in making loans of this nature a very delicate balance must be struck because, while the requirements of farming operations are large, the people in this position are likely to be weighed down with debt. There will come a time for repayment, and it is of no use hanging around people's necks a debt they will

not be able to repay. Nothing escapes criticism, and it is common to hear people say in relation to drought concessional loans that in order to qualify for a loan one has to be nearly bankrupt, and in order to be approved for a loan one has to be shown to be viable.

On the latest figures, 572 farmers have received loans totalling \$12.704 million in round figures. The figures therefore show that the money is getting to the people and is serving the purpose for which it was intended. At the same time—last week—399 applications still had to be processed and, hopefully, approved, and as the closing date for applications was the 15th April it may well be that the amount given by way of loans will be still further increased. It has been foreseen by the Treasurer that the total amount of the loans will rise to \$20 million, which is a very substantial sum.

Some dissatisfaction has also been expressed with the demarcation of the drought-affected areas. This was always recognised as a problem, because the areas were affected in patches. No clear line could be drawn in any one direction indicating drought-affected areas. In some cases parts of shires were affected, in some cases whole shires were affected, and in other cases only individual farms were affected.

I have heard only two really serious criticisms of the demarcation line, and they come from the Shires of Coorow and Moora. In the Shire of Coorow only a small area was deemed to be drought-affected but it was felt a much larger part of the shire should have been so designated. In the Shire of Moora no areas at all were designated drought-affected, although two of its wards were affected by drought.

At the time the applications were made—which was fairly late last year and early this year—I do not believe members of Parliament associated with those shires had any idea there was any difficulty about the applications to the Drought Consultative Committee; or if they had any such idea I doubt they would have been able to do anything about the situation. Other than in a very general way, I am not aware on what grounds the demarcation was made.

In the case of Moora, it was a late application, and the shire suffered from late rains which changed its situation. It is to be hoped the Drought Consultative Committee will reconsider its decision. However, I see this as a real difficulty, because the time for such applications to be made has passed and I do not know how, in fairness to other shires, it can be done.

I should say in favour of the Government and

the Drought Consultative Committee, which tried very hard in difficult circumstances to assess the drought-affected areas, that because of the patchy nature of the drought provision was made for isolated cases by allowing for individual applications for drought relief. That is to say an individual farmer from any area could apply. Perhaps not sufficient use was made of this provision. If so, I am not sure of the reason—whether communications were bad and the provision was not fully understood, or because of the changing pattern of the drought during the whole season. One month a farmer might appear to be in difficulty, and the following month with some favourable rain hopes would be revived.

Even by Christmas, when feed had dried off and grain had either been harvested or was about to be harvested, and one would have thought the season was quite clear, a considerable change came over a number of areas, because of storms which began on Christmas Day and continued for some weeks. Heavy rain fell at Winchester, Carnamah, and Morawa, and in the Shire of Moora. To my knowledge the only place that benefited was east of my province at Kalannie where nine inches of rain fell. Because of the rain and continuing storms farmers were able to plough up the land for summer fallow, and there was a good germination so that feed grew and they had grazing for their stock. Nevertheless, at that time of the year such a favourable outcome is still subject to risk until the season breaks.

The people who found themselves in a greatly altered situation because of the storms and the rain were among those who submitted late applications for aid for drought-affectedness. In quite a number of cases the Drought Consultative Committee rejected their applications, because it felt that although those people might have originally been suffering from a light season, in fact they did not come into the area of distress until they were forced into it by the effect of the rain, and rain damage did not come within the ambit of the aid the committee was offering. So while those people felt they were affected just as much as anyone else in the drought-affected areas, they were not eligible for aid. It is a miserable situation to be in, because they appear to have nowhere else to turn and it is depressing, because they are the neighbours of people who are receiving assistance. It is similar to the situation where it rains everywhere else but not at one's own farm.

The best thing that could happen in my province would certainly be a good season, which would restore confidence not only to farmers but also to businessmen and people in the towns.

While we are still waiting for the season to open, I am grateful to know the Minister for Agriculture has gone out of his way to help the Northern Rainseekers, who are interested in cloud seeding, and the Government is prepared to sponsor research in cloud seeding over a period of three years with the co-operation of the CSIRO.

In the last year it has not been proven whether, in fact, rain fell as a result of the efforts of the Northern Rainseekers; but certainly its work had a very good psychological effect on many people in the farming community, who were involved, and there was sufficient doubt on the matter as to encourage people to believe this work might have the desired effect. In any case a great deal of work has been done, and it is very encouraging that the research will be undertaken in the areas where rain is of primary importance.

I was very taken with the speech of the Hon. Neil McNeill in the Address-in-Reply debate. Whilst I enjoyed every part of it, I was particularly interested in the parts which dealt with agriculture; and perhaps I also suffer from having an agricultural bias.

One of his comments which interested me most was his remark that the consciousness of disparity in living conditions had added to the feelings of depression, and one might say, of despair of so many people in the country. I would say that it is not exactly the difference in living conditions which appears to exist between the country and the urban people that counts in itself; differences have always existed. But this consciousness stems from the lack of confidence on the one hand, and from the fact that the quality of living is now seen as a necessity for survival on the other.

It will be recalled that in the 1950s and in the early 1960s, as Mr Wordsworth reminded us the other day, the rural areas experienced a time of prosperity. It was a time of hope, and established farmers consolidated and expanded their holdings. At the same time there was a great deal of pressure for new land to be opened up, and many new farmers came to the area.

These new farmers had to live under fairly hard conditions; and they had to live fairly frugally and in isolation. The important aspect was that they had a great deal of hope, and the expectations were that after a number of years of hard work they would be able to live if not in prosperity, at least in comfort.

At the end of the 1960s wool prices fell. The wheat market collapsed in 1969 and quotas were introduced; then the northern agricultural drought occurred. As a consequence the situation changed very radically for all farmers in the

wheat belt, and very much so for those in my province.

One of the changes was that overnight share-farmers disappeared. In an effort to cut costs the farmers got rid of their farm labour. As another consequence country towns lost small businesses, and the business people did not return. Some of these country towns do not seem to have recovered.

Some farmers were faced with the prospect of having to leave the land. If they did not have to leave the land they were faced with the position of having to consider the future of their children, and whether they could be trained for other vocations and sent elsewhere.

Since that time we have experienced some favourable seasons. A floor price was set for wool; cattle fetched fairly good prices; and not only have good prices been received for wheat, but also quotas were discontinued. That occurred in the intervening period before we came to the present drought. However, the underlying causes of the difficulties of the 1960s still remained, and they have been exacerbated by the present conditions. Those underlying causes included the cost-price squeeze. The costs in the 1960s were rising not rapidly, but still they were rising. However, prices for farm produce fell and markets contracted. It was apparent that no useful purpose would be served by increasing production, because the farmers would not be able to produce at a rate which would compensate for the increased costs.

The lesson which the farmers unwittingly and bitterly learned was that they were in competition with one another, and that in times of stress some had to go to the wall. When farmers went to the wall in times of hardship, more land became available. To some extent the farmers also learned the lesson "Get big or get out".

There has been a decrease in the number of people on the land, and in their cropping programmes the farmers certainly tended to get bigger, and to use bigger machinery at a tremendous cost. This is a feature of the present time. It is quite possible for a farmer to pay \$100 000 for seeding equipment, which is a very big cost. This sort of expense can be borne in good times, but it rebounds in bad times when there is no income.

It seems to me that perhaps the family farm is fighting a losing battle, and I am haunted by the thought that somewhere along the line we seem to have taken a wrong turn. But it is all very well to suggest that we should keep the people on the land, instead of relying on a few large landholders to produce the goods that we need. I am conscious

of the fact that history in Australia, and certainly in Western Australia, is full of failures of ideas like this, and this would have been expressed formerly as establishing "a bold peasantry". Nevertheless, as a consequence of the failure to keep people on the land, we will lose some towns which should survive. Those towns will not have any people to service, and we will not be in a position to build up the small towns further, because they will not have the local markets.

Despite all efforts, these effects have already been felt in such day-to-day matters in the country areas as, for instance, the lack of tradesmen. The nearest electrician or plumber may have to come from a town 100 to 150 kilometres away. Of course such factors add to the cost of the people on the land, to their discomfort, and to their frustrations.

Perhaps one cannot deny that the answer to this problem is an economic one. To the country people one answer is the provision of improved conditions and facilities, and there is an insistent demand for them. In this respect the Government is quite sympathetic and is prepared to do its best. However, the help it is able to extend is not always immediate, is sometimes limited, and is sometimes not accepted, because the position in which some farmers find themselves precludes them from availing themselves of such help.

One instance is rural housing. When, after a great deal of effort, the Government arranged for the Rural Housing Authority to provide housing in country areas, it put forward a plan with vision. The authority went to great pains to acquaint the farmers throughout the length and breadth of the agricultural areas of the purpose of that authority; and it encouraged the farmers to use the facilities provided. The authority did not fail to do anything that it could possibly have done.

Nevertheless, since that time there have been fewer than 200 applications for houses—I believe the total was 181 applications—and far fewer than 100 applications have been approved. Most of those applications were not from my area, but other country areas.

The reason for the failure of the authority is quite evident in my area, as well as in other areas; that is, by the time the rural housing plan began to operate the farmers were no longer in a position to accept loans for a facility which they regarded as being not vitally essential, although very desirable.

I think it has always been a feature of farming that whilst farmers were prepared to spend almost their last penny on improvements to their

properties, the provision of improved housing was left to the last.

One of the ways in which the farmers have been losing out is on the labour market. They did dispense with as much farm labour as they could to reduce costs. We have heard amazing stories of how some farmers, without aid, have been able to keep a flock of 15 000 sheep single-handed, and of the extensive acreage they have been able to crop with the aid of large farm machinery. However, there is a limit to what people can do; there is also a limit to the period that they can carry on doing this. The time did come when the farmers would have employed more labour than they previously engaged; but unfortunately by that time they seemed to have lost access to the farm labour that they had before.

More importantly, the farmers had already lost out in competition with other industries, because they were not able to pay the wages which would attract workers to the country and away from the towns and cities, and where bigger money was available, as in the mining industry.

A very successful scheme—using the NEAT scheme—has been instituted at Moora under which workers undergo two years of training, so that at the end of this period they will be able to cope with problems in the sphere in which they have been trained. Of course, this scheme had its teething troubles. It has settled down, and its success has been so great that there has been a clamour for the duplication of the scheme. Unfortunately the duplication is to take place at Moora, where the facilities for the education of these people already exist.

I think it would be of benefit if this scheme could be set up in other districts, although I can see that the setting up of schemes elsewhere would be more costly. At the same time the difficulties which the founders of this scheme went through would be faced in these other areas. Nevertheless, the effects of this scheme as it operates at Moora, are confined very largely to that area. Perhaps efforts should be made to extend it to other areas.

It is true there will still be the difficulty of competing with other industries by way of wages, but experienced and skilled labour is worth the money expended. Only too often the farmers are glad to obtain unstable and unskilled labour.

The Government has gone a long way to providing the infrastructure for the farming areas, but there are pockets which miss out, which present problems, and which suffer the consequences.

I suppose the drought this year has brought

home to all of us the realisation of the importance of water. I am pleased to say that by and large many of the water problems in my province have been solved over the years. Water supplies have been made adequate, some of them, in fact, just in the nick of time before the drought struck. I am glad to say that the small town of Greenhead near Leeman has just received its water supply, and the particularly intractable area of Yuna, which has only a very small but insistent population also received a water supply, mainly through its own efforts, but also with the co-operation of the Public Works Department. The Government also placed emphasis on the water supply at Geraldton which is necessary for its future, and a good supply of water is being provided for the town at a cost of some \$14 million.

However, there are still areas of difficulty. Some are simply small towns which would like to expand. I refer to Horrocks, and Port Gregory in the Shire of Northampton. Mogumber is another case and, most pressing, the town of Bindi Bindi in my electorate. Bindi Bindi is situated not very far from the town of Moora. It has a school, a schoolmaster's house, a store, three or four houses, and a Co-operative Bulk Handling installation.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: No hotel?

The Hon. M. McALEER: No, no hotel; the nearest is at Miling or Yerecoin. There is no water supply at all in the town. For many years, the school has been supplied by water carted by the Moora Shire and, for the rest, the people have to cart their own.

In the district there are farms in almost as proportionately difficult a situation. Underground water is lacking, or where it occurs it is salty. The structure of the soil is not suitable for dams and where the soil is suitable and will hold water it tends to become salty in quite a short time. There is a great deal of rocky outcrop in the area, which requires to be blasted.

For many years, particularly since 1967, the people of Bindi Bindi have been making representations to the Government for assistance. In 1967 and 1970, surveys were carried out with the result that everybody agreed the situation was a very difficult one. The area was water-deficient and, although it lay outside the proposed farm water reticulation scheme, nevertheless it was decided that when the time came it should receive special priority treatment.

But time has gone by and the farm water reticulation scheme has not been proceeded with due to lack of funds from the Commonwealth, and very little has been done at Bindi Bindi. One thing which has been done—this is very

important—is the provision this year by the Government of two underground tanks to supply water to the school. When I last heard of the scheme, the holes had been dug but the contractor had gone away, and it still had not any concrete lining. I sincerely hope the scheme will soon be completed. Without the provision of these two tanks the water supply to the school would be in a most serious situation. Certainly, it still will not be good and is no advantage to the rest of the town.

The spectre which haunts the local people is that they are going to lose their store, because business being what it is, the lack of water with the consequent continual carting may possibly be the last straw that breaks the storekeeper's courage. In the meantime, of course, the farmers are experiencing great difficulties.

One solution which has been proposed is the extension of the pipeline which extends from Mundaring to the eastern districts. Probably, there are good reasons that this suggestion has not been followed because Bindi Bindi is at the very end of the line, and new pipe of much greater dimensions would need to be provided, extending right back to the source.

The only other solution is that a new water supply could be established from the Agerton field. I am very pleased to hear the Government is considering applying to the Commonwealth to take part in its water resources plan and that this area will have a high priority when the scheme gets off the ground. However, I cannot help feeling that this is a very long way off.

It is all very well to expose a problem and say what the difficulties are but not to provide a solution. However, it seems to me that one measure which could and perhaps should be taken now is that, while the Government is offering on-farm water loans which carry with them an application for assessment, it might perhaps take an opportunity to reassess the district as a whole. Very few applications for on-farm water loans have been received from the Bindi Bindi area, mainly because farmers are convinced there is no possibility of locating suitable water and establishing dams. However, I believe careful assessment of the area is warranted, and should be carried out.

Among the amenities which have greatly improved in my province is the telephone system. I realise this is not within the State Government's area of responsibility. However, I also have in mind several areas which need attention, one at Gutha-Canna, in the Morawa Shire, and the other at Waddi Forest in the Coorow Shire

which still have manual exchanges with no possibility in the near future as far as one can see of becoming automatic. It is possibly true to say that people will put up with manual exchanges so long as the telephone lines work—even if they work only intermittently. They will put up with manual exchanges so long as there are a certain number of hours in each day when they can receive and make telephone calls. The people of these areas would not be so insistent in their request for automatic telephone exchanges if they worked or if they were not at the same time pressed by the Telecom people to upgrade their existing lines. They can upgrade their lines but they do not have the possibility of Telecom providing an automatic exchange. So from their point of view, it is simply a waste of money to think about upgrading their lines.

When the people in the country complain about Telecom's profits, the profits and the plans are not always understood but, even if they are understood, they are not necessarily accepted. People would prefer such things as the restoration of concessional rates to a more reasonable time of the day—for instance, at least to 9.00 a.m. which would take in some part of the business hours. They would regard that as a very worth-while application of Telecom's funds. They feel that telephone calls to larger centres should be made cheaper and, indeed, treated as local calls. Of course, this does raise the problem of zoning; something has been done to rationalise the way charges are levied on telephone calls. However, I am quite sure a great deal can still be done, and this would be greatly appreciated. In fact, it would be more appreciated than all the marvels of technology which Telecom is providing and will continue to provide.

One of the fantastic achievements of successive Governments has been the provision of the State electricity grid throughout the agricultural areas of our State. It has now reached the stage where only about 1 per cent of our population are not provided for by the State Energy Commission. It is very unfortunate and unlucky that, almost without warning, the SEC has arrived at a situation where it has had to contract a commitment to the remaining 1 per cent who are not catered for by the grid. I do see and understand as well as I can the difficulties faced by the SEC. However, the fact is that it seems extremely hard that those people who had an expectation of gaining access to the electricity grid within a few years now find they have been deprived of it, possibly forever.

I know that in cases where connections were promised but where they were put out of reach by

the increase in charges by the SEC, great efforts are being made by the commission to make the connections either by regrouping the people or by making exceptions to its policy. However, this will not cover all the cases, or even the majority of them and I hope that the Government—which is considering the matter—will give it sympathetic consideration and find some solutions to a problem which at the moment appears intractable.

The last facility I wish to mention is the matter of country hospitals. In recent years, the Government has spent a considerable amount of money in the country. For instance, I point with pleasure to Mullewa and Northampton which have received additions, and a new hospital altogether. But future extensions are needed. There are hospitals at places such as Three Springs or Moora where nothing has transpired. This is a misfortune, especially in the case of the latter, because the number of hospital patients has long outgrown the accommodation at the hospital. These problems are well known to the department. A great deal of money had to be spent to restore the Port Hedland Hospital after the cyclone, and that made heavy inroads into its funds. In addition, new funding arrangements have been made with the Commonwealth which have also resulted in less funds being allocated to this area.

Finally, there is the amount of money the Government is obliged to spend on city hospitals, especially on extensions to the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. I realise the metropolitan area has a huge population of nearly 800 000 and that reasonable, adequate hospital accommodation must be provided. However, it seems to me one can spend too much money on city hospitals; the degree of almost luxury one sees at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital leaves one astonished and, at the same time, surprised and pleased—but not so surprised and pleased when one compares the facilities provided there with the needs of the country areas.

I think it is now acknowledged that country hospitals are far more cost effective than the very large city hospitals. There was a time when any Minister for Health would say, "We continue with country hospitals, because they are a social amenity. People do not have to travel very far, and the Government does this for you. However, we would much rather transport patients to the metropolitan area." I think those times have passed. With the tremendous escalation in health costs, which concerns us all, the department and the Minister concerned would only too readily

concede that country patients can often be treated a great deal more effectively in the country.

The smaller country hospitals are not faced with the extra costs incurred in so many city establishments; many of the overused laboratory facilities provided at the larger centres are not included in country hospitals. Patients can be treated by their local general practitioner and allowed to return home as quickly as possible. Therefore, although I understand the difficulties, I am concerned that the Government should press on with its country hospital programme especially as it relates to the hospitals in my province which greatly need the extensions I have mentioned.

Finally, Mr President, I should like to make special mention of the Town of Geraldton. During the past few years the town has been affected by the drought, because the hinterland has been affected by it, resulting in business being depressed and sales falling. The building industry, which is a very important one in Geraldton, is in a precarious position because of lack of forward orders. The tourist trade has greatly declined this season, perhaps caused as much by the very hot weather as by anything else. However, the rural people who usually come to the area certainly have not been present this season. In addition, the abattoirs which provide a great deal of employment have been faced with the problem of lack of stock and have closed.

Unemployment is at a very high level. In January the figure was 15 per cent and climbing, as compared with 6 per cent throughout Western Australia. There are various reasons for this. One reason is that the people who are unemployed in the hinterland, in the farming and pastoral areas, have come to Geraldton; and another reason is that since the town was one of the last areas to be affected by unemployment many people have said, "We will go to Geraldton and find a job", but eventually they have found on arriving there that it was no longer easy to obtain employment. However, these people have stayed in the district. If one must be out of work, in some respects Geraldton is a pleasant place to be when one is in that situation.

The town's people have taken pains to try to look after those who are unemployed, and if it has not been possible for them to provide work they have at least encouraged the unemployed to take part in the Commonwealth schemes which have been provided.

Another matter which has added to the unfortunate situation in Geraldton is the position of the mining companies which mine heavy mineral sands. As is well known, these companies

have had to put off many workers; but they are struggling hard at the present time to keep their own heads above water. It may well be that the time will come when the Government will have to decide whether it is worth while giving assistance to these companies or whether in fact they should be allowed to go to the wall. I cannot believe any Government would consider such a course if it were possible to avoid it.

The only other major industry in Geraldton is the rock lobster industry. Although prices are down, the catches have never been better. Therefore, I would say, in parenthesis, although the season has been shortened by six weeks and it was feared by some people, especially those in the north at Kalbarri, that this would cause them a great deal of embarrassment, at least the catch should be such as to ensure they remain unembarrassed. However, I believe it will do nothing to further the Government's objective of lowering the crayfish catch.

The people of Geraldton have been looking to the Government to help provide work and the Government has attempted to do so. It has provided work on the water supply scheme; it has ensured continuing work on the harbour; it has built schools; and it has gone so far as to advance the building of the Waggrakine Primary School by a year. However, the town council and the neighbouring Shire of Greenough, which has similar problems, are looking for long-term planning. They realise that short-term measures, in many cases, are extremely helpful; but they wish to have long-term plans outlined in order that the town and the shire have something to work towards and they can at least see the direction in which they are travelling.

The town council and the shire presented a detailed submission to the Government in which they outlined various projects which they thought would be of a long-term nature, which would be valuable, and which the Government might be prepared to assist in funding. That occurred some months ago and the Government has been investigating the projects one by one. However, time seems to pass very slowly and the period seems longer to people when they are in distress. As far as I know, the Government's investigations are not yet completed. This leaves the people in the town and the district with a feeling they are being disregarded, although that is not the case.

The formation of the Regional Development Committee which occurred recently gave a degree of encouragement to the town council, the Shire of Greenough, and the people they represent. After many years of planning and trying to attract the attention of the Government so that

the potential of the Geraldton region would be realised, the people who are involved in the Regional Development Committee, or who are associated with it in any way, are not overconfident or overoptimistic. Nevertheless, they see it as another tool for planning in a long-term manner and they see it also as another avenue of approaching the Government and drawing attention to their region and the problems experienced there.

Finally I should like to mention one other facility which is needed by the Town of Geraldton itself and that is a cultural centre. Geraldton has a very nice-looking town hall, but it is too small. In spite of its substantial exterior, it is unsafe. Although there are a number of smaller halls which are suitable for holding dances, and the gymnasium at the high school can be used for entertainment purposes, the town does not have a hall of any consequence.

For some years the town council had been planning a suitable cultural centre and the plans were finally drawn up. A fairly simple structure is envisaged. It comprises a stage, adequate dressing rooms, and a naked floor which would accommodate 800 people or, with a little pruning, would accommodate 650 people. However, the difference in cost between providing accommodation for 650 people and 800 people is so small as to be negligible. The price for this simple structure is nearly \$3 million.

The council is able to provide \$1 million, and perhaps a little more, but it has no possibility of totally financing such a structure. Therefore, the council is claiming from the Government what it considers to be a promise made some time ago that funds would be made available for cultural buildings in country towns. I believe it is very important that Geraldton—as it is important for all regional centres—should have the possibility of developing a cultural life of its own. One cannot expect good theatrical companies to visit outlying towns if the accommodation is not adequate. One cannot expect even the local companies to keep performing if they do not have reasonable accommodation in the form of dressing rooms and similar facilities. I am not an expert in the area of costing, but I was staggered by the cost quoted for this particular building. However, the council has told me it has made every effort to prune the plan, but all the alterations it has tried have made very little difference to the basic cost.

Therefore, I hope in the first place the Government will consider the particular need for a cultural centre which I have just mentioned, and perhaps when it has some relief from all the disasters which have occurred it will address itself

to the general need for extensions to cultural facilities throughout the countryside. I support the motion.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [5.40 p.m.]: I shall take the opportunity that is offered by the Address-in-Reply debate to raise some matters of interest particularly as they relate to my electorate. I listened with a good deal of interest to the speech of the Hon. Margaret McAleer. It seems that during the progress of this debate my duties have taken me outside the Chamber to the extent that I have heard very few of the speakers.

I listened also with real appreciation to the comments made by Miss Lyla Elliott who made a very well researched speech which dealt with people who are not very well placed to represent their own interests. I congratulate her on the research she carried out in the presentation of her speech.

I believe the speech made by Miss McAleer showed a good deal of careful thought and it was one of the best expositions I have heard of the situation of country people. The case she made out for the problems facing her constituents was very well presented. It is a good example for less experienced members to follow.

I noted also during the speech given by the Hon. Margaret McAleer that she spoke quite favourably about at least two of the programmes which were initiated by a Labor Government and she said these programmes have been of benefit to rural people. This gives the lie to the sorts of statements we have heard in recent years, statements which have been made in order to create a division between country people and city people, a state of affairs that is becoming one of the major problems we have to deal with in our society today.

The problem raised by the Hon. Margaret McAleer in regard to the recreation building was of interest; but I was staggered at the cost of \$3 million. I have a relative who is engaged in a similar project in Carnarvon. The member might like to look at the plan being used there. I do not know whether the building is of the same size as that required in Geraldton; but the cost is considerably less than \$3 million as a result of the particular design and construction methods used. There is certainly a considerable difference in cost.

The Hon. M. McAleer: We require a cultural centre in Geraldton.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A recreation building is also a social centre. There is a large area for recreational activities; but there is

provision also for meeting rooms and accommodation for other community activities. I do not know whether it is the same sort of building as that required in Geraldton.

The Hon. M. McAleer: We require a cultural centre where dramatic productions can be held.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The recreation centre to which I refer is capable of accommodating dramatic performances and activities of that nature. The honourable member may be interested in the design as it may be the solution to the problem which confronts the town council in Geraldton as far as its cultural centre is concerned.

There are a number of matters to which I wish to refer. Firstly I should like to deal with funeral charges which over the past year have been featured in the Press. A minor storm arose as a result of comments made by Reverend Peter Harrison from Southern Cross. My interest in this matter stems from a representation made to me by a person who lives in Margaret River. He came to me, because I was a Labor member whom he knew and he did not want to approach the local members in his area who are not of the same political persuasion.

This gentleman, Mr D. Warner of Margaret River, gave me permission to use his name. On the death of his wife he wanted as simple a funeral as possible—at her request—with the elimination of all the frills. That was the instruction he gave to the funeral director.

What alarmed Mr Warner was the cost of this simple burial which amounted to \$633 in round figures. He said there was to be no funeral service at all and there were to be no flowers. The casket was to be of the simplest design and, preferably, no casket at all if that could be managed. It was to be a cremation. He was greatly shocked by the amount which was charged.

When he forwarded the details of the cremation to me I asked the Bureau of Consumer Affairs to carry out an investigation on his behalf. I will quote the costs of the various items involved, because there are matters in which I think the Government could take some interest.

From the comment in the Press, particularly in relation to pensioner schemes, there is no doubt a good deal of concern is felt about this problem. In the case of Mr Harrison of Southern Cross, he was able to obtain a simple rosewood casket for the sum of \$48. For those members who are interested, that figure was quoted in "Bill Lang's Look" in the *Daily News* of the 9th November, 1977.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is not a very authoritative source.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The article was reporting the comments of Mr Harrison at an Anglican Church council meeting. I have to assume that Mr Harrison was telling the truth.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I did not say he was not telling the truth.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister was saying it was not a very authoritative source. I take it Mr Harrison would be a creditable source.

The cost of the casket to the pensioner, Mr Warner, was \$175. It was described as a pensioner-type coffin, polished, and fully lined. Now, I am sure that neither Mr Warner nor his wife particularly wanted the casket to be polished or fully lined, but simply the minimum standard required. When questioned on the matter the undertaker stated that was the minimum price on the undertaker's list. In this cartel—suppose it would have to be termed—there is an agreement that the minimum price charged shall be such-and-such. A sum of \$175 is the minimum price for a casket, so that is what will be charged regardless of the wishes of those involved.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is possible to purchase an unpolished casket.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I would have thought in the case of Mr Warner, and in view of his request, that the undertaker would have purchased an unpolished casket. The direction was that the funeral was to be as simple as possible and without frills. There was to be no funeral service; just the body to be burnt at the crematorium.

I might say that Mr Warner has not criticised the undertaker; he has raised the problem in general because he felt outraged that these prices are being charged.

I will refer to a further breakdown of the charges for the funeral. The cost of moving the body from the Margaret River Hospital to Bunbury—which had to be done since that was the nearest crematorium—was \$97. Perhaps there is a message there for other people who want to have as cheap a burial as possible, and the cheapest disposition of the body: If one lives some distance from the crematoriums at Perth and Bunbury, the cheapest method is burial in the local cemetery.

The charge for receiving the body from the hospital was \$27, and the mileage from Busselton to Bunbury—some 200 kilometres—was 35c per kilometre. I do not know whether or not that is an

unreasonable price to charge, but certainly it is the standard charge laid down. That charge amounted to a further \$70, and added to the \$27 to receive the body from the local hospital, gave a total of \$97.

Once the body was in Bunbury it had to be moved at the time and date determined, from the moratorium to the crematorium—not a great distance, I would assume.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You said "moratorium", when I think you meant mortuary.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I accept the Minister correction; the body was moved from the mortuary. The distance in Bunbury is not tremendously great. It was then necessary for the undertaker to provide three people to move the body. I do not know why three people are required but something might be laid down in the regulations so I will not dispute that. I know that two people have moved a body, but there may be good reason to require that three people should move the body. However, the cost to Mr Warner for that service was \$189. That seems quite an exceptional cost to move a body from the mortuary to the crematorium—\$189.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: That would be the most expensive trip that person ever had!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: These charges are laid down in the schedule of charges agreed between the undertakers. That being so, I believe the Government could well look into that figure to see whether or not a reduction is possible.

Amongst the rest of the charges there was an amount of \$56.65 to cover administrative expenses of the undertaking, detailed as office and administration fees, including all necessary documentation. They are listed as \$20 for making the funeral arrangements; \$36.65 for the necessary time and paper work involved in preparing and inserting Press notices in *The West Australian* and the *Busselton-Margaret Times*; arranging for a death certificate; applying for a medical referee on Mr Warner's behalf for a permit to cremate Mrs Warner; arranging a time for the crematorium with the Bunbury Town Council; and preparing and carrying out the registration of death with the Busselton Registrar under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act of 1961.

Perhaps those costs were not unreasonable in the circumstances. Other costs included cremation fees paid to Bunbury Town Council, \$90. I believe the charge at Karrakatta is \$70, and for a pensioner the charge is \$60. So, there is a difference there for country people and it could be said there is a disincentive for people to live in the

country, or a disability being imposed on country people not only while they are alive, but also when they are dead. That adds more fuel to the argument put up by the farmers.

For the disposal of ashes, a sum of \$5 is charged by the cemetery authority. I understand that two charges apply at Karrakatta, depending on the method of disposal. The charge at Karrakatta is \$3 and I would have thought the disposal of ashes in the manner requested by Mr Warner would have been the same. So, there may well be a price differential to the disadvantage of country people.

There is also to be acquired a permit for cremation to be issued by a doctor. The charge made in the case I am mentioning was \$7.50. I do not know why that should be necessary; to be subject to a certificate of cremation. I would have thought one could make one's choice whether to be buried or cremated without having to get a doctor's dispensation. I would like to be enlightened as to the reason.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There is a very good reason for that. When cremation was first established religious groups were opposed to it. Nobody has ever bothered to change the situation. There is still the matter of criminal action against a person.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is a different matter for the police or law enforcement authorities.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Incidentally, the crematorium at Bunbury was financed by the local authority.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That could well be, but here we have a price differential between the city and the country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is because of a different method of financing, and the different times the crematoriums were built.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The remaining expenses included sums of \$7.92 and \$5.30 for Press announcements which were involved.

Among the other articles before me is one which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 1st March. I do not know the exact heading, but it appears to be an article of the "Bill Lang's Look" type. This article deals with two similar types of funerals. In one a request was made for the simplest type. In this case \$276 was charged for a polished casket with chrome fittings. The total charge for this funeral was \$787.

The lady in question became incensed, because in the case of her uncle's funeral the charge was

only \$499, also for a simple funeral. In this case the body was cremated, but the casket was identical. The lady pointed out that in her uncle's funeral the "Last Post" was sounded, a flag was draped over the coffin, and her aunt was driven to and from her home.

I shall not pursue this matter any further on this occasion. However, there are grounds for a reduction in the cost of funerals, particularly in the costs charged for the caskets. I think that the sum of \$189 charged to transport a body from the mortuary to the crematorium is too high.

There are other matters affecting my electorate which I wish to raise.

Sitting suspended from 6.02 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Before the tea suspension I was about to speak on some matters affecting my electorate, which is one of the fastest growing regions of the metropolitan area, particularly that portion of it within the Shire of Wanneroo. As a result of the rate at which this area has been expanding, needs will arise for facilities within the district. I raised one of these needs by way of a question on the 15th March regarding a site for a fire station. In answer to my question I received the agreement of the Government to provide a site. That is not the only matter I wish to raise; I raise it simply because it was rather oddly reported in the Press that the announcement regarding the allocation of the site was contained in a report given to the Council, and not in a reply to a question.

However, there are other matters of importance to the development of the Shire of Wanneroo in respect of which the shire has been attempting to obtain a response from the Government. These matters are delaying the development of facilities within the shire. One concerns the location of court facilities. This matter was first raised in 1973 when, of course, the population of the shire was much smaller than it is now. I have raised this matter previously in the Parliament. My correspondence indicates that the Attorney-General was approached by the shire by way of a letter on the 6th December, 1976. In its letter the shire pointed out that the population of its area at that time was 64 000, and that it was expected to rise to 81 000 by June, 1978. The Attorney-General's reply to that letter simply stated—

It is understandable that your Council is concerned to have this type of facility for its ratepayers and general public. However, before committing funds for the building of a Court building and the provision of staff, it is necessary to establish a need in a particular

locality for such services which are not or cannot be met from existing facilities.

Although you mention an expanding population in your Shire, this is not necessarily the sole indication of a need for Court facilities. At present, Courts located in Perth are meeting whatever needs the people of Wanneroo may have for a Court. This would be assisted by the fact that there would be a large number of the working population of your district commuting daily to the city and suburbs.

Then he went on to speak about the shortage of funds. I received a request from the Shire of Wanneroo to follow up this matter; so I asked questions regarding the location of present courts and the number of cases heard in them. We wanted the figures to use as the basis for an assessment of the need for court facilities, and after hearing the figures I find the case for Wanneroo has been well and truly made out. At the time I asked the questions, apart from the courts in Perth, we had courts at Fremantle, Midland, Armadale, and Rockingham. The population in each of those latter areas is not of the order of the population of Wanneroo, and each of those areas would have as many residents working in and commuting to the city as would the Wanneroo area.

The suggestion was made by me and also by the shire that temporary premises could be obtained. However, no temporary premises were available in the Wanneroo townsites, which is not surprising seeing it is a rapidly expanding district. I suggested a prefabricated building could be provided, particularly if a site had been allocated. I do not see why that suggestion cannot be followed up even at this stage. A decision has to be made about where the court is to be located, and I can see no reason that it cannot be made at this time rather than later. Once we know where the court is to be located it would not be very expensive to place a prefabricated building on the site, which could be moved and used elsewhere when the permanent structure is built; so there would be no loss of money from the point of view of that temporary structure. That is one further decision required to be made by the Government.

Another decision required to be made is in regard to the location of the Joondalup regional centre. Here again, planning has come to a standstill, because none of the other planning associated with the location of the centre can be finalised until the site is known. I fail to understand why the Government is unable to make up its mind on this particular matter so that the shire may be in a position to set about its own

planning, unhindered by this very frustrating business of not knowing where services are to be located. I bring forward those matters for the attention of the Government and hope it will take early action to see they are resolved.

In respect of other problems within my electorate, one of the most important is that of the major regional road, the Mitchell Freeway—a subject on which I have frequently spoken in the past and on which I do so again to reiterate and further confirm to the Government the importance of this road to the welfare of the whole of the northern suburbs. Its nonexistence affects not only those people in the northern suburbs, but the traffic that accumulates on other roads creates problems in the southern end of the corridor.

I recognise the value of the progress that is being made; the extension of the Mitchell Freeway to Hutton Street is now nearing completion and already those who use the roads in the area find a noticeable difference in traffic patterns. Bottlenecks do not now occur where they used to occur; as the freeway extends so the bottlenecks are moved further to the north. This may be to the advantage of suburbs to the west of Perth, but it does not solve the problems of those living in the northern suburbs.

We find, for example, two competing groups have emerged in the localities north and south of Beach Road along the coast. Those north of Beach Road are being deluged with traffic moving through residential streets to the coast; so they want that traffic removed from their streets. The residents are particularly concerned about a kindergarten in their locality, quite apart from the nuisance of traffic flowing past their homes.

On the other hand, those south of the Beach Road alignment do not want Beach Road extended from Marmion Avenue to West Coast Highway, because that would create congestion and perhaps other traffic problems south of Beach Road.

I sympathise with both groups of people and, according to the Minister's public statements, he also sympathises with them but he does not do anything about the matter. The Minister washes his hands of the whole affair and asks the shires to resolve their differences. This is a problem which is really beyond resolution at that level. There is a need for traffic moving to Perth to have a suitable route to follow; and the only final solution for the northern suburbs is the extension of the Mitchell Freeway. Once that is completed the traffic will no longer be required to flow down

West Coast Highway, because a more convenient route will be available.

I would like to see the Government take a lot more interest in this matter. We know it has been presented with a problem because of the attitude of the present Federal Government, which is obviously not very sympathetic to the needs of the States. The Federal Government continually cuts down the funds of the States, and particularly funds required for major arterial roads. It is essential for the traffic flow within my electorate that the Mitchell Freeway route be completed in the shortest possible time.

As I mentioned before, the Mitchell Freeway extension to Hutton Street is now nearing completion, but it must be taken well beyond that locality and north of the present offices of the City of Stirling in order to have a real influence on the traffic flow north of that locality and to resolve the congestion that occurs south of Beach Road.

Another matter which has gained prominence in my electorate is the question of Star Swamp. I do not wish to dwell on this matter at length at this stage but it does require the attention and the decision of the Government. The local authority cannot make any decisions about it but the Government has the power to make the decision which is required for the benefit of the people in the northern suburbs. Even if the whole of the area bounded by Marmion Avenue, North Beach Road and Hope Road, which includes lands presently held by the State Housing Commission, is set aside as a reserve, at the time the open space requirements of the northern suburbs are genuinely examined there will still be tremendous deficiencies of open space in the northern suburbs.

I wish to move on to some more general matters. Last week we debated the events in the meat industry. I do not wish to canvass all that ground again, but the situation is indicative of this Government's real lack of decision-making powers; that is, it seems to have arrived at a stage when it is no longer able to bring itself to make decisions, because they might upset certain sectional interests. We have heard the Hon. Margaret McAleer speak briefly about the meatworkers in Geraldton and the closure of the abattoirs in that town. The union would not argue that that had to happen, because drought conditions are such that there is very little likelihood of those works being able to be economically maintained.

But when we speak of the problem in general and examine what has been done elsewhere, or what has not been done by this Government and

its Federal colleague, all we can see is the meatworkers being made a scapegoat for this Government's lack of initiatives in this area. The other night I mentioned what New Zealand has done and how that country has secured orders for its meatworks from the Middle East without exporting one live sheep.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How are their orders going?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yet the Liberal-National Country Party Governments—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How many abattoirs are closing in New Zealand?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: They have just got another order for 20 000 tonnes.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How are their abattoirs in general going? How many have closed in New Zealand in the last three months?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am not saying that they are not closing down. The point I was making, which is contrary to the theme put abroad by our opponents, is that the killed meat market is not dependent on the live trade market. New Zealand is an example of a country where there is no live trade at all.

Mr Lewis interjected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: No matter how much Mr Lewis argues, the fact is that New Zealand has recently secured another order for 20 000 tonnes. That is not a bad effort.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: How are you going to persuade those countries which do not have facilities to take frozen meat?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is right; so the Government throws up its hands in despair, it seems. That is where we deserve to be criticised. If there are no facilities, the Government just sits on its tail and does nothing; and of course there will be no improvement. The sort of attitudes the members are expressing are a fair sample of how this Government sits and wrings its hands and says, "There is nothing we can do". The Government will express real regret and cry tears over the plight of the farmers and offer all sorts of aid. But we hear not one word of how the Government might try to ameliorate the conditions of the meatworkers who are caught up in precisely the same set of conditions. There has been a series of climatic events over which we have no control; there have been droughts and other things that the Government cannot control. For the farmers the Government takes all the steps it can but it expresses no sympathy for what has been happening to the meatworkers. Government members throw up their hands in

despair or cry crocodile tears, because they say they can do nothing about it.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How many meatworkers are there in your electorate?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There would be a fair number of meatworkers in my electorate.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How many abattoirs?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: There are no abattoirs in my electorate. Is Mr Lewis suggesting that because there are no abattoirs in my electorate I should have no concern about these people? That is the sort of thing we have come to expect from Mr Lewis—because a problem is not on one's doorstep one should have no feelings about it. That is completely false. I may be a city member but I can feel equally with Mr Lewis about the difficulties that rural people face; I can understand them and appreciate them. But there seems to be a great lack of appreciation on the part of members of the Government for people who have to work for wages and salaries; and if their jobs go there is no concern. The moment that such people start to protest at what is happening they are cursed, condemned, and abused and the full weight of the law is used to cast them down. Special legislation is brought into this Chamber to deal with them and is then used to accuse them of not conforming to law and order. What a nice sort of procedure that is! That is a great way to try to deal with the country's problems!

This sort of attitude will get the Government nowhere. I am most concerned about the attitudes held by Government members and what they may express outside Australia. We know that the Premier and a number of his Ministers have been overseas. The Premier presented to the Parliament a report titled "Overseas visits. A report to the Parliament of Western Australia from the Premier, (Hon. Sir Charles Court)". Any rational person reading that can only be most concerned at the sorts of things he says and the ideas that he has taken to the leading financial circles of the world. I can imagine the concern that these people must have felt when he went to them with these sorts of ideas. The early visits were made during the course of the Whitlam Government. In these papers he makes much of what he said to important people that he met on these visits.

For instance, when talking of the visits to the United States, Britain, Europe, and the Middle East in January and February, 1975, he said—

During the period leading up to the visit it became increasingly evident to the Government that steps would have to be

taken to re-establish and re-vitalise important contacts on behalf of the State in key centres of the world.

For months we have been receiving reports of the destruction of Australia's credibility in all of the major countries on which we had relied for trade, and capital and know-how.

That is so much political clap-trap, and that was not by any means the case. I can imagine the concern of people if the Premier used these terms about what was happening in Australia not only with respect to the Whitlam Government but also with respect to people such as himself. Not everybody, especially the people in the countries the Premier and his Ministers were visiting, has the same simple notions about politics and relations with the work force that are apparently held by this Government. The Premier also said—

We also found it essential to project in our discussions our absolute confidence that the people of Australia would not long tolerate a continuation of damaging policies being fostered in Canberra at that time—a confidence since amply vindicated, with resultant major reinforcement of the State's already well-established credibility.

That is a fine party political sentiment but is not the sort of thing we would expect to be said to people overseas with whom we are negotiating and whose goodwill and respect are needed, if they are to have credibility in what is happening in this State. I can feel only the greatest concern that the Premier may have been voicing these sentiments when he went overseas.

I point out to members that Australia now has considerable trade with countries which have centrally-planned economies—I am sure the Leader of the House appreciates that point—and those countries would not be very attracted to the sentiments which I have just quoted the Premier as expressing. They would feel some concern at what may be happening to the political stability of this State and may feel that people who carry those sorts of stories overseas are not being particularly wise if they wish to deal in commodities with them.

We know that centrally-planned economies have been growing at a rate in excess of that of Western nations. Those are not my figures; they are figures I can quote from recent issues of the publication *Overseas Trading*. I shall quote for members some of the figures which are given in an issue of the 17th March, 1978, on pages 160 to 163.

I shall cite some figures from the journal about the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

which covers eastern European countries other than Yugoslavia. Their rate of industrial growth averaged 7.7 per cent a year during the 1971-75 five-year-plan period compared with 3 per cent among western industrialised countries. Reference is also made to the large wheat sales that were made to the USSR and to the significant orders for meat. The article stressed the importance of the continuing market in the USSR for wheat and also made reference to the coal going to Rumania.

In the five-year-plan period 1976-80 those eastern European countries are planning to spend \$250 000 million. I might add that all these figures are in US dollars. Of that figure \$20 000 million is available for imports from the western industrialised countries, and that amount does not include consumer or agricultural products. So the amount available for trade is greater than that \$20 000 million.

When one looks at figures like these and then at the comments of the Premier, one has to wonder just how effective he and his Ministers have been in their visits to countries overseas. If these are the countries that are to be the most important to the future of Australia's economic recovery, I think there is a responsibility for the Premier and the Ministers to tread with a great deal more caution. Although Mr Pike thinks that businessmen do not deal with socialists, his ideas are just not proven by the facts. Businessmen will deal with whoever will give them a profit.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is that what those socialist countries are after?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Had the member been listening he would have realised I said "businessmen" would deal with whoever will give them a profit. The honourable member has had his turn and if he wanted to argue along a certain line he has missed his chance. If he wants to argue this point, he will have to wait till his next opportunity.

The PRESIDENT: Will the honourable member ignore those interjections?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I will present the argument in my terms. Japan is a very important trading partner about which the Premier has stated he has a special relationship. That relationship does not seem to be a very special one, and in fact it has been strongly questioned whether there is any special relationship.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Questioned only by enemies of this State.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I say that because Japan has set about diversifying her markets for some considerable time. She has

recently signed a contract for the supply of iron ore with Brazil.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Only as a safety measure, because our industrial record is so bad.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You have not read the facts.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The comments of the Hon. Mr Lewis could cause concern outside Australia. A gentleman like Mr Lewis has absolutely no sympathy for organised work forces; he does not seem to believe that people in the work force have legitimate demands. If gentlemen like him and his business colleagues learn the lessons from what, in fact, takes place in more successful economies, they would change dramatically the attitudes they now express. I refer to the sort of attitudes that are now expressed in such an extreme way by the Minister for Labour and Industry who has indicated he would be prepared to introduce a system of industrial apartheid.

I think it is an indication of the Minister's lack of erudition or learning that he did not even know how to properly pronounce that term. When correctly pronounced "apartheid" is a very apt term to use. It fits the Minister precisely.

On the subject of the development of the Australian oil industry, we heard a lot of how it was alleged the Whitlam Government's policies prevented exploration of oil development within Australia. When we examine the figures—

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: That is very obvious.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Recently there has been a contract signed in Yugoslavia—one of the dreadful socialist communist countries—for the construction of a 750-kilometre pipeline by a consortium of countries including US interests. These people do not mind doing business with the communists, because they are able to make money.

If there had been an Australian pipeline authority, there would have been contracts for private business to construct pipelines. That is not against the interests of private enterprise people. We had a change of State Government in 1974. If we look at the dramatic turn of events brought about by the Court Government in the years following, we see that as far as the oil industry is concerned Government figures indicate there were five off-shore wells and one on-shore well drilled. In 1976 there were three off-shore wells and three on-shore wells—not a very proud record for this supposedly brilliant private enterprise Government. Even if we look at the years before—

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver interjected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The honourable member should take things a little steady. There is no simple explanation; no simple, easily derived explanation such as the honourable member would like to believe. There is no guarantee that there is going to be any large exploration programme in Australia, as this depends on funds.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: There is none now.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is right. Two years with the Fraser Government and four years with the Court Government and there is none now, as Mr Tozer says.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Will honourable members cease their interjections?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not want to dwell on this, but if we refer to the publication titled *Oil and Australia 1976*—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The honourable member is after the Shadow Ministry for Mines and Industrial Development.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We can disregard that remark. I shall quote figures from that document which indicate that in 1969 there were 274 on-shore wells and 49 off-shore wells. I indicate that these figures include Papua-New Guinea. In 1970 that figure dropped to 154 on-shore wells and 63 off-shore wells. What happened in that year? We can see the dramatic turnaround from 274 to 154. Again, with a Liberal Federal Government in power, the figures for 1971 showed there were 61 on-shore wells. So the figures dropped from 274 in 1969 to 61 in 1971. What happened under this much vaunted private enterprise Government to cause that sort of turnaround? It was not Mr Whitlam's fault; this was 1971.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: On-shore wells cost a couple of million; off-shore wells in Western Australia cost scores of millions.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: For the benefit of Mr Tozer who perhaps might not have heard me, as he sits behind me, I said that in 1969—

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Are we talking about Australia or Western Australia?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am talking about Australia and Papua-New Guinea.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: That is very interesting for us.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: What happened in Uganda?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We can disregard Papua-New Guinea and consider only Australia. The honourable member is complaining about the influence of the Whitlam Government and how disastrous it was. I was giving these figures to illustrate just how disastrous Liberal Governments have been. Apparently Mr Tozer does not want to understand or to be presented with the figures.

In 1969 there were 274 on-shore wells; in 1971 there were 61 on-shore wells which is a drop of approximately 210. What a tremendous turnaround; what has happened to this marvellous private enterprise Government? Are the explorers losing confidence because of the Government's policies?

When we consider the period of the Whitlam Government it is not surprising that the figures had dropped a little—I will not say there were no consequences at all—but the dramatic turnaround had occurred well before the Whitlam Government came to power. If we consider what happened elsewhere we find that 274 on-shore wells is not a magnificent figure when compared with the figures of North America and Canada. The figures in this area are colossal. There is no differentiation made between off-shore and on-shore wells in the figures I have obtained from the Parliamentary Library.

I think the research facilities require some improvement. The figure in 1970 was 31 228 and the latest figures I have available—those for 1976—reveal that the number in that year was 46 181 which is a tremendous increase of some 14 000 to 15 000 in the number of wells in that period.

There is a variation up and down in the other countries. No matter whether there be a socialist, communist, or private enterprise Government in office, there is a great deal more activity in those countries than there is within Australia.

I contend that the real problem we face in Australia is the fact that we have Liberal conservative Governments and their business friends. For many years business management in Australia has been criticised, particularly the lack of expertise and management skills.

Before I conclude I would like to deal with the speech made by Mr Oliver who demonstrated a lack of understanding of what goes on in the world. We do not seem to be able to make any impression on him and improve his lack of understanding no matter how often quietly and earnestly we try to give him some appreciation of wider things than simply the ability of turning \$1

into \$1.10. The 10 per cent profit seems to be the beginning and end of everything for him.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was giving him credit for not being a gross profiteer. I am sure he would prefer to turn \$1 into \$2.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Who wouldn't?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: During his speech Mr Oliver made a slighting reference to Mr Whitlam. In his speech he seemed to be confused about what was paramount, because he suggested a couple of items were of paramount importance. He did not seem to be able to make up his mind on the subject. On page 299 of *Hansard*, on the 22nd March, Mr Oliver said—

We know what happened on Mr Whitlam's visits overseas; he wandered around the Greek islands. I do not know what the attraction is there. Some people tell me it is nice looking at these old ruins, but Mr Whitlam looked at them while his own country was in ruins.

Mr Oliver demonstrated his lack of appreciation of the value of old ruins. If Australia had a fraction of the tourists who visited Greece just to view the old ruins, our economy would be enjoying a much greater fillip than it is now. Let us look at the publication *Overseas Trading*.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We might, in fact, ask for the cost of the various visits made by Mr Court and his Ministers—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Sir Charles Court.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Sir Charles Court and his Ministers, and then try to work out what cost benefit there has been in return in respect of those jaunts.

Several members interjected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not wish to be unkind. I am sure he is being very earnest in his visits, but is being misdirected.

On page 132 of *Overseas Trading* of the 3rd March, 1978, which Mr Oliver may care to read is an article headed, "Greece revives as a trading nation". Amongst other things the article states that Greece has gained some standing since its return to a democratic country rather than the situation which prevailed when a military junta ruled there until recently.

The Government there has set about regenerating activity in the country. Although that is a Government which I am sure Mr Oliver would say was leaning towards the left, it is doing

its best to encourage people who would be termed private enterprise people.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: How do you make that observation?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: On the basis of the sort of comments Mr Oliver makes in the House. Anyone who is not of Mr Oliver's political persuasion and tends more to the Labor side would be classed by him as being on the left.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Socialists are left aren't they?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The article sets out in detail the sort of spending programme the Government is undertaking. Large sums are going into public works and to providing opportunities for businessmen all over the world—Australia included—if they like to get off their tails and do something about it.

Among the other things revealed is that far from being a place in which to view ruins, Greece has in recent years become short of seafood, and an active local company, headed by Mr Michael Kailis, has begun to export Western Australian rock lobster to that country. I would congratulate Mr Kailis on his enterprise. He has not sat at home and waited for markets to come to him. He and his colleagues have gone out to an area which historically has been a source of seafoods.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I myself was involved in such an enterprise 12 years ago.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The honourable member seems to have forgotten all about it, because there was no indication in his remarks that he had any idea of what was currently occurring in that country.

Members of the Labor Party are very much aware of the necessity to have a good economic system, as this is needed to support welfare programmes and the extension of facilities to cater for all the needs of the public, and not those of a select few.

We are well aware of events which occurred not only in Australia, but also in the world at large, and I would hope that Government members would change their narrow viewpoint of the world and their rather inhibiting political ideology. Perhaps when that happens Australia may start to advance and we may have a chance to get rid of the divisions and policies of confrontation, currently the hallmark particularly of the Court Liberal Government in Western Australia.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [8.25 p.m.]: During the course of the debate all those members who wanted to speak have done so on a wide variety of

subjects and I think you, Sir, would agree that this is a welcome opportunity members have to make the points they have in mind.

Firstly, I would like to comment on one or two matters Mr Cloughton mentioned and, in particular, I would like to refer to what he said about the lack of management expertise in Australia.

We are a comparatively small population—13 million or so—and I know it is fashionable to knock our own nation here, but let me point out just a few items in which this country sets the hallmark for the world in management.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is not fashionable to knock our country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I suggest the Leader of the Opposition should speak to Mr Cloughton.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have not heard him knock this country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Dans is his leader and is a man of undoubted ability.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: Knocking your party and the Government is not knocking Australia.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Cloughton said that we were noted for a lack of expertise and management.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: That is right.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: For a start we have one of the most efficient steel companies in the world and, even with Mr Cooley in the House, I will mention BHP.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The most efficient.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: This country started the portable concrete industry. It was started by Readymix right here in Perth and it is a world-wide company. We also have Hills Hoists Pty. Ltd., Nuggets shoe polish, Nicholas Aspro, and Pantyhose, which has a most fascinating story. It is the only product which has consistently come down—in price—over the last 10 years!

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: One swallow does not make a summer.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: With regard to our rock lobster industry we are without peer anywhere in the world, as is the case with our fine wool production. All these items require management of an extraordinarily efficient nature and some of these industries started here and still exist in this State. Therefore no-one can say we are short of management expertise in this State.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Since we have run up

against closed markets, we do not know where to go.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: When the Leader of the Opposition makes such a wrong sweeping statement as that, we are right in assuming he is wrong in everything else he says, too.

I point out that this country is not short of management expertise and I wanted to highlight that point, because of something Mr Cloughton said about confrontation to which I will refer later on.

It has been pleasing to note the way in which this motion has been supported in the Chamber and the variety of speeches which followed the motion moved so ably by the Hon. Win Piesse and for which I thank her.

Everyone who wanted to has taken the opportunity to associate himself with the formal expression of loyalty to Her Majesty, the Queen, as I do, and the appreciation extended to His Excellency for the Speech he delivered to this Parliament.

I was grateful to Mr Hetherington and I will refer to him before I get onto another speech with which I wish to deal. I appreciate his speeches, because I learn a little more each time he speaks. However, I point out to him that he makes a mistake which is commonplace amongst people. He has said he sets great store by what happens in other countries.

The other day I saw a letter to an editor and I considered it was the epitome of impertinence. Someone on holiday here from the United Kingdom had written to the paper saying what terrible drivers we were. That was not so bad. With one or two exceptions I am too modest to mention, there are a number of bad drivers in this country. Nevertheless, the writer of the letter said that we did not even know the road rules; that we did all sorts of things. He also said that we went down lanes on the wrong side of traffic. For his and Mr Hetherington's information, we happen to have slightly different laws in this country. We also have slightly different rules.

Mr Hetherington went on to tell us at some length that the Monarch summoned Parliament—talking about Westminster—and he would tell the Parliament why he had summoned it and what he wanted it to do. I was taught that in school but it was so long ago I had forgotten it. He went on to say the Monarch acted on the advice of people, and he told us how the speech was given.

That is all very well for the United Kingdom but I remind Mr Hetherington that we happen to

be living in Australia. A number of things might go on in the mother of Parliaments which we no longer follow. Indeed, Sir, I am quite certain your father and mother had habits which you do not have; it is a different time and age, and you are a different person. Similarly, we do not follow the United Kingdom.

We had a classic example recently in this State when there was an argument about the action of a Presiding Officer in one of the eminent Chambers in this State. In my opinion, he followed what he believed to be the practice in the United Kingdom, which is not the practice here. You, Sir, are a political animal and you have no option to be anything else. In the party to which you belong you face endorsement once every six years; then you face an election. So of necessity you keep in touch with those matters—

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I thought you were congratulating him on his impartiality.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I do. Surely it is all the more credit to our President—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is a good case for never sending anyone else to Westminster.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: We should, but we should ensure they are told the facts of life. Let me come back to what Mr Hetherington said about what the representative of the Monarch says in this Chamber. Mr Hetherington was quite wrong about what should be done in this Chamber. He has spent a great deal of time learning and lecturing about what is done in the United Kingdom, but I suggest he spend a little more time learning what we do, instead of trying to tell us what we ought to do. We have long since passed that stage.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Our system emanated from the United Kingdom; so what are you complaining about?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: My forebears emanated from Scotland and when they landed in this country they spoke Gaelic. The only Gaelic I know is, "Ich mach ich m'shalloch", and I do not know what it means. Should I still be speaking Gaelic? If Miss Elliott's remark is valid, I should be.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We should never send anyone to Westminster.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am starting to believe that myself. We are 150 years removed from the United Kingdom's traditions, and in that time the practices in the United Kingdom have changed.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You are advocating we break away.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: We broke away from Westminster a long time ago. This is no longer a colony.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I am afraid Sir John Kerr destroyed that myth.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Sir John Kerr destroyed absolutely nothing. Sir John Kerr underlined a number of things, and the people of course endorsed what he did. Let us not get sidetracked into that matter.

I want to point out to Mr Hetherington that we ought not go overboard about what used to be done in the reign of the Stuarts in the United Kingdom. Let us concentrate on what we do in Western Australia today.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Special Branch will have a file on you if you keep talking like that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: There are three files on me and it does not worry me a bit, because they all say nice things.

Last year I intimated that I did not intend to follow the custom of answering all the points that had been raised. Nevertheless, this morning I sent a number of letters and some material to other departments, and I hope they will be acknowledged. In the main, I think that is what members wanted, and the few remarks which called for answers were answered. That practice will be followed again this year.

I do not intend to answer a great number of points. Nevertheless, I think one speech deserves some comment in passing; that is, the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to unemployment, in which he also included inflation, which is a world-wide complaint at the present time.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: But it was only an Australian complaint when the Whitlam Government was in office.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The Leader of the Opposition made accusations that the Government was ignoring these problems. That is simply not true. Unemployment is an overriding problem which is obsessing all of us at the present time. The Hon. Grace Vaughan said this State seemed to be losing jobs more rapidly than other States were. Such statements are uninformed and seem to me to be designed to undermine the Government's efforts to stimulate the economy and create employment opportunities in the long term.

I want to speak about this attitude of almost total confrontation which seems to be prevalent today. I want to say a few words about that in a philosophic vein. No clear-thinking person who

goes so far as to read the newspapers would consider the present unsatisfactory employment level, either in this State or elsewhere in the country, to be anything but a problem.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What would be a satisfactory employment level? You said there was an unsatisfactory one; so there must be a satisfactory one.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I will come to that in a moment. It would not be a bad idea to discuss what seems to be a reasonable remark of the Leader of the Opposition, until he gets up to speak, when everything we do is wrong and nothing we do is right.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are quite wrong in saying that. Mr Ellicott made a statement yesterday.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I wish the tone the Leader of the Opposition is employing now—the spirit of co-operation in an endeavour to resolve the problems—could be carried into reality, instead of the continual confrontation. We heard Mr Claughton say, "There is no managerial ability in Australia."

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He did not say that. He said "expertise".

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: I said there was a sad lack.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Let me point out the obvious sincerity of the Leader of the Opposition. When he first came into this House in 1972, in speaking about the problems associated with strikes, inflation, the state of the economy, and the role of trade unions, he said on page 5 of *Hansard* for that year—

There is never a shortage of people from any walk of life who are ready to supply us with the supposed answers and cures for these vital problems which are the concern of all Australians.

In most cases these well-meaning people are not competent to discuss the subjects, let alone supply us with the answers, and they only add to the confusion and distrust with the resultant widening of divisions in our society.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have never changed my mind since I have been here.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: He went on to say—

That is a situation which we, as proud Australians, should strive to avoid at all costs.

Who could disagree with that?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you disagree with it today?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: No. None of us has ever disagreed with it. You, Mr President, above all, with your history, would agree with that. But we have this problem of total confrontation all the time. When one reads that speech, one sees it is a very reasonable statement; yet we have this attitude of confrontation all the time.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You should talk to Mr Grayden if you are worried about confrontation.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Grayden is not in this House.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: He is in your party.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Why cannot an example originate in this place? Must we give to people of this State an impression that this is a place where the confusion and distrust are generated? Why cannot that germ of total co-operation originate here?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I suggested that in my last speech. Put up a plan to reduce unemployment.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: And the Leader of the Opposition would knock it down, on recent experience.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said we would support you, but you have not done it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Members of the Opposition talk, talk, talk. The Leader of the Opposition himself said—

Western Australia, if not having the highest unemployment in Australia, has the second highest.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What year was that?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: This year.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was true.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I do not want to whitewash what is obviously a very dark situation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Was that true or false?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It was false.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not know what the penalty is for telling fibs in Parliament.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: People in this State deserve some encouragement that brighter prospects are beginning to emerge. They should also be told the correct position in regard to employment in this State. In other words, the statistics ought to be more carefully examined and interpreted.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Ellicott told the

truth yesterday when he said there will never be enough jobs in this country.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: He did not tell the truth. He described the situation as he saw it. I would argue with Mr Ellicott.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Remember what you are saying three years from now.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I will remember very clearly what I say, because it is possible to create occupations.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And if you can do that you will have my full support.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Bear in mind I said "occupations", not "jobs".

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Paid or otherwise?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I suppose since we got beyond bare subsistence living we have been looking for the situation where we can in fact produce the requirements of man without everyone having to slave. We have reached that stage, so there must be a solution to the incidental problems about which Mr Ellicott spoke, as reported in this morning's Press.

At the time the Leader of the Opposition addressed this House last month, Western Australia clearly, on the statistics of either the Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Commonwealth Employment Service, was the second best State in terms of employment. Only Victoria had a lower percentage of the working population unemployed.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: On the day I addressed this House. There have been some changes since. My information came from exactly the same source as yours, and it is correct.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is a matter whether one interprets it with the attitude of knocking or of building up hope. Western Australia's record for increasing its employment capacity to provide jobs for its population is second to none in Australia. Population, labour force, and industrial growth rate figures support this.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What I said in my speech was correct, and I challenge you to prove it was not.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Members are aware that since then the unemployment figures recently released showed further employment for this State. Both Western Australia and Queensland continued to attract large numbers of interstate immigrants, particularly from New South Wales and Victoria.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Interstate immigrants?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Well, visitors. Computed statistics on interstate inflows reveal this State currently is drawing the same number of immigrants or visitors from other States as it did during the construction era of the late 1960s. During the year 1976, an estimated interstate net immigration of 8 920 persons occurred. It is a measure of the underlying strength of the Western Australian economy that such numbers can be assimilated into the work force without causing the rate of increase of unemployment in this State to greatly exceed that of other States.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: How many people left the State?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: What are you quoting from?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have told members opposite that we had a net immigration of 8 920 persons.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Where did that information come from?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am quoting from a statement prepared for me on the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition; it has been checked and double-checked.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: By whom?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It was supplied to me. Some months ago, I attended a conference at the Gold Coast, and we were entertained by Sir Bruce Small who, at that time, was a member of Parliament for the area and the Mayor of Surfer's Paradise.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: At that time, something like my speech, he was very popular; he is not so popular now.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr President, Sir Bruce Small is really a remarkable character. He hopped up on a table and made a little speech, and I will never forget it, because I thought it was amazing. He said, "Do you know, the Gold Coast is the most popular place in Australia? Do you know there are more unemployed in this strip of Australia than anywhere else in Australia? It is the best place in Australia to live, and the best place to be unemployed; so all the unemployed come here." This is a different attitude. It is the difference between the optimism I like to exude and the depression Mr Dans likes to exude.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I must confess you are really changing from the traditional Address-in-Reply speech. You have spoken about Pantyhose, the Gold Coast, and Sir Bruce Small.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: As everybody except Mr Dans knows, the place to go in

Australia if one wants to work is Western Australia, and they are coming.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: And not getting work.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: They are not doing badly. Let me talk about the rate of decline in unemployment overall in Australia between February-March. In fact, it was a very disappointing 4.9 per cent compared with 5.8 per cent for the period last year. However, in Western Australia the rate of decline was 6.2 per cent, compared with 5.24 per cent for the same period last year. Again, these are fairly good figures. Only Queensland had a greater reduction in the percentage of unemployed.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: The figures for March were not so good.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: But these figures are good, are they not?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I am not conceding they are good.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am losing track; you are going onto so many other things that I cannot keep up with you.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Might I suggest to Mr Dans that my speech is quite well presented, and if the honourable member obtains a copy either tomorrow or the next day, he will be able to follow it through. I realise it is very difficult to understand figures like this.

Queensland's rate of decline in unemployment was 8.28 per cent, while the corresponding figure for the same period last year was 7.31 per cent. Western Australia's percentage of unemployed fell from 6.69 per cent to 5.94 per cent of the work force. The next best was Tasmania, with a fall from 7.33 per cent to 6.73 per cent. In terms of a percentage reduction, Western Australia had the best result of all mainland States.

According to Commonwealth Employment Service statistics unemployment in Western Australia reduced by 6.2 per cent, New South Wales by 5.4 per cent, Victoria by 5.1 per cent, and Tasmania by 6.4 per cent. Those are factual figures. I think we all should be talking in terms of hope, confidence, and expectation of better things.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You did not give the Tonkin Government that privilege.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: We gave them all sorts of help.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No matter how hard you try, you will not be able to talk the economy up.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is where Mr Dans makes a mistake. While we may not be

able to talk an economy up, we can in fact talk the economy down. That is what members opposite are trying to do; they are attempting to talk the economy down by destroying confidence. Mr President, you would be well aware of this. I have seen candidates, whether they be Labor or Liberal, go out into tough areas and come back very depressed, having lost all their confidence. Therefore, it is possible to talk an economy down, quite contrary to what Mr Dans would have us believe.

The Government is not ignoring the unemployment situation, and there has been a significant decrease in the rate of unemployment of school leavers and junior workers; there are a number of schemes which have been undertaken. There is no need for me to enumerate them all; everybody should know what they are.

The Government has made provision to increase the pre-apprenticeship intake to 520, which represents almost a 30 per cent increase on the previous year. Approximately 4 000 apprenticeships are expected to be offered this year. The Government has taken advantage of the National Employment and Training Scheme. There has been a State Public Service special intake this year of 500 young people.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: And there are still 12 000 people under 21 who are unemployed.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is all the Opposition can talk about. Members opposite keep putting forward these depressing figures, but they do not talk about the steps the Government is taking to overcome unemployment, and the jobs it has created and which I have just enumerated. They still come back to their wailing wall.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: What you have done is infinitesimal.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Unemployment continues to get worse.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: And as long as people like Mr McKenzie howl and cry, it will continue to get worse.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He is not wailing. You put up a concrete plan for employment and we will listen. Actually get the North-West Shelf under way and increase iron ore production, and I will support you.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr President, my memory goes back to when we were talking about iron ore. I can remember a fellow who used to sit in the centre of the bench Mr Dans now occupies saying, "Pie in the sky, it will never happen." I can remember a fellow down the other end promising to push a peanut with his nose

along Hay Street if the iron ore development ever got off the ground. They said it could not be done, but we did it. The same attitude exists with regard to the North-West Shelf development.

I will stop enumerating the jobs this Government has created, and turn to the North-West Shelf gas development. Mr Dans said we should stop talking and get something going. We have already committed expenditure of \$50 million in the North-West Shelf area on the feasibility programme, and workers are being sought and employed.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The Government has not committed that money.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It has encouraged its commitment. Indeed, if it had not been for Government action it would not have been committed.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not muck a good story up; stick to the truth.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is the truth. Mr Dans said the Government should stop talking about the North-West Shelf project. What does he want us to do? In the North-West Shelf project we have the biggest single project ever contemplated in Western Australia. It is many times the Ord River project, which was one of the biggest single engineering jobs ever undertaken in this State.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If I were you, I would not talk about the Ord River tonight.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is planned to commence in 1979 and will involve the employment of some 4 000 or 5 000 people at peak capacity; yet Mr Dans says we should not talk about it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said you should not talk about the Ord River.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Dans says things he does not mean. He said we should not talk about the North-West Shelf project; we must talk about—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said you should not talk about the Ord River project.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Dans said that later.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: No, I did not. I said, "Let us talk about the North-West Shelf."

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Let us have another look at Mr Dans' scepticism about the Government's plans to provide an additional 100 000 jobs by 1984. He should not tell me he is not being sceptical about that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I said it was 137 000 jobs; you have gone back.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: But Mr Dans was very sceptical.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Of course I am; you have not produced anything.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Members opposite are supposed to be the great democratic socialists, experts in planned economies.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Your Premier made a statement that inflation could be cured State by State and about creating 100 000 jobs. You are the Government.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Dans was very sceptical about this. He pooh-poohed the Premier's statement. To achieve the figure of 100 000 additional jobs, 14 300 jobs need to be created annually. I wish to quote figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the period between December, 1974, to December, 1977. Bearing in mind that economic activity and major investment during that three-year period had been restrained by necessary anti-inflationary policies, such as Government expenditure cuts and high interest rates, and the effects of the world recession, employment in this State grew annually by 11 400 jobs. In fact, the annual growth in jobs of 14 300 to achieve our target by 1984 was almost achieved in the 1974-77 period. So, those figures will be met, despite Mr Dans' scepticism; on present indications they will be met.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: If that rate is continued, it will take at least seven years before 100 000 jobs are created.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr President, I felt I should answer some of the greater absurdities in Mr Dans' speech, which he made to sound so reasonable. This is what worries me about it: That confrontation is even starting to sound reasonable. We have to guard against this; we must accept that what is said by Mr Dans is not always ridiculous, and we must listen to him. We must talk more and listen more, because the attitude that seems to be generated nowadays of confrontation is not doing us any good.

I must admit there was one other thing that Mr Dans said that was quite true. He said there was now a third force in politics, and that it was the unions. He is wrong, of course; it is the Labor Party. The two forces in politics today are the Government and the unions, and unfortunately the unions have left the ALP and the ALP must try to win them back. I think that is perhaps why we are getting such a great degree of confrontation.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Your speech writer may be good but he is not a very good reader, whoever he is.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It might not be happening all over, but it is happening in the Pilbara.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is happening all over. It has happened in Australia since the Second World War.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Dans talks about my speech writer. If he studies my speech notes and finds anything about that last comment I will give him \$1 000.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Any competent person knows of the change in Australian society since the war.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr President, Mr Dans' speech contained a great number of other statements I should contradict, but at the end of a long and rather friendly debate on the Address-in-Reply motion, I think I should not test everybody's endurance to any greater extent than I have already.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You might not be very accurate, but you are very entertaining.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The fact remains we must continually bear in mind that it is by hope we live and by hope we will prosper, and these pessimistic attitudes expressed by members opposite about the economic situation do none of us any good.

When we analyse the figures carefully we will be sure to find that we have coped not just with the very difficult economic situation but also with the very marked increase in our population. Indeed, it is a very exciting State in which to live and on that note I want to move on to an area of total, uniform, and unanimous co-operation, I am sure, and speak for a few minutes about Western Australia's birthday party next year on the occasion of the State's 150th anniversary.

These celebrations are now gathering momentum and we need to adopt an optimistic and happy attitude towards them. This is our birthday party; a party for everyone in the State to enjoy. I am hopeful members will be able to spread these words to the four corners of the State and so ensure that everyone feels he is part of the celebrations and contributes to them.

Planning for Western Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations is now gathering momentum. With just nine months to go before the spectacular opening ceremony, programme material is being slotted together and a clearer

picture of next year's schedule of events is beginning to emerge.

Most of the main committees involved in the celebrations planning have already submitted their programme segments, and draft schedules are beginning to come in from local authorities or their celebrations committees throughout the State.

An interim programme of events which was printed last month is now being distributed throughout Australia and overseas. I understand that all members received a copy of that. If they did not I will make sure they receive a copy. The interim programme is intended as a broad outline of some of the major events rather than as a detailed calendar for 1979. Work is already underway on a more comprehensive programme which will be available towards the end of this year, and thought has been given to the printing of progressive programme sheets, each covering a three-month period of the celebrations. The first of these is likely to be produced in August-September.

I did ask a number of members if they would assist me and act as guest speakers. I am currently endeavouring to compile a list of people who require guest speakers in the last six or seven months of this year and I will be calling on those people later on.

The list of events, lengthening every day, is one of variety and imagination, with considerable emphasis on the historical significance of the celebrations. Among the ideas currently being developed in the historical and commemorative category is a plan to invite a descendant of Captain James Stirling to visit Western Australia next year as an official guest.

Well over 100 State, national and international conferences have been listed to take place in Western Australia during 1979, and in the field of sport a very full programme of international and national events is taking shape. An aquatic subcommittee is currently working out details of an impressive carnival on the Swan which will involve all water sports popular in Western Australia.

The work of the women's committee is well advanced, and one of the committee's latest undertakings is the production of a catalogue of all the arts and crafts groups working throughout the State to let the public know when and where exhibitions are taking place.

Efforts to promote "WAY '79" in the Eastern States and overseas are now being stepped up. In this regard, help has been offered by the WA Department of Tourism, which is now working in

close co-operation with the celebrations committee. The new Agent-General for Western Australia in London, Mr Slade, has also been briefed by the "WAY '79" director, Air Commodore Dallywater.

Still in the area of promotion, the television stations are producing programme segments on different aspects of the celebrations, and a schedule of paid newspaper advertising is already underway. I would like to enlarge on the fact that the media—television stations, radio stations, and newspapers—are co-operating to the fullest in a wide variety of ways and we are very grateful to them.

A detailed timetable of paid advertising on television and in some of Australia's biggest selling magazines has been prepared and this part of the promotional programme will be operational soon.

Work on one of the special projects associated with "WAY '79", the minting of a series of commemorative medallions, is now nearing completion.

As planning for "WAY '79" progresses, public interest in the celebrations is mounting. The central office is dealing with a constant flow of inquiries from people keen to take part and a big effort is being made to encourage participation from all quarters. Particular emphasis is being given to inviting country communities and individuals to take part, and a similar effort is being made to involve the State's ethnic groups. Interest from within the business sector is growing, but a great deal more scope still exists in this area.

In a thousand and one ways from one end of the State to the other the whole programme is growing and coming together in a most satisfactory manner. I sincerely hope members will render assistance whenever they can and take back to their respective areas all the information we can give them. If they want to know any details from time to time they need only ask for them. Mr President, I support the motion.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-Reply thus adopted.

Presentation to Governor

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [9.06 p.m.]: I move—

That the Address-in-Reply be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President and such members as may desire to accompany him.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.07 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HOSPITAL

Royal Perth

90. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health:

What measures, if any, are being taken to reduce the excessive waiting time for patients in the casualty section at Royal Perth Hospital?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The waiting time in the accident and emergency departments at Royal Perth Hospital is not excessive for major units of this kind. The department is fully operational at all times of the day and night, and deals with well over 50 000 emergencies a year. The number of people arriving at any point in time and the severity of their problems fluctuate widely and unpredictably. In such circumstances, waiting times are bound to fluctuate and become extended at times of maximum pressure, particularly for non-urgent cases.

The hospital does review the working of the department from time to time to improve its medical efficiency and to reduce social inconvenience. A major study is currently in progress.

ROADS

Chapman-Spencer Roads Link

93. The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN, to the Minister for Transport:

Regarding a proposal made to the Main Roads Board by the Town of Canning that the Board construct or assist in the construction of a road to link Chapman Road, Wilson, with Spencer Road, Gosnells, via a route through regional open space along the Canning River, will the Minister advise whether he—

- (a) has been informed of the proposal;
- (b) if so, has he been informed—
 - (i) of a survey which was done recently in the vicinity of the proposed link; and
 - (ii) of the reason for the survey;
- (c) if "Yes" to (b) what was the cost of the survey;

- (d) if "Yes" to (a) is the proposal part of the South East Corridor Plan;

- (e) if "No" to (d)—

- (i) will the proposal be the subject of a major or a minor amendment to the Metropolitan Region Planning Scheme;

- (ii) if it is declared a minor amendment, will this mean that a major road may come into existence through amendments which do not need to be the subject of Parliamentary debate for approval or disapproval;

- (f) if "Yes" to (a)—

- (i) who initiated the link road proposal;

- (ii) what other alternatives have been considered; and

- (iii) does the Minister intend to ask for an Environmental Impact Study to be done before any consideration is given to a road plan which will traverse the finite and valuable natural heritage of our river side open space?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) Yes. The proposal to construct a road link between Chapman Road, Wilson and Spencer Road, Gosnells was identified as an option to be studied in detail in the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority's "Strategy for the South-east Corridor Interim Report October 1976". The proposal is currently being studied by a group set up by MRPA and consists of representatives of the Main Roads Department, Town Planning Department, Department of Conservation and Environment and the local authorities of South Perth, Canning and Gosnells. The intention of the Study is to produce a report for MRPA covering the need for the link and its impact on the environment, the various alternatives available, as well as such aspects as engineering and economics of the proposal. The Report will take the form of an environmental impact study and

will be the basis for MRPA to determine future action.

- (b) Yes. The survey consisted of a base line and pick-up of information, it is not a survey of a possible road alignment.
- (c) \$2 800.
- (d) Answered by (a).
- (e) (i) and (ii) The MRPA has yet to consider the implications to the Metropolitan Region Scheme of the South-east Corridor Interim Report.
A decision on this would have to be made at the appropriate time.
- (f) (i) I understand that the proposed road link was originally suggested some years ago. More recently the proposal has been considered by many authorities involved in the planning of the South-east Corridor.
- (ii) A number of alternatives will be studied by the group referred to above and will be fully reported on to MRPA.
- (iii) The requirements of an environmental impact study will be covered by the Study Group's report.

EDUCATION

School Sites

94. The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the minimum amount of land required as a site for—
 - (a) a metropolitan primary school;
 - (b) a metropolitan secondary school;
 - (c) a rural primary school; and
 - (d) a rural secondary school?
- (2) What area of land is embraced by the site of—
 - (a) Challis;
 - (b) Westfield Park; and
 - (c) Seaforth;

Primary Schools?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The current standard requirement is:—
 - (a) 4 ha
 - (b) 10 ha
 - (c) 4 ha
 - (d) 10 ha
 but prior to the introduction of preprimary centres the standard requirement for primary schools was approximately 3.6 ha.
- (2) (a) 5.34 ha
(b) 4.05 ha
(c) 3.64 ha.