

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 8 April 1987

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 7 April.

HON. E. J. CHARLTON (Central) [2.32 pm]: Last night during debate on another motion I made reference to a comment in the Governor's Speech with respect to the revenue raised by the agricultural industry. The statement was misleading insofar as it could lead the general public to believe that the industry is not as badly off financially as is currently believed. Although it is correct that the financial contribution made to the State by the industry was the second highest on record, the statement could nevertheless be said to be inaccurate.

Hon. J. M. Brown: There was no inaccuracy.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: There was an inaccuracy. It is too easy to play with figures and make them do the sorts of things individuals want them to do. I am not suggesting that Hon. Jim Brown or anyone else deliberately tried to be misleading. The fact is that anyone reading the statement in isolation could be led to believe that the industry that is crying poverty and is supposed to have a lot of people walking off their properties and selling them at greatly reduced prices is not in so much trouble because in this State it has had its second highest income on record. I was explaining that the reason for that good figure was that the agricultural industry had one of its highest yielding crops on record. That demonstrates to me the dependence of this State on the income that is derived from the agricultural industry.

I have heard it said in this place and elsewhere that the rural industry can no longer sustain the high economic contribution to this nation and State that it has made in the past, and that we must therefore become more involved in the manufacturing industry. I get very cross when I hear those sorts of statements. I totally agree that this nation must become more involved in the manufacturing industry. However, there is no simple way to do that, and it will not happen overnight.

To make this nation competitive in the manufacturing industry we must set up the industry so that it can compete with other nations. That does not mean working 36-hour or 38-hour weeks, and having 17.5 per cent leave loadings and between three and five weeks' paid holiday. I am not critical of those who now receive those benefits because they did not make the decisions which granted them. As I said last night, the people of Australia who made those decisions were the elected members of Parliament and should have known better. The only reason those benefits were granted was for political gain. Anyone who thinks it unfair of me to make these comments should consider that the great mass of people who work are worse off today than they were 10 years ago. If the system is so good, why is it that everyone is not better off today than they were 10 years ago?

It is irresponsible to say that because people now experience a lower standing of living they should be given an extra \$52 a week increase in their pay packets. I cannot understand why the unions, the employees, and all those associated with them do not direct their attention to the Federal Government, the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and associated bodies and tell them that what is needed is not extra pay from the employer, but less taxation. If an employer has to pay higher wages he employs fewer people. Why is it that people on fixed salaries and wages cannot say to the power-brokers and the decision-makers of this nation that they want more take-home pay—that they do not want the employer to pay higher wages because that would not achieve anything in the long run?

Hon. J. M. Brown interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: It is my line, and it is that taken by most thinking people, including some people in the union movement. Hon. Jim Brown should ask those in the work force whom he represents what they want. If they got a \$10 a week increase in their pay, they would take home \$5 of it and give the other \$5 to the Federal Government. The alternative would be to give them \$5 a week to take home by reducing the level of taxation. People could then spend that money the way they wanted to. If Hon. Jim Brown asked people which possibility they wanted, I guarantee that he would find that they would opt for taking home \$5 a week and having a reduced level of taxation.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Is this the Joh line?

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Of course I happen to be stating the Joh-line. It happens to be the best way, whether the member likes it or not, and the sooner that point is put across the better. It is happening in his organisation today. This very day the ALP is talking about changing direction with a whole host of things. Look at what the Government is doing in New South Wales; it is changing the superannuation scheme.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the honourable member not to direct his comments to the members who are interjecting. Indeed, I suggest he ignore them completely if they keep interjecting.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I will try to ignore them, but I always feel it is not right to ignore them totally because they are here. I take your point and your direction, Sir.

Hon. T. G. Butler: We are important.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: It distresses me at this time of economic disaster for this nation that people seem to make decisions based on wrong premises instead of the facts. The reason they promote a certain line is to make the people who support them able to sit there with clear consciences. They are misleading the population of Australia. I have said this before over and over again; I am not pointing the bone at a particular Government, State or Federal. I am referring to all types of Government: National, Liberal, Labor and Democrat—Democrats probably worst of all. One of the senators who represents Western Australia is probably the most irresponsible person we could have. All these people combined have not read the signs and have not been prepared to stand up and do what must be done.

The first thing to be done is to change the financial operations of this nation; change the taxation system. I will keep saying this for as long as I am here. People may disagree with this now, but as sure as God made little apples we will have to change the taxation system because we cannot have a position in Australia where more people receive income from the Government than supply that money. This is the first and basic principle of any economic exercise.

Sooner or later something must be done, unless Australia is to finish up like some other countries in the world, where the economy has totally collapsed and they can borrow no further money around the world and are in a desperate position.

Regarding the second point—that is, social security—this is strictly associated with the taxation system. I can never understand why we have to provide incentives for people not to work, not to be involved, not to be married, not to be in a family, not to look after their own children and so on and so forth. It seems to me that successive Governments quite consciously and responsibly set out in stages initially to help and assist.

Hon. T. G. Butler: You are talking about the old age pension.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I will ignore that interjection because it is not relevant. It is way off line. These people who have been receiving this sort of assistance in the past would not have received it if they had been given an alternative by successive Governments to go into the workplace or into life itself, take their chances and receive an opportunity to earn an income in their own right.

People ask, "What about the farmers who are on the dole; what about the fishermen who are on the dole; what about the shearers who are on the dole; what about household support?" I am as aware of all these things as anybody else in this place. I have helped some people to seek that assistance, and I have helped some people to receive it who would probably never have had it because they did not believe in the principle. They did not make these rules. They have been in the work force doing whatever work they have done during this period. They have contributed towards the income of this nation, so they have more justification than anyone else to seek assistance at this time.

As far as social security is concerned, there must be a major change to the system to provide an incentive for people to be employed. They must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. That must apply right through the system, and is related to a question I asked last year which is brought more to the fore as the months go by.

A minority of juveniles are now virtually encouraged, due to their lifestyle, to go out into society to harass people and cause damage in the district. The court system and everyone associated with it rejects responsibility. They say, "You cannot pay; it is not the responsibility of your parent or guardian; no-one has any money so we will put you on a good behaviour bond." The people who suffer the disadvantage as the result of those actions must whistle in the dark for any reaction to what has taken place.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Give examples.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I am pleased to hear the member say that. I will give him 50 if he likes. He knows, if he has done his homework, the facts concerning interstate buses and trains. Members have heard of juveniles having thrown stones at train drivers' windows and injured the drivers. This has happened in many country towns. The people responsible have been caught but no action has been taken. It is just too bad; the person responsible is a juvenile and under age. No responsibility is taken for the damage done.

Several members interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Members are interjecting, saying that I am taking a narrow view.

Hon. J. M. Brown: I did not say narrow, I said extraordinary.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Well, extraordinary. I would like to remind honourable members that this is not a narrow view, it is the view of the majority of the people of this nation. It just happens that in Australia over the last 15 or 20 years there has been a total upheaval and revolution, and values have changed. Not a shot has been fired or a drop of blood spilt. If any member doubts that, think back to some of the situations we had before. I remind members of the money that has been expended by Federal and State Governments over the years to help all these poor, underprivileged people, with whom I have sympathy, but who are worse off today than they were then. The system which has evolved has not been successful and we are now worse off as a result of it.

Anyone who wants to argue with that is simply blind to the problems of this nation.

Hon. T. G. Butler: You are pretty blind.

Hon. John Halden interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Here is what has caused it. I suppose it is those entrepreneurs, those half-dozen people of this State who are multi-millionaires. Members opposite do not ever talk about small business people, no matter what business they are in, who are the backbone of the economic well-being of this nation and who are finding it increasingly difficult to survive, working more hours than they have ever worked, and having more responsibilities, and paperwork, and input to State and Federal Governments than they have ever had; yet they are worse off. Those people have been the backbone of this nation yet have been persecuted; but no-one worries about them. We worry only

about the Commonwealth system. We see how people can do nothing, make no contribution, yet maintain a standard of living equal to those people who work 60 to 80 hours a week.

Several members interjected.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I am standing up and being counted on the attitude I take. Members opposite can tell everyone in the State and in the nation that that is where I stand.

Hon. John Halden: Mr Charlton, the backbone of this nation are the young people, the very people you are now condemning.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Did I condemn the young people of this nation?

Hon. John Halden: Yes.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Obviously, while members opposite have not been able to understand the economic realities of this nation, the young people whom they are supposed to be representing, lobbying, and looking after have fewer prospects now than they have had in the last 40 or 50 years.

Hon. J. M. Brown: That is arrant nonsense.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Then why are the young people of this nation walking away from the country areas and coming to the city because there is no opportunity any more? Why are they leaving school at the age of 15 instead of completing five years of secondary education? One of the reasons is simply that they can get the dole at 15 and do not have to work.

Hon. T. G. Butler: They cannot get the dole.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Can they not? What do they get, then?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! The rules in this place are very simple and easily understood, and therefore I fail to understand why members keep contravening them. One person at a time is entitled to speak. Hon. E. J. Charlton has the floor. Members do not have to like what he says or agree with him, but while they remain in the Chamber they must listen to him.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: Thank you, Mr President. I cannot understand why members opposite do not agree with me.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Hon. Norman Moore agrees with you.

Hon. N. F. Moore: I do.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I have heard people on talkback radio say the same thing: We must get more incentive and opportunities for young people, and for people of all ages. No matter what his age, every person has a contribution to

make to this nation. People have made that contribution in the past, and the reason Australia has been able to enjoy the standard of living and the opportunity of lifestyle we have had in the past is simply that, 20 years ago and further back into our history, a very large percentage of our population made a contribution to our nation, and were allowed to do so. Members from both sides of this Chamber, their families, and the people they are associated with were involved in one thing or another that complemented the contributions of others in setting a standard and an opportunity for the people and the nation to develop, to such an extent that we have been able for so long to enjoy a high standard of living.

Because that cannot happen any more—because the contribution is less—fewer people are now able to sustain that situation and all these problems associated with the young have been created, as well as those with the not so young. And no-one is in a position to be able to benefit from their input these days. That is a fact. If anyone disagrees with me, obviously he is blind to the realities of life today.

Several things are related to that. Again, I envisage a number of people jumping up and down and talking of the freedom and the opportunity of the individual to exercise his rights, and saying it is not the responsibility of Parliament or anyone else to have direction over other people. However, I refer to the AIDS problem. While I fully agree, like so many other people who have commented on this matter, that I do not have the capacity or information to be an authority on it by any stretch of the imagination, I will make one point about it because, whether we like it or not, it is and will be probably the most talked about and most significant topic, and the most important responsibility, we as a community and as decision makers have in the immediate future.

Last Sunday night the first advertisements were aired on national television, on radio, and right throughout the media. That was a very important step and I compliment the people involved. Last week I, along with my colleagues and other members of Parliament, had the opportunity of receiving an AIDS update from the Health Department of Western Australia and those people directly involved with the programme in this State. I was very pleased to see the responsible attitude they took to towards the problem, and to hear their com-

ments as to what they envisaged doing, and what they would do with regard to advertising the AIDS problem in this State.

I was very pleased to hear them say that, while the initial advertisement was based on a bit of a scare tactic, it was done to make people take heed of what was going on. Too often, too many of us believe things will never happen to us, nor to anybody associated with us, and that they are not our responsibility. I hope that what the Health Department people said to us the other day is fulfilled, in that some basic statistics and some important and relevant facts will be made public to the people of Western Australia in the next few weeks which will substantiate the fear and concern we all should have for this problem facing our community.

If members believe at all in any faith or anything of that nature, they would say that the AIDS problem the world is experiencing probably had to come because—and I make no apology for saying this—our society could not go on as a society the way it was going. There is no responsibility of the individual for his or her actions, to the point where this sort of thing is one major example. It will make people think about what they will do and how they will conduct themselves in the future.

I am not trying to say that I, or anyone else, should be setting the standards and telling people what to do and what not to do, but it gets back to the basic fact that people should be responsible for their own actions. I mean that in relation to this problem, and in relation to the economic factors. People should be responsible for their own actions.

It was absolutely deplorable to see the Western Australian AIDS Council's activities, and advertisements of some of the literature available on the market prior to January this year, and certainly up to December last year. It was absolute and utter filth.

There can be no other description accurate enough to describe the utter filth that was brought out by the council. It did not achieve anything for anyone. I have in my possession, as possibly other members of this place have, copies of the pamphlets and so on that were for sale. They are absolute rubbish, and I believe that it is disgraceful for an organisation such as the Western Australian AIDS Council, which receives both State and Federal Government funding of about \$57 000 a year to pay for its administrator, to provide such material. When people hear a name such as the Western

Australian AIDS Council, they automatically think it is a Government organisation which is fully authorised and so forth.

While the council may do some good things, being involved in this sort of gutter stuff while receiving Government handouts of good, hard money from taxpayers is totally disgraceful and an affront to this nation. As I said at the beginning, it is very important that everything possible is done to alert and to inform people of the problems which are confronting our population, particularly our young people. It is important that they be told the facts, which should not be dressed up and should not be made smutty; nor should other diverse positions be given. People should be told the very important, basic and honest facts of life: That when people behave promiscuously in terms of sexual relationships, they stand the chance of contracting AIDS and possibly passing it on to their children.

AIDS is incurable; that is the simple fact about this disease. I suppose we should be relieved that other infectious killer diseases cannot be contracted as AIDS can; that is, if one does not indulge in those sexual activities which can lead to the contraction of AIDS, it is likely one will not end up with this disease. That is as simple as ABC. As people who are involved in the dissemination of information about this matter tell people, there is no cure for AIDS. Yesterday I heard Professor David Penington say that he does not believe there will ever be a cure; while I do not believe that is accurate, I do believe we should not be looking for a cure in the form of an injection and so on as much as educating people to be responsible for themselves and their activities.

I return now to my remarks about videos. I congratulate Hon. Pam Beggs in respect of what she has done about strippers in hotels. She took decisive and direct action. This is a serious matter, and I believe Hon. Pam Beggs' decision will help to generate more responsibility in terms of Government decision-making in this respect. Recently I went into a video shop with my wife, and on the front row of shelves were videos with a "R"-rating. The rating was there for anyone who looked hard enough; but the point is that it was difficult to detect the ratings on the videos. Another point is that such videos seem to be in the most prominent places in video shops—not all of them, but certainly many. For my bit, I would like to see a bomb put in those video shops which stock "R"-rated videos because I believe they are detrimental to young people. When

young people have access to this type of video without supervision, they may be seriously affected. I am not being critical of these young people because it is natural that certain things take place which encourage them, as a result of viewing these videos, to involve themselves in certain activities which are neither good for the individual nor for the community in general.

I say that in all seriousness because it is important that something be done about this matter. I know probably few people in this place would have anything to do with censorship or with denying people things which they want. However, I bring this matter to the attention of the House and to society in general because I believe that if we are to do anything about the problems confronting our nation, individuals must be encouraged to be more responsible for themselves and not to pay heed to this sort of rubbish.

Hon. S. M. Piantadosi: I agree with you 100 per cent.

Hon. E. J. CHARLTON: I thank Hon. Sam Piantadosi.

Finally I touch on another matter altogether, relating to a problem faced by people involved in the rural industry at harvest time. I have written to all the shires in my electorate in respect of the problems relating to heavy haulage during the carting of this harvest, and past years' harvests.

Under current arrangements and regulations of the Main Roads Department and successive Governments, there has been an increasing number of farmers booked and fined for the overloading of their vehicles. There is no complaint from the point of view that this is the law—and if the law is broken, the farmers have to pay the penalty, unlike all those other people to whom I referred earlier, who, if they break the law, are not penalised. It is very difficult to load grain onto a truck to the exact specified allowable weight which can be loaded. As members can imagine, one must either be a little over the weight allowed or a little under. Overloading may not happen in most cases, but it does happen.

I know this suggestion is not new, but I intend to proceed with it anyway. It has been suggested that, in respect of the various regulations, there should be an allowable increase of 15 per cent in the weight which can be legally carried by a farmer's vehicle from his property to his nearest, or his normal, receiving point.

I am referring to the CBH point to which the farmer carts his grain. That 15 per cent tolerance would be administered by the local authority, and the revenue would go to that authority to be used in whatever manner it decides. This will overcome a great deal of the frustration which is caused in rural areas, particularly at harvest time.

I want to elaborate a little because we are dealing here with a set tonnage of wheat harvested; it is the product of the property, and it will be deposited in the nearest receival bin. It will not cause the damage to roads which some people might think because it is a set tonnage and it is being carted at a time of year when road conditions are well above minimum requirements. The minimum requirement occurs in winter, and therefore it is obvious these tonnages can be carted safely without causing any damage to the roads at that time of year. I am pleased to see that present in the Chamber today are other members who are interested in this point, because it is important that we have the support of the Government for this type of proposition.

What I am proposing does not set out to break the law or change the situation dramatically. It will encourage people to act within the law, and it will create an opportunity for the State's harvest to be taken from the farm to the nearest receival point in an orderly manner and in a way which will remove the need for a police presence. For the benefit of members who do not know what goes on, I point out that heavy haulage police wait on side roads and drive in and out of town at various times of the day to apprehend people carting grain. They put their trucks on the scales and weigh the load, and then those people are taken to court and fined accordingly. It seems odd to me that police should be directed in such a way as to go out with a positive intention of apprehending these people, weighing their trucks, and making them pay up, when in relation to the other activities to which I referred earlier the police do not involve themselves because they believe there is no point. They believe it is no use taking those people to court because the case will be remanded or adjourned, or the person will get off, and there is no sense in pursuing the matter.

I was made aware yesterday of a situation in Northam where much destruction of property and assaults on individuals have taken place. I am not being critical of the police, but they are not in a position to do much about it because

of manpower problems, and they cannot set a standard. That is another topic, and I will not go on with it now.

In the situations to which I was referring the police are involved in maintaining a presence on the roads, but that presence achieves nothing in the way of safety. To my knowledge there has not been an accident of any consequence which could be attributed to the overloading of such vehicles. Action needs to be taken in this area to enable the farmers of this State to deliver their crop for a short period of the year—a month or six weeks—with an overload permit which will enable them to do a job which is so important to this State. Such a system would eliminate one of the problems they face. I urge the Government to take note of the points that I have raised or have been raised by other members of this House.

HON. W. N. STRETCH (Lower Central) [3.15 pm]: I support the Address-in-Reply and on behalf of my electorate thank the Governor and his wife for the superb job they do in that office. As I have said before, they impress people wherever they go in the electorate of Central Province with their friendliness and open manner, and the sincerity with which they listen to people. It is greatly appreciated both by people in my electorate and members of this Chamber, and we wish them well.

Hon. Graham Edwards: It is true of the whole State.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: That is so.

However, there are parts of the Governor's Speech, which was prepared for His Excellency, with which we disagree, but I guess that is the name of the game. I will take this opportunity to raise some of the issues mentioned in the Address-in-Reply debate and others not directly related to it.

I will begin in a conciliatory manner. I was going to attack the Government for its lack of action in the Kukerin district where water shortages were experienced this summer. It has been a very dry year, and people in that area have been trying to get assistance. I was ready to launch a vicious attack, but I am glad to say that at the last hour the Government, and the Minister for Water Resources, Mr Bridge, have graciously made a two-for-one grant and the deepening of the essential stock water dam in the district will go ahead. I thank the Minister on behalf of my electorate. Despite his philosophical aberrations, we have found him to be a very approachable Minister, and in this case

he has done a wonderful thing for the district. I will give credit where it is due; his action is much appreciated by people in that area. It is a recognition by him of the problems which face the area. The other stock dam, Duggan Dam, which I understand could have been called Pandal dam, went dry some time ago and people were forced to cart water a greater distance. The solution is now in hand, and we hope we will get enough rain to fill the Kukerin dam so that people will have enough water to carry them through future summers.

The other problem which I wish to address has been partly dealt with by Hon. Eric Charlton today and in his speech yesterday in reply to another motion, and relates to transport. He referred to some of the anomalies which continue to plague the rural industries of Western Australia. I guess it all comes down to a question of whether we should regulate or deregulate. The difficulty is that some areas are totally deregulated and farmers and carriers are carting what they like and where they like. In other areas next door people are trying to cart shorter distances but cannot do so. These sorts of irregularities must be ironed out of the system. It is incumbent on the Minister to keep these matters under review.

I refer to the problem of supply of fuel to the great southern and my area of Kojonup. I understand the department is looking at this problem now, but it is about two years too late. It is having a serious effect on the price of fuel in the district. We must do anything we can to reduce the cost of fuel to primary producers and rural towns. It is not as though it will cost the Government a lot of money. It is an inefficient and wasteful system when fuel is hauled 50 or 100 kilometres, picked up by road transport, and then carted back in the opposite direction. That is not efficient. More time is spent in double handling than one would spend in going directly to a port and picking up fuel in one's vehicle.

This is the sort of wastage of resources, manpower, roads and railway rolling stock that we must cut out of the system. It is one of those things that will come forward with increasing rapidity because of the proposed review of grain handling by the Royal Commission. We must look at where we can prune unnecessary costs.

The Nannup Shire Council would be a perfect example, because farmers in that area are not permitted to cart bulk superphosphate if they are within 80 miles of Picton. Farmers in the Augusta-Margaret River Shire area, which

is further south than Nannup, have unrestricted transport. The Nannup farmers are subjected to other costs which are not fair or rational. I am sure that when the Minister looks at the total situation and not just at individual districts, he will see my point. I hope he will reach a sensible and fair conclusion.

The two points I have mentioned are the major problems facing my electorate with regard to transport. Deregulation is progressing fairly satisfactorily. I know that deregulation has its problems, but it also has its benefits. Within the last few years we have all experienced problems with deregulation. For example, a 2 000 horsepower diesel electric locomotive pulled a wagon which contained goods that would have fitted into the boot of a normal family car. That sort of inefficiency cannot help the railways. The move to less-than-carload policy for Total West did allow the cartage of smaller goods, but it was unfortunate that it did reflect the real cost of moving smalls. Deregulation is a progressive move, but it must be accommodated in the community. It causes pain and dislocation to some families. However, if it is carried out on a humanitarian basis it is the way in which this State must move to achieve a commonsense transport mode which is absolutely essential for a State of this size. It may well result in more closures and better roads.

The next point I will raise concerns roads because it is a corollary of deregulation. Where there has been an increase in road transport because of deregulation there has been a decline in the standard of road surfaces. This is a great concern to most country shire councils and to the Main Roads Department.

It concerns me that at the same time as the Government deregulated some transport it diverted revenue from the road trust fund to the transport trust fund. I admit that I made a mistake when I agreed, in a roundabout way, to the Government's proposal—I did not support it, but unfortunately I did not oppose it as strongly as I should have. Together with other members of the Opposition I believed the Leader of the House when he assured us that road funding would not suffer in real terms. On that basis we allowed the Bill to pass through this Parliament. It has now become an Act and, as a result, an amount of approximately \$40 million has been lost to road funding. The amount has been transferred to other transport uses with a large percentage of it going to Transperth. It was a serious blow to the Opposition that the Government did not honour the

spirit of the debate that took place in this House. The funding arrangements were changed on a technicality. The Opposition was of the opinion that there would be a slight drain on the funds to assist Transperth and other transport services, but it did not believe that there would be such a huge drain. If the Opposition had known then what it knows now, that Bill would not have been passed.

I hope that the Government will take remedial action because a serious situation has arisen due to the lack of road funding. I compare the situation with that of a person who decides to sell his home and rent a flat, thereby living off his capital. What happens is that as he gets older he finds that there is nothing left of his capital. That is what is occurring with roads. They are a capital asset.

Most people do not realise that in the first 70 per cent of the life of a very well constructed road it will lose only 40 per cent of its "wearability" and there is a slight decrease in the road quality. Over the next 15 per cent of the life of the road it loses another 40 per cent of its "wearability" and there is a rapid decrease in the road quality. For the last 15 per cent of the life of the road it loses 20 per cent of its "wearability" and it becomes potholed and no-one would drive on it because it would cause major wear and tear to motor vehicles.

The maintenance of roads can be waived during the first 40 per cent of their lives, but we cannot get away from it forever because eventually the roads will collapse. The use of the funds collected by the Government from the two per cent petrol tax is immoral.

Criticism has been forthcoming from Westrail that the road and transport industry is not maintaining its "rights of way". What has happened is that the transport trust fund has taken half of the funds collected from the two per cent petrol tax; that is, approximately \$40 million and the road fund is left with \$42 million which is less than the amount it was receiving previously. The argument may be valid, but the action by this Government is totally invalid and immoral. The Government cannot continue to do this sort of thing because it will end up with a run-down road system and an enormous cost will be incurred to upgrade it to a reasonable standard.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Would you have argued if the money had been utilised in the hospital system? Hundreds of accidents are caused by road hazards.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: The area of health funding is a little difficult. Certainly, there is a cost to be picked up, but it can be equally argued that the road trauma is as attributable to bad roads and people running off gravel surfaces and narrow bitumen roads as it is to alcohol and other factors. I would not accept Hon. Fred McKenzie's point. Health care is a cost to the total community. The two per cent petrol tax has been put aside for road funding and it should have been used for roads and the cost associated with hospital care should come from other funding.

We will need more roads and better roads in the future. I am a great supporter of the heavy-gauge bulk rail system of transport. I do realise, however, that there are many other areas in which road transport will be more effective and in such cases the road must have a well-constructed base. The two modes of transport should work side by side and rationalisation of the transport system must take place.

I will not predict what will take place in the next 10 years. I come from an area where there is no rail service and I am dependent on a good road system and good, solid rights of way.

The Government must look at the area of road funding because it includes not only road transport, but also tourism. Tourism is a significant contributor to our State's economy. Tourists are using the road and they are entitled to an efficient road system.

I reiterate and warn of the perils of delaying funding on roads because the funds required will not increase in a direct progression; they will increase in a geometric progression. The longer spending is put off the worse the road gets and the more expensive it becomes to repair.

On the subject of railways, in various areas throughout my electorate large areas of railway land are tied up in farms and country towns. This land is not producing much revenue for Westrail but it is a severe barrier to development of some towns and it is responsible for setbacks in some industries which have been built on railway land no longer required by Westrail but which it cannot relinquish.

I have made several representations on behalf of people to Westrail and the argument put to me is that Westrail cannot sell the land because if it did so, any proceeds received would go to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and would not be available to Westrail. That is a valid argument; if anyone is running an

enterprise and part of the assets may be sold without any money being received, that is a good argument not to sell.

Last night Hon. Max Evans gave an excellent rundown on what he said, tongue-in-cheek, was creative accounting. He gave enough examples last night of the misuse of creative accounting. Surely there is someone in Treasury with enough nous to use some positive creative accounting to work out a way in which Westrail can sell off surplus land for which it has no use, except to gain a small amount of rent, and retain its capital account. In other words, a way for the money to be credited to Westrail which will be sufficient for it to buy replacement land, if needed, in another location. Westrail would relinquish the leasehold on the land but it would catch up on capital and the investment of that capital.

For example the Boyup Brook-Kojonup railway line—the subject of many questions in this House, as Hon. Fred McKenzie will recall—was closed some years ago and Westrail has been removing hardware from that line. It has removed the road traffic signals.

An Opposition member: Mr McKenzie says it will open the line.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: That could be, but I shall be surprised if the line is reopened. Westrail has removed 22 500 sleepers, all the culverts, and the flashing lights. That railway reserve is approximately 150 kilometres long. In many cases it bisects good farming land and operations and the farmers are obliged to fence land on both sides of that reserve. I quote the example of Mr Jury of Kojonup who has been told that he is not allowed to move his stock across that railway reserve. His alternative is to drive miles down the track to a road crossing and then drive miles back the other way to put the stock in his paddock.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Who told him that?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Westrail properties department and the shire. It is an absurd situation and the shire has been trying to remedy it for some time.

Along that same railway line is the very fine town of Kojonup, and my corner shop which is 35 miles from my home. The old railway line cuts through the heart of that town. It used to service the railway station which has now been leased and put to fine use as a recreation centre. The line also used to service the CBH installation to take the grain away at harvest time. The tracks have been bituminised over and this useless and unused railway line is

now bisecting a fine country town. Recently an enlightened and progressive sportsground development group in Kojonup tried to get this land from Westrail to extend the playing fields and to put in sports fields. They were told the land was not available because it might be needed for railway lines in the future. Remember the culverts, sleepers, and heavy rail have been removed and the track has been bituminised over in places. In reality if that line were to be reopened a heavy gauge line would be put down instead of a light gauge line, it would be routed away from the town and a modern station would be built with plenty of room around it. The answer given is nonsense.

The real reason for Westrail's objection to selling the land is that it would not receive the proceeds from the sale. I understand its problem and I ask members opposite to talk to their Ministers and tell them that what is happening in Kojonup and other towns is crazy and the Government should do something about it.

Another argument put forward was that there may be some future mineral development. In modern parlance if a mineral development needed a rail service the Government would make sure that the mining company put in an infrastructure to service its needs, or at least provide the service on a contributing basis. In any case such a development would not be interested in a light gauge rail, so there is no validity in that argument.

In Wagin there is a grain operation known as Grainfeeds Pty Ltd which takes grain from the farmers, fortifies it with added proteins and minerals and turns it into stock food. The manager, Mr Rowe, has been fighting a battle with the Government for four years trying to buy the land on which his operation is established. He built on that land because it had rail-head access and as time has gone by and the demand for his product has increased, he wants to expand his business. He has been wanting to invest \$300 000 in this small, highly successful, competitive and efficient operation. The business is highly prized by the community for the employment opportunities it provides and by the surrounding farmers for its product.

Mr Rowe leases the land from Westrail and for the last three or four years he has been trying to buy it. He has come up against the same argument; Westrail cannot sell it because it may need it and it is thinking of putting a heavy gauge track through that land. A year down the track or further along the line—the

puns flow on! Westrail built a heavier track but it was not adjacent to Mr Rowe's premises, but hundreds of metres further east.

Westrail's argument was totally valid, it cannot divest itself of that land because it would lose the proceeds of the sale and it would be another debit against Westrail. At the end of the year people would say that Westrail had made further losses if it lost the lease money and that land. But, surely there is some way to solve this problem so that Westrail can receive the proceeds from the sale of this land and Mr Rowe can be allowed to make this investment enabling his business to go ahead. Overall everyone would be better off. Let us use some positive creative accounting and get this under way. There really is a need for a change of policy and I implore the Government to look at it very quickly. I can assure members that when the Liberal Party returns to Government shortly I will initiate such a change. We need a change of heart to turn this land, which is not returning much income, into an asset for community use.

Another piece of good news given by the Minister for Budget Management was that Cabinet had changed its mind on the swimming pool grants to local authorities. As the Minister frankly set out in his letter, since the \$3 000 was granted to shires about 1976, its value had depreciated so much that it was virtually insignificant. However, rather than saying Cabinet appreciated the role these pools play in community activities, he said there would be no grant; it would be scrubbed altogether.

There was such an uproar from local government throughout my electorate, and I gather throughout other areas as well, that Cabinet has reconsidered and is now going to grant assistance on a needs basis. The only question about the needs basis criterion is who establishes the need and on what is it going to be judged. I urge Cabinet when it makes those decisions to look at the geographic location of some of these swimming pools, and to ensure that the dry, hot areas of the wheatbelt receive special consideration. I am not suggesting we take these pool grants away from other towns at all, but Cabinet must make sure that these subsidies are given to those shires. I prefer to call them grants rather than subsidies. They are straight-out figures which were established by the Brand Government in recognition of the difficulties of keeping young people in country towns.

I believe that is a very worthy objective and one which the Government should continue with now. These grants should be increased to keep up with the rate of inflation. They should be indexed if possible. Because of the problems country towns are having now in keeping young people and trying to create an attractive environment for their work force, pools are important and the Government should pay due recognition and ensure that the areas of the greatest geographic need receive grants as soon as possible. The shires are going through their figures now, and would appreciate a very rapid decision on what those guidelines are to be. It might only be \$3 000, but for some of the smaller shires in my electorate and further north—and I would say also in Hon. Norman Moore's electorate—a grant of \$3 000 is quite significant.

The changes to the Education Department—the creation of a Ministry of Education—have been generally accepted as a reasonably progressive step in most of my electorate. However, again there is a worry about the question of funding on the basis of needs. We have had a lot of concern expressed to us from Parents and Citizens Associations that the P & Cs which worked hardest and supplied most of the resources for the schools are going to be the ones that are cut back. This would be a most unfair way of allotting funds, and it has in it the inherent dangers that we will have P & Cs dropping back in their efforts in the belief that the Government will take it on on the basis of need. That would be a most unhealthy trend and one that the Minister and Cabinet must be most aware of when they are drawing up their guidelines.

There are genuinely needy areas which will require special assistance, and not all of them are going to be in metropolitan fringe areas; a lot of them are going to be smaller country schools. They have to be listened to, irrespective of their geographic situation, their political whim, or anything else.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I will now focus on the Harris River Dam. I guess everyone in this Chamber, the other Chamber and the Federal Parliament is sick and tired of hearing about this dam. But the quality of the water supply in the great southern has deteriorated greatly over the last 10 to 15 years until in many parts of my electorate and the areas just east of it the water is just about undrinkable; it is approaching

World Health Organisation limits for suitability for human use. The situation has become serious.

All sorts of solutions have been attempted to overcome the increasing salinity of the Wellington Dam, which supplies the water; and while the reforestation projects are going very well, it will be 15 to 20 years before they have any effect on the salinity level, if indeed we see any effect at all.

The engineering solution to the problem has been known for some time, and it is the construction of the Harris River Dam. The dam is to be sited just out of Collie and will tap a very good stream and create a dam which will allow the water supply to be blended so that we have enough fresh water in the presently saline Wellington water to produce a suitable drinking water for the great southern and the areas associated with it. Added to that is the enormous potential the dam would have for the town of Collie for increased employment and a general improvement to the surrounds there, because the Wellington Weir cannot now be used for recreation to any great extent. However, if the Harris River Dam is built and used for supplying water for drinking purposes, it will open large expanses of the Wellington Weir for those sorts of uses. It will not only improve the water supply for the great southern but it will also add greatly to the lifestyle and employment prospects of the people in Collie itself.

The dam is important and that is why its construction has been referred to continually. The Collie Shire has raised the matter with me throughout the four years I have been a member of Parliament. The dam has been a stop-go situation with this Government right from that time. Now at long last we have settled on a site which is suitable to most parties and we have the environmental approval to go ahead and construct the dam.

However, funding is another matter again. We are looking at a figure of around \$30 million, perhaps a little more. Naturally we would need Federal funding to get the project under way. Those members who have studiously observed the question book will have noticed that my colleague Hon. A. A. Lewis has had a question listed for some time. The question is as follows—

(1) Is the Harris River Dam the Government's first priority in the application of Federal funds for water schemes?

(2) When was the Federal Government first approached by the State for finance for the Harris River scheme?

The reply is—

(1) The Harris Dam is the State's first priority for Federal funds for new water projects.

(2) 1985-86.

That might be so for the Government and I suppose technically it is correct, but in fact Hon. Andrew Mensaros, when he was Minister for Water Resources, already had applications with the Federal Government, going back to 1982. I quote from a Press release issued by Mr Mensaros, as follows—

... the South West areas would by now have enjoyed for some time plentiful, good quality water had Labor not been elected to Federal office in 1983.

Mr Mensaros said that before the defeat of the Fraser Government he, as Minister for Water Resources, received firm promises for a large capital sum by the Commonwealth Government for State Water Resources as a bi-centenary contribution.

High on the list amongst the individual projects, to lift the level of our country water supplies, was the Harris River Dam.

The Federal Government had been approached for funding back in those days and tacit approval had been given for those funds as well as recognition that the list of projects—that included the Agaton water scheme—would be suitable for bicentennial funding.

Hon. J. M. Brown: They never asked that Agaton be considered on a priority basis.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I disagree, because Mr Mensaros said, and I quote again from his Press release—

This bi-centenary Commonwealth contribution to improve and exploit our water resources included negotiations on a contributory and long term basis for the Agaton Project.

In 1983 I well remember that the Agaton scheme was given priority by the Premier, Mr O'Connor.

Hon. J. M. Brown: It was never given priority by the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: The bicentennial water funding had been approved by the Fraser Government, and those two priority projects for WA had been accepted as a matter of principle. It was up to the State to allocate the

funds. Mr Mensaros, as the then Minister, would know what he was talking about; he usually does.

We urge the Government to go on and get that funding, which was available. It can be made available again. It is not a large amount of money when looked at side by side with some of the grants given to other less productive, less worthy projects. We keep our fingers crossed, as do the people in Collic and especially the people in the great southern, because the water situation down there, as Hon. John Caldwell will recognise, is very bad. The water quality is so bad that people running nurseries cannot use the water on their summer seedlings. Many parents will not give the water to their children until they boil it first, and it is surprising to see some of the residues that remain after boiling. I urge the Government to realise the problems involved with the water supply there and to keep the matter very high on its list of priorities.

Another problem we are having with some of our shires, particularly those with large forest areas, is the supply of gravel for road building purposes. The Forests Department has rightly guarded its forest estate most jealously, but in the past there has usually been some arrangement made whereby shires could get reasonable access to gravel. The present situation has been made worse by two factors.

The first is jarrah dieback disease, for which no-one is culpable. It is one of the unfortunate things that arise from time to time and it has really devastated many areas of jarrah forests. It is a very severe threat to that timber species.

The other factor is the creation of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. The department has taken a far stricter view of the forest estate and the so-called conservation values. I am not knocking conservation as a whole, because it has some very laudable attributes and is going to play a very vital part in our continued existence on this planet. But there is room to take a sensible approach to this matter of gravel pits.

The shires are well aware of the dangers of the dieback disease, but they are also well aware of the existence of areas from which it is quite safe to remove gravel.

We run again into royalty difficulties relating to who owns the gravel, who owns this, and who owns that. Instead of the Department of Conservation and Land Management throwing

all of these objections in the way of the shires, it should be encouraging the shires to build better roads more cheaply.

Members will be aware that one of the main aims of the Department of Conservation and Land Management is the creation of a viable tourist environment. The tourist industry, above all, depends on good roads. If the shires are not able to obtain the gravel to build good roads, how will they encourage tourism? I believe the Department of Conservation and Land Management is defeating its own argument. I believe it is time the Minister took the department in hand and made it obligatory for it to provide shires with suitable gravel pits at strategic places, because it is absurd to expect smaller shires to build roads when they have to travel up to 100 kilometres to obtain the basic materials for those roads.

It is a bureaucratic tangle and another of the cases to which Hon. Max Evans refers as "Yes, Minister" cases. The Minister should be strong enough to know where his department stands on these matters and to ensure that shires know where they stand. If jarrah dieback land is involved, the Minister could ensure that the shire puts in washing facilities or whatever else is necessary to overcome the problem.

As I said earlier, we must facilitate the building of good roads rather than put bureaucratic knots in the string to slow things down. Good roads are a long-term benefit to the State as well as to shires. Shires which have large areas of forest in them suffer greatly because forests are not rateable and the income has to be made up from grants from other Government bodies. On-costs for road making have to be made up from somewhere.

The volunteer fire brigade movement in various parts of my electorate, including Narrogin and Kojonup, has expressed concern to me about proposals to remove some of its functions in cases of road accident rescue work. These brigades are highly trained and extremely expert and are always on hand to help one out of a car accident. I think we would all welcome their assistance if we were involved in a car accident and that car was about to catch fire or the jaws of life were needed to help someone from the car. They are always on the spot.

I believe the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is considering taking over these functions. These volunteers willingly give up their time and have elevated the volunteer fire brigade to the status of a competitive sport.

They are very competitive and highly trained and take their jobs seriously. They provide an excellent volunteer service along the highways and main roads in this State. They are becoming better and better equipped. In fact, my daughter was involved in running a dance in the country which resulted in a donation of \$4 000 being given to the local volunteer fire brigade for the purchase of a jaws-of-life machine. It is set up on a trailer. I know there are several of these in brigades throughout the State ready to be used at short notice to rescue people from accident-damaged and fire-threatened cars and from collapsed buildings, although the latter are few and far between. They have telephone hook-ups and radio-controlled contact with their brigades.

I believe the fire service should be encouraged and not downgraded. I think many country members recognise the great work that these volunteer groups do.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Members like Hon. Jim Brown should have an input into the Minister about the way these volunteer brigades handle their jobs.

The volunteers also undergo St John Ambulance training. Even though it is not like having an ambulance attend an accident, they are a necessary adjunct to it. Above all else, they have a willingness to get out on a voluntary basis to help the community.

Another matter worrying industry in the country is the occupational health, safety, and welfare legislation. It is absurd that, in future, no-one will be able to lift a weight of more than 16 kilograms without assistance. That is not realistic. As a farmer, I have lifted great weights—as I am sure many farmers have done—which have probably damaged my back. However, I assure members that I have lifted much more than 16 kilograms. It is unrealistic to impose this limit.

Members should bear in mind that a plastic crate of large bottles of Coke weighs 16.3 kilograms. Anyone buying a crate from his local shop will have to have assistance to put it into his car.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Are you talking about the big bottles?

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Yes, the large bottles in the crate.

Hon. J. M. Brown: You carry a crate up the stairs and see how heavy they are.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I have seen members struggling out of this place with crates of drink, and they will be in total contravention of the Bill. Sometimes I wonder whether some of those crates have legs of their own!

I think it is absurd that two people should be required to carry a crate of large bottles of Coke. I admit that damage has been done in the past by people lifting heavy weights. However, are we building a nation of wimps who cannot lift more than 16 kilograms? Surely people should be allowed to make their own choice about what they should lift without this Parliament wasting its time legislating on such absurdities.

I received a letter from a butcher in my electorate who said he has been carting carcasses of meat all his life. He is now somewhat advanced in years, probably at the age that many public servants retire, but he is still active in his own shop, and still humping carcasses of mutton around, but has to get assistance with a haunch of beef. He has an able-bodied young man who assists him in the shop. However, he will not be allowed to move things even along a shelf unless it has rollers or runners on it. What does that do to a small business in a country town? Two people are required to carry a lamb carcass weighing more than 16 kilograms. All that is doing is loading another cost onto a business which it cannot afford. Hon. Tom Butler, with his experience in industry, should realise it is not viable. It is ridiculous that we should waste our time legislating on such ridiculous things. Surely we have more pressing matters on which we should be legislating.

We had a row with the former Minister for Industrial Relations over the hearing legislation—that is, the audiometric testing regulations required for shires. The Minister was not in a position to accept many of the sensible propositions which were put forward because he had this gigantic piece of legislation to get through. We do not know what the legislation is a cornerstone of; we have a suspicion that because there is similar legislation in the United Kingdom, it is thought that we need it in Australia. I am not denigrating our forebears, but surely industry and business should be able to make their own regulations in this instance. I do not believe too many businessmen would refuse to listen to an employee if approached reasonably. An employer would respond positively to an employee who said, "I'm sorry, but my back's a bit crook today. Could you get Joe Bloggs to give me a hand lifting this?" An Act of Parliament is not

needed to limit the amount an employee can lift when he can probably lift two, three or four times that amount. We are legislating in the realms of absurdity. The Government should stop wasting its time and that of this House.

This speech would be notable among my speeches if I failed to mention the rural crisis in some detail. I know that members opposite would be upset if I sat down without saying something about it. There is not much about the rural crisis that has not been said already by members of my party, members of the National Party, and most other people. I believe that the spirit of the House was much less hostile to the rural economy motion put before the House yesterday than it was when I raised a virtually identical issue last session.

Hon. J. M. Brown: You raised it on 2 July.

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: I am glad somebody listened. I am indebted to Mr Brown. However, it is fair to say that the situation in some areas has worsened. It is also relevant to mention that the industry is now polarised. It is evident that those who have a stock enterprise with a comparatively low level of debt will pull through. Those who cannot get into a livestock enterprise—whether because of the geographical unsuitability of their properties or because of a lack of finance—will face considerable difficulties and will need a very sympathetic ear from the Government. I believe the climate has improved and that members on this side of the House can take some credit for that.

The Opposition has trumpeted, in particular, the disasters in the wheat-belt and we have been accused of overstating our case. However, I think that the Government now recognises that we were not overstating our case and that funding is essential for the survival of farmers in the wheat-belt. The 1986 annual report of the National Australia Bank states that farm income in Australia fell by 32 per cent in real terms in 1985-86; in other words, there was a one-third cut in effective real expendable income. It must be clearly understood that that reduction was not a reduction in profit, but in income. The report also stated—

The reasonably favourable returns in the livestock sector were insufficient to offset the falls recorded in the cropping sector due to declining international grain prices.

Thus we then have falling incomes and rising costs. The farmers now in trouble will need very real and immediate assistance in the way of debt restructuring if they are to pull through.

Over the last 12 months I have chased up very actively the matter of RAFCOR funding, as have all the members representing country electorates. It is generally recognised that an interest rate of 15 per cent is not low enough to get these people out of trouble. It is not necessarily a problem of their own making. Some of them received advice from banks or accountants. Such advice probably did not take into account some traditional trends in farming. Generally speaking, much of that advice was just a matter of darn bad luck. Nobody foresaw the trends that were to develop, or that those trends would develop so quickly. That is what has left so many of our farmers in trouble.

There is an urgent need to reduce interest rates. We have to consider a reconstruction scheme on a longer term, possibly on a 10 per cent basis, to try to keep these people operating on their farms. They produce an export product and contribute to the national wealth in that way. We must also accept that a community cost is involved.

Much has been made of the externally-imposed problems of our industry, for example, those imposed by the European Economic Community. The difficulty is that European nations had no food during wartime. Hundreds of thousands of people probably perished of hunger. Those countries will never again be short of food stocks; that is inherent in their makeup. There is the kind of mentality that insists upon having plenty of reserves. That in itself cannot be argued with. It is a reasonable reaction to the horrors of the 1940s, but it does cause difficulties for our marketing. Those countries are prepared to accept such reserves as a community cost. The anomaly is that those countries have the industrial base and the populations to carry that cost; Australia does not. The Government must recognise that the support of the community is necessary on that basis. Are we to have farmers leaving their farms, thus adding to the economic problems of the country through being unemployed or through displacing other people in the work force?

In another speech in this House, I drew attention to the fact that most farmers who come to Perth find work very quickly because they have a work ethic. They are prepared to find work and enjoy their work. Even if they do not receive unemployment benefits themselves, they displace others from the work force who will then need unemployment benefits. Therefore, there is a social cost involved. It would be realistic if the Government took on board that

cost and kept those people in their own enterprises, contributing their expertise to the well-being and wealth of the country. That is to be preferred to the alternative of their coming to Perth, dislocating their families and causing added costs to the community.

The other major problem within the rural community is the increase in farming costs. I have already referred to the National Australia Bank report in which it was reported that there was a decrease of 32 per cent in farmers' incomes in real terms. There is now the steadily increasing cost of doing business as a rural enterprise and a family enterprise.

It is significant that an article on page 3 of the *Daily News* of 7 April stated that food eats up only \$1 in \$5 of average household expenditure. The article by Pam Nixon states—

Critics of government run price watches have said our taxes could be better spent looking at prices for the goods and services bought with the other \$4.

It continues—

We looked at what's happened to State Government charges over the past six years.

Here's what we found:

While the CPI food component has gone up by only 43 per cent since 1981, the total tax take by successive WA State Governments has soared by 127 per cent in the same period.

Land tax does not include farmers but it does include country town and city families. Land tax takings are up 126 per cent.

Extension of Time

By leave, the member's time was extended.

Debate Resumed

Hon. W. N. STRETCH: Land tax has increased 126 per cent. Stamp duties are up 120 per cent. Bearing in mind food has gone up 43 per cent, and real earnings are down 32 per cent in the country, stamp duties are up 120 per cent and land tax 126 per cent, payroll tax is up 81 per cent, liquor tax takings are up 128 per cent, the fuel levy is up 279 per cent, and tobacco 488 per cent. Excess water rates have gone up 46 per cent, a little more than food, and local government rates and charges have gone up by 76.7 per cent. SEC rates for domestic users have risen 57 per cent, and the restructuring of rates from domestic to industrial for businesses such as supermarkets and

other small businesses has caused an effective increase which has not been recognised; the basis has just changed.

Worker's compensation premiums are up 60 per cent. So we have some severe problems when all those charges go through to the consumer. They act against a sector of the community whose real income—not profit—has decreased by 32 per cent. I do not believe any other sector of the community has coped with that sort of squeeze as has the rural community.

Our unfortunate brethren are being forced out of the industry. It is incumbent on the Government now to take urgent steps to get them back into their lifestyle, and keep them going in their occupation so that they can continue in the industry in which they are very efficient, productive and of great service to the State.

In his opening address His Excellency, on page three, quoted Western Australia's rural production, which is estimated to reach \$2.48 billion compared with \$2.2 billion in 1985-86. This ignores the cost factors which have eaten up that increase, as well as many others. Costs continue to rise, despite the troubles.

Those in the livestock industry will survive. As Mr Brown said last night, the wool industry is going pretty well; it is keeping up with costs. Those with that component in their enterprises will be able to scramble along until things improve in the community. If they do not have too much of a debt structure they will be able to survive, but we have to try to keep them out there on the job in the country.

The Government must listen to these points. It is now realising at long last, both Federally and State, that we will only get out of our present malaise by boosting export earnings, and a major component of that will come from the rural and mining industries. I believe that the Government has now recognised—judging by the tone of the debate yesterday in this House—that it is incumbent on members to keep the pressure on to improve the economic environment and encourage people to put their shoulders to the wheel and keep things moving forward.

We are not going to get out of trouble by borrowing more overseas. We recognise that a large component of our overseas borrowings is only servicing previous borrowings. In other words we are borrowing to pay interest on our debts, and that is a sure-fire way to disaster, as anybody paying off a car, a house or anything

else knows. We must put pressure on our leaders to cut their cloth accordingly. If we can do that we will work our way out of this present trouble together.

We are not going to work our way out of it on a divisive basis. There are no such things nowadays as workers and bosses. We are all workers and we are all increasingly bosses in that we have more and more control over our disposable incomes. We have a job to do to get Australia back on its feet. Western Australia has a very large role to play in that we have wonderful gold mining and other industries like agriculture which are as good as any in Australia. They can hold their own with others anywhere in the world. Given that incentive and environment we can do it, but the Government must realise that these problems must be tackled very quickly.

The grain growers must have finance approved early in the season, like now, if they are to get a viable crop in for the season when it breaks. It is no good having approval for finance in June or July. I feel confident that if the Government goes ahead with such proposals it will have the backing of all Parliaments in Australia; certainly of this House.

I support the motion.

HON. J. N. CALDWELL (South) [4.36 pm]: I support the motion, but first I would like to congratulate Hon. Joe Berinson on being elevated to the position of Leader of the House. I would also like to congratulate Hon. Kay Hallahan, the deputy leader, and thirdly, but not least, Hon. Graham Edwards on being appointed Minister for Sport and Recreation. I am sure we of the National Party will have a good rapport with him.

I know Hon. Graham Edwards has had something to do with the country areas because he was fortunate enough to come from my home town. I believe he learnt a lot in that country area. He was in the opposite football team to me, although I do not think we ever played against each other. It appears that we are on opposite sides of the fence most of the time, but I am sure we will get along quite well together. I know he has some understanding of country areas and of the problems being faced there.

I would like to comment firstly on the rural economy and the economy of Australia. Everyone knows it is not good. There seems to be a cycle of rises and falls in the economy. I have been told by some experts that it is a seven-year

cycle, but probably this time the cycle will be extended, in view of the Government we have at the moment.

Perhaps Governments are not directing their energies towards the people. The people produce goods and services, but they are being taxed into oblivion. Eventually people will be forced to quit. Understandably, when people earn \$300 a week as a wage, it is absolutely imperative that those who do not work receive nowhere near that \$300, otherwise people will chuck it in and eventually, for reasons of their own laziness—I suppose they cannot help themselves—will say, "Why work? I can get \$300 for my family and myself so I am better off not working." The workers must be given the incentive to carry on.

When talking about the rural economy, two factors must be addressed: Soil and water. The rural economy is based on those two things.

It has been mentioned here before that water is imperative for country areas, and it seems a shame that the development of water resources has slowed to a trickle. I happened to go to a meeting at Nyabing, at which our Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Julian Grill, stated that he was very pleased to be able to offer farmers an extra loan of \$60 000, instead of the existing \$15 000. I was somewhat disturbed at that offer because the interest rate for the loan of \$60 000 was three per cent below the going rate, which was at that time approximately 15 per cent. It was unanimously decided among the growers at that meeting that nobody could afford to take more loans at that interest rate.

I said to the people at the meeting that I thought the Government was tackling the problem at the wrong end: that it should be leaving the loan at \$15 000 but charging an interest rate of only four or five per cent. Perhaps then people would have a chance of paying back the loans. If we offer people loans at such a high interest rate, it is understandable that they cannot repay the loans, and so get themselves into financial difficulty and are eventually forced off their land.

As for the soil, it is the thing we till and work, and is something which I am sure home gardeners around the city areas are conscious of. They have to build up that soil. Unfortunately, at the present time the economy is such that all incentives to protect our soil have been taken away. I urge the Government to give incentives for water and soil preservation because these

are the lifeblood of the Australian economy and it is absolutely essential that they be given the highest priority.

I will now take Hon. Jim Brown to task about his statement that our wheat quality is the highest in the world. He congratulated everybody for selling the last wheat crop. I have heard from a member of the Australian Wheat Board that we have sold the wheat, but only after very hard work done by the board's members. He said that because of the quality of our wheat we are starting to lose markets, and that that is all to do with the quality of the soil. He said the protein level is reducing and markets are being lost as a result.

Hon. J. M. Brown: That is different from Winston Crane's comment, made last week.

Hon. J. N. CALDWELL: I believe that in some areas Winston Crane and the National Party do not agree, and this is possibly one of those areas.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Then you are talking about the National Party candidate, Trevor Plugge, are you?

Hon. J. N. CALDWELL: We take notice of the people from the Australian Wheat Board. They are selling and testing the grain and they know that the protein content of Australian wheat is declining, and they are having great difficulty selling the wheat.

Hon. J. M. Brown: Not the producers I know.

Hon. J. N. CALDWELL: I will turn briefly to the subject of mining, about which I have made some comments before in this House. It seems to me that because of the current mining boom more and more companies are being formed by any Joe Blow who has the initiative to go about it. These people are invading the agricultural areas.

I have just received a phone call from some people in the Beverley area who were most upset because they have received letters from the warden's court saying they must appear before the court. These farmers have objected to the prospecting licence, which is their right, but they still have to go to the warden's court to have their appeal heard.

One family in the Beverley area was given seven days in which to appeal. Members know what the mail is like in country areas sometimes. It invariably takes four or five days to arrive, and these people had to get their reply back in two days. I do not think that is fair. If they had not returned it within the seven days

the warden would have said the applicants could go ahead, and the prospecting licence would have been awarded.

The family I referred to appealed for their right of veto, and a month later they were told they must appear before the warden's court. My advice was that they go for their lives. I said, "You have the right of veto so your appeal should be upheld", and it was. This family applied for \$300 costs against the mining company, which I thought was quite correct. I believe the farmer was shearing then, and he had to leave his farm and take his family to Perth, stay overnight, and return the next day. The farmer tried to get \$300 costs awarded to him, but the mining company offered \$50 and the warden awarded \$50 costs.

It just goes to show that private land-holders are not being looked upon very kindly. I am vehemently opposed to the right of veto being taken away from land-holders, principally because of the fly-by-night companies that are being formed. They have no care whatsoever for a land-holder, and it must stop.

I will move away from the northern agricultural areas to Albany, where my office is located. Albany is having its problems as well, and one is in relation to the shipping of live sheep which used to be well and truly established there. Unfortunately, it has been taken away, although I will not say by the Government. It has also been taken away from Esperance, and many other country areas. It is a notable fact that environmental issues may eventually see its disappearance from Fremantle. I urge the Government to look very seriously at making these shipping facilities available in Albany and various other ports around the State.

I will quote from a letter written by Hon. Gavan Troy, Minister for Transport, to a person in Albany. The letter read in part—

A number of export industries have been lost by the Port of Albany in recent years. The Government is concerned about this situation and is working closely with the Albany Port Authority in seeking to attract new industries to this port.

The letter also stated—

The Government is keen to see the regional ports, such as Albany, involved in this trade and will continue to support moves to encourage this, such as the port charge concession package offered to live sheep exporters by the Albany Port Authority.

I congratulate the Minister for his efforts and urge him to support anything at all that will make the export of live sheep from country areas such as Albany a viable proposition.

The "Albany Tomorrow" programme has spent one year looking into the financial side of Albany and trying to get it on the road again. There is a possibility of an integrated electronics industry. It has my full support. The benefits would be astounding. The employment situation in Albany is poor. We definitely need something like this to ease the situation. The environment in Albany would be ideal for this industry. The electronics industry needs extremely clean air and I can assure all members that the Albany air is the cleanest in Western Australia.

Southern Processors has been restructured in Albany. It was previously known as Hunts Processing Company. The manager is a dynamic person and the company is just about to open its potato chipping section. It has just been awarded some 2 500 tonnes of potatoes which, unfortunately, have to come from the Manjimup area. It is storing them now and in two weeks the process will be in full swing. The chipping industry will be able to handle from 8 000 to 10 000 tonnes next year, and in years to come will be able to handle in excess of 10 000 tonnes.

Unfortunately, potato cyst nematodes are prevalent in Western Australia, which could have a devastating effect on the potato industry as they are almost uncontrollable. The best way to effectively control them is to have a four-year rotation period. Albany has a very small area in which to grow potatoes. The swamps and producers are small so a four-year rotation period would almost eliminate them. I urge the Government to support the growers in every way possible. If they do have a four-year rotation period they should be given some financial assistance to grow other crops.

There are also other swamps in the Albany area that could be used for production. Here lies a solution to the problem. I refer to the Yakamia swamp which has been the subject of debate for some 20 years. Unfortunately, it lies between the Albany Town Council and the Albany Shire. No-one seems to want to do anything with it. It is currently filled with water and after last night I have been told that it is 80 per cent covered with water. It is one of the biggest and deepest potato growing areas in Albany and covers some 300 acres. It could be brought into production if the Government assisted in draining the area. The assistance

would be refunded in the future because it would reap benefit to Southern Processors, which is chipping the potatoes and would help by employing many people in that area. It would keep the chipping industry going from eight to 20 hours a day.

I refer to a swamp just east of Denmark called Owingup. It is made up of 2 000 hectares and is covered with water. With appropriate drainage, it could become one of the most productive areas for the vegetable growing industry. It could be drained into Parry's Inlet. There was a feasibility study in 1979 which said that the water could be drained into the sea. Eventually, it proved unsatisfactory because there are many hills and sand dunes between it and the sea, so the cost would be quite prohibitive. I have had it from good authority that it may be feasible to drain this area and if so, this area could become one of the best potato growing areas in Western Australia.

I urge Hon. Ernie Bridge, the Minister for Water Resources, and Hon. Julian Grill, the Minister for Agriculture to look at these areas. It would help the Albany population, the employment problem and, best of all, the economy of Western Australia.

I have the support of Dr Brian Steins, who is the chief divisional officer of agriculture. I also have the support of Southern Processors, the Albany Shire and the Albany Town Council in these ventures.

I support the motion.

HON. FRED MCKENZIE (North East Metropolitan) [4.57 pm]: Firstly, I wish to congratulate my colleagues on the front bench; Hon. Joe Berinson on his promotion to Leader of the House following the resignation of the former leader, Hon. Des Dans, and Hon. Kay Hallahan who has been elevated to the position of deputy leader and is the first woman to have occupied that position. That is quite a notable achievement and cannot go unnoticed. Likewise, I congratulate my colleague Hon. Graham Edwards on being elevated to the Ministry. I think he will be a worthy incumbent of that position. After the settling in period, I am quite sure he will bring great benefit to this House as a Minister of the Crown.

I refer to the Address-in-Reply speeches which have taken place so far. There have been some useful contributions from backbench members and a useful contribution from Hon. Mick Gayfer. However, somewhat regretfully, a large portion of the speech given by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Gordon Masters, was

not productive and it certainly does not augur well for the Opposition's chances in future elections if that trend continues.

I refer to the portion of his speech which raked up the Brush affair, the Midland abattoir inquiry and all those types of negative approaches which do nothing positive for the governing of this State.

If he were to come forward and criticise the Government for its policies and offer some examples of where improvements can be effected, as other backbenchers have done, we would get somewhere. Hon. Bill Stretch did that today. I took particular note of his congratulations of the Minister for Water Resources.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call for questions without notice, I take the opportunity to advise honourable members that due to excessive rain overnight, which did not stay outside Parliament House but entered the Parliamentary Library, the library will not be open after 6.00 pm because the lights cannot be switched on. If members want to get something out of the library, they should do so while it is still light.

[Questions taken.]

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Hon. Bill Stretch congratulated the Minister for Water Resources on his efforts in providing a dam in Mr Stretch's electorate. That is the type of contribution to a debate of this nature which is very pleasing to me personally; and in other areas where Mr Stretch was critical of the Government he had some positive contribution to make. When we get down to muckraking, I do not believe it produces any great benefit to members on the Opposition benches and it does nothing for the State. Instead of our getting on with the job of trying to provide a better place for all of us to live by way of constructive debate which people will take note of, we do not get very far.

Hon. N. F. Moore: It sometimes catches people out.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: That is a matter of opinion. We have witnessed this type of slander continuously in the Parliament for the last 12 months. In spite of that and the economic problems facing this country, the Opposition has not made a lot of progress in the opinion polls. The criticisms members opposite have made and brought to the attention of this House have not produced much by way of result.

I want to refer to one matter affecting my electorate which is continually raked up. Both Hon. Gordon Masters and Hon. Neil Oliver have contributed to the debate on this matter. I refer of course to the long running saga of the Midland abattoirs.

Hon. N. F. Moore: I am surprised you would bring it up.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I am not afraid to bring it up; I just wonder how much longer it is going to continue.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Until the truth comes out, I guess.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Hon. Gordon Masters referred in his speech to Mr Ellett's selling some \$200 000-worth of equipment and the site being purchased for \$450 000. I do not know whether the sale of equipment is a fact but, assuming Mr Masters is right, people fail to realise the cost of demolition of the abattoirs in order to establish an industry on the site. Anybody who has looked at the site would appreciate that fact, and I know Mr Oliver has looked at it. The cost of demolition is in excess of \$1 million, and that is what brought the price of the site down. It may be that the cost of demolition outweighs the value of the land. It was sold on the basis of demolition in part or in whole being required.

In addition to that we were very concerned about the future of the Midland saleyard. Whether the Government was right or wrong in selling the site is beside the point. The point is that Mr Ellett has endeavoured to secure the saleyards for the use of country people for as long as they are required, or at least 15 years. In that time the Government will have ample opportunity to find another site or take whatever action is necessary to ensure country people are protected.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth interjected.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I think members will find that the National Party will be more appreciative than our Liberal colleagues opposite of Mr Ellett's efforts—leaving the argument about the Government aside—To appease people in the country and relieve them of any worry they may have. That is the way forward, not to continually hammer Mr Ellett because he sold something for \$200 000.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: We are hammering the Government, not him.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: It so happens that Mr Ellett was contacted by a newspaper reporter following Hon. Gordon Masters' remarks, and

he then rang my office yesterday and issued an invitation to me to go to the site and look at what is going on. I approached my colleague, Hon. Tom Butler, and we rang Mr Ellett who expressed concern at what was being said about the Midland abattoirs. He invited us to go and see what progress was being made at the site on which he intends to set up a brickworks. I advise members that he told me that invitation was open to any member of this House or another place. If any member wishes to see what progress is being made at the Midland abattoirs site, he will be welcome at any time so that the matter can be put to rest as far as Mr Ellett is concerned.

Mr Ellett invited me to inspect the brickworks because I am one of the local members of Parliament for the area. He told me that he had invited Hon. Gordon Masters to inspect the property before he made his speech in this place. His first invitation was by way of a telephone call and his second invitation was in writing and up until yesterday he had not received a response. I hope Hon. Gordon Masters will take advantage of Mr Ellett's offer. I hope also that other members will take advantage of his offer and travel to Midland to see at first hand what is taking place at the brickworks. The development will be of great benefit to the area when it is completed. It appears as though we will continue to have this muckraking by the Opposition until the brickworks is operating at full capacity.

Mr Ellett is in charge of a company which wants to provide employment in an area that badly needs it, but he is being hampered at every opportunity. The arrangement was entered into between the Government and Mr Ellett in good faith and there was nothing sinister about it. It was a genuine agreement that would create employment. Mr Ellett was determined to develop a brickworks and it was irrelevant whether it be sited at Midland or anywhere else.

The Government was anxious to get rid of the land that became available at the Midland abattoirs because it had been vacant since 1981. Hon. Neil Oliver knows very well that the Swan Shire Council was keen to attract industry to its area and it wanted the site utilised, but there were no takers.

Hon. N. F. Moore: If the Government was so anxious to get rid of the land why was it not auctioned instead of going out to tender?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: The problem that occurs when a property is put up for auction is that it is not known what the proposed development will be. A situation occurred between 1981 and 1983 when the Liberal Government sold land by private treaty at Wundowie.

Hon. N. F. Moore: You are casting aspersions on the previous Government. Why did you do it that way?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Hon. Norman Moore is casting aspersions on this Government and I was putting to him a situation that occurred when his party was in Government. Why did not that Government auction that land? This Government was only following the pattern of a previous conservative Government.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Do you agree with that?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: On some occasions it is proper to auction Government land, but on other occasions it is not proper and each case has to be determined individually. I advise Hon. Norman Moore that in this instance I do not think it was proper to auction the land at the Midland abattoirs.

Hon. N. F. Moore: I happen to think that it was.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: One could say the same thing about the Government land at Wundowie or the parcels of land attached to the abattoirs which were previously sold by the Liberal Government. It does not necessarily follow that land should always be auctioned. In some cases there are advantages gained from the sale of land such as the provision of employment in labour-intensive industries. The benefit of employment to an area may be greater than the proceeds obtained from the sale of the land.

Hon. N. F. Moore: How many people expect to be employed at the brickworks?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I have no idea. I would suggest to Hon. Norman Moore that he accept Mr Ellett's invitation and inspect the site at Midland and ask him that question. It is a massive number of people and, because of the multiplier effect on other industries which will benefit from the brickworks being in that area, the number involved will be even greater. I hope that this matter is finally laid to rest.

I refer now to a request I have made to the Minister for Water Resources concerning sewerage. Originally I wrote to the Managing Director of the Water Authority of Western Australia about a problem which exists in a

suburb called Viveash which adjoins the brickworks at Midland. The soil in this area is clay-based. The reply I received from Mr Glover, the Managing Director of the Water Authority, did not give me much joy, because it indicated that the sewerage programme for Viveash is a long way off. Serious problems exist in the area because of the clay-based soils.

Mr Glover advised that 65 per cent of the metropolitan area is sewered. I know that the problem has been around for a long time. He said that the cost, in current dollar terms, of installing sewerage throughout the entire metropolitan area is \$800 million. Currently the Government is allocating only \$8 million per annum to the sewerage programme. Taking those figures into account, it will take 100 years to complete the programme.

Hon. Neil Oliver: Is that using day labour or contract labour?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Using day labour it will take 100 years to complete the programme, but if contract labour were used it would probably take 150 years.

The Government is not providing sufficient funds for the sewerage programme to be carried out and this is something which members should take note of, particularly when people in areas like Viveash are experiencing problems with their septic tanks and there is no way of overcoming the problem because of the clay soil. It is areas like Viveash which require priority over some of the sewerage works being undertaken in sandy soils which can soak up the sewage.

In addition to my request to the Minister for Water Resources, and in turn to the Government, to provide additional funds for sewerage, I have also requested that a planner be instructed to investigate the problem which exists in Viveash. It is complicated by the problems associated with the Wescombe main sewer and some of the Aboriginal sacred site areas that are in the path of the pipeline.

I am sure that if that action were speeded up, and the Minister has indicated that it will be, progress would be made towards resolving the problem.

However, I do not think that is the real problem. The major problem is whether funds will be available for that area. I am asking for those funds to be increased. I bring this to the attention of the House so that the Minister will take note of my comments. There is nothing people in that area can do about their problem because

there is no way the sewage can be soaked up. I refer, for example, to a letter written to me by one of the residents—

The ground in this area is all clay, so the waste water has no chance of seeping away, which is now a health hazard as far as I am concerned.

Some years ago I had a leach drain installed which runs nearly parallel to a French drain which was the original drain. I have now connected a pipe from the leach drain to paddock at back of my block, which I regret.

I would strongly ask if you could see your way clear to inspect the area together with a member of the Public Health Department and Water Board. I'm sure you would agree this is no frivolous request.

I am supporting my constituent in this matter and that is why I express my concern about this problem.

Of course, it is fortunate that we had some sense in 1982. The Water Authority adopted regulations which in the main will prevent the development of new areas—not completely because there will be some exceptions—unless sewerage is supplied by the developer and connected to the main sewerage system. That is a step in the right direction. If developments are allowed on the basis of septic tank installations in areas which are not suitable for such waste disposal methods, it is not long before a major problem arises. That applies not only in clay soil areas but also in low-lying districts. If there is unusually heavy rainfall in the winter months in these districts the water comes to the surface and there is no way that the sewage can drain; it comes to the surface with the rest of the water. It is a very unhealthy and unpleasant experience, which I have some knowledge of. Fortunately good sense has prevailed since 1982 and developers are not allowed to proceed until adequate sewerage provisions are made.

Nevertheless we have a backlog of sewerage works to catch up on and we are allocating only \$8 million a year to that area. Sewerage work is fairly labour-intensive and I know that these are harsh times; but the Government should pay attention to this area. Hon. Sam Piantadosi has some experience in this area and he has always indicated his support for people in the Water Authority industry. Therefore, I am sure I have his support when making this plea that more funds be made available.

Hon. S. M. Piantadosi: Yes, you have my support.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I thank Hon. Sam Piantadosi; that makes two of us supporting this case and if we knock off another 45 we shall be on the way. Two are certainly better than one.

I now wish to speak about the crematorium at Karrakatta which has been in the news recently. I wish to defend the Administrator of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board, Mr MacLean. I received a letter about this development at Karrakatta, attached to which was a copy of the plan of the new crematorium which appeared to be a very nice development. No doubt all members received a copy of that letter. Under normal circumstances the proposal would have received my support because I think we must plan for the future.

I received some complaints, as no doubt other members did, about the anxiety of people whose loved ones were buried nearby, and I took up the matter with Mr MacLean who was very helpful. I am sure that was the general attitude of the administrator and the board and that they recognised the pain people would suffer as a result of the ashes of their loved ones being moved to another site. Having made the decision to develop the crematorium, I think they handled it as tenderly as they could. I consider that they took reasonable steps to ease the pain that these people would suffer by assuring them that although the remains would be relocated, they would be cared for.

Nevertheless it was still unacceptable to many people and, as members are aware, it culminated in a public meeting being called. Eventually on 18 March an announcement was made by the Minister that the board would not proceed with the development for a month. An article later appeared in *The West Australian* under the headline "Plans to move urns dropped". That was a very sensible decision for a number of reasons.

The most important reason is that I do not think the move was necessary. I am sure that Hon. Gordon Masters and Hon. Neil Oliver, who represent people in the eastern districts as I do, would support my recommendation to the Government that a crematorium should be established in Guildford, Midland or in that area. I see that Hon. Gordon Masters is nodding his head and this is one subject on which we agree.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I was worried for a moment.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I know that the member was worried about what I said earlier about him and he will get his opportunity to respond in due course. I am pleased that he did not interject at the time; he was very polite in that regard which was quite unusual. I was expecting interjections but they were not forthcoming.

Returning to the subject of the crematorium, I do not think the Government has paid enough attention to the requirements of people in the eastern districts of the metropolitan area. There is a crematorium at Karrakatta and one at Fremantle. Instead of developing the Karrakatta crematorium to cater for the whole metropolitan area it would be good sense to establish one in the eastern region. The people in that area have a long way to travel to attend funerals at Karrakatta.

It is very strange that the Karrakatta Cemetery Board has been able to plan these developments because I have no doubt that funds will be required from the Government. I raise the matter in this House hoping that the Minister will take note of my comments. I refer to a letter he wrote to me on 12 September 1985, not that long ago. The points he made in that letter are quite valid with respect to capacity. I am surprised that the Karrakatta Cemetery Board has proceeded with a proposal to develop and extend its facilities when no consideration has been given to providing a crematorium in the eastern part of the metropolitan area.

I want to remind the Minister of what he said to me on 12 September 1985 so that he can take into account what I am now asking. I am repeating a request I made of him in August 1985. This is how he replied, and I have no doubt he must have received some of this information from the Karrakatta Cemetery Board at that time—

When the Karrakatta Cemetery Board recently modernised its crematorium, the State Government assisted with the upgrading which was planned to cope with the anticipated rise in demand for services in the metropolitan area over the next 20 years. Assistance was provided in 1982-83 in the form of a loan of \$240 000 as well as a grant of \$360 000 to cover the expected capital outlay of \$600 000 for the purchase of three new cremators and extensions to existing buildings.

If we add those two together, the total is as stated, \$600 000. He continued—

At the present time there are five cremators installed at the Karrakatta Cemetery and two at the Fremantle Cemetery. These installations have a combined capacity in excess of 7 000 cremations per annum. The demand for cremations in the Perth Metropolitan area is approximately 4 600, and therefore there is a reserve capacity of 50 per cent.

It is not quite 50 per cent on those figures of 4 600, but the reserve capacity still approaches it.

It was September 1985 when he replied. Surely there are not that many more people who are dying and being cremated which would alter those figures to any great extent. He continued—

I am advised that a cremator is not economically viable unless it processes between 600 and 700 cremations per annum. In addition I understand that because of maintenance down time, it is desirable to install at least two cremators at each site.

That might be so, but if Fremantle and districts can justify a crematorium, I am sure the eastern districts can do likewise. I am saying to the Minister that rather than spending the money down there and causing the anxiety that people have experienced, let us decentralise them. One has to go through the City of Perth or the outskirts of it to get down to Karrakatta to attend a cremation. It makes good sense to have a crematorium on the eastern side because one could get the drift with the highways that are going through from Armadale, and people might elect to be cremated in those areas.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I fully support you, Mr McKenzie.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Thank you. I am pleased the Leader of the Opposition does, because it is something members can work at together for the region, and that is what Parliament is all about. Rather than attacking one another on the Midland abattoir, members would be better off working together to get the crematorium at Guildford.

Hon. G. E. Masters: They both have their place. You do not want to spoil a good argument by bringing in something which would be an embarrassment to you.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I have had my say on that and I do not want to go back to that.

The Minister went on to say—

From a regional planning viewpoint it would be desirable if:

1. Following its closure for burials, Karrakatta was to remain as a crematorium and memorial park.
2. Cremations in the region (Metropolitan) were confined to Karrakatta and Fremantle Cemeteries.

In view of the fact that the present crematorium facilities at both Karrakatta and Fremantle Cemeteries are designed to cater for community needs for a considerable time, the provisions of further facilities as contemplated, would be difficult to justify in the circumstances.

That was from a regional planning point of view. I was very heartened by the Minister's remarks in *The West Australian* of 27 March where he indicated that plans to move the urns have been dropped—

Mr Carr said architects would now look at other options for new chapel and assembly areas, including the use of an area of vacant land at Karrakatta. He said that any proposals would come under new legislation which would require that any new development be advertised for 12 months and approved by the Minister. The State Government will also carry out a detailed study of crematorium needs in the metropolitan area. Mr Carr said that it would investigate whether other crematoriums should be established in other Perth suburbs.

That gives me great heart and prompts me to raise the matter with a great deal of vigour in relation to the provision of a crematorium to service those eastern districts. I do not care whether it is at Guildford or at Midland. We have cemeteries in both locations. At one of those two locations we should have a crematorium. Let us forget about the development of Karrakatta. It is difficult to get there. A crematorium provided in the eastern area on a local basis would serve the region for a long time, and it would be forward thinking. I do not think enough effort has been put in by successive Governments or by those advising Governments on the question of a crematorium to be provided in the Guildford or Midland area. I do not think it has ever really been seriously looked at, and it is incumbent upon all members to do so. Indications have been given by

members opposite that a joint approach would gain favour, and that is a step in the right direction.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: That is very convincing.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I listened to the speeches in the last few days about Westrail. Members who have been here over a long period would realise that in my early days in this House I was a great supporter of Westrail. That has not changed. It is, however, more difficult when one is in Government to change things back.

Hon. G. E. Masters: You made some very big commitments when you were on this side.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I gave some very big commitments and tried to get them implemented, without success, and I guess that is democracy. I am an individual, and I will keep plugging away; and my colleagues know how hard I fight for the railway system because I know there is a future in it. If one reads of the future of the railway system in other countries and applies it here, one will find we have very woolly thinking. In 1977 we saw some major changes here in the railways because of the change in policy of the Government of the day. The Government was supported by the Liberal-National Country Party members, although I note that some of those National Country Party members subsequently joined the Liberal Party, so I will not blame the National Party people of today. They were obviously Liberals at that time, with that type of thinking.

I have noticed in speeches here recently that we are starting to get a few friends again, particularly among the people opposite, because of what is now being experienced with the drift from the country, the breaking up of country towns because of the centralisation of freight services, and the operation of them from the metropolitan area by way of road transport. It is having an effect on the rail system. It is incumbent now on Government, and it has adopted this approach, to inform the people who come from country areas that if Westrail is to become competitive and not lose money, they should realise that the bill has to be met somewhere. The problem with the rail system now is that there is not enough throughput; there is not enough tonnage offering. If one wants to get grain freight rates down, one will utilise the railways to the capacity it can handle and then the costs will reduce, and that means some form of regulation.

We have to get more of our grain back onto rail. We would then see the real worth of Westrail.

I acknowledge that we had problems with the mode used for smaller loads of commodities. Given technological advances which had been made, we tended to be 20 years behind most modes being used elsewhere. The South Western Australia Transport Study report showed us there was no reason to prevent Westrail from setting up a separate division, Westfreight, to handle smaller loads. Jim Pascoe despaired about the way we went. He made the recommendation along with the other commissioners of Westrail, including John Knox, whom I have criticised here on many occasions before.

We had a public instrumentality that could have provided a complete service throughout Western Australia, not a fragmented service as we have now with all the separate operators. In the old days we could put a small parcel on the rail system at Boyup Brook and it would be delivered anywhere in the State for a very small sum. That situation has gone. We now have Total West and several other firms operating in the south west providing a service which is fragmented and which is now, importantly, all operated from Perth.

Employment opportunities in country areas have therefore dried up, with devastating effects on some of our major regional centres. I visited Merredin recently and it is showing signs of distress because the railway system no longer provides the employment opportunities it once did. Had we looked at the suggestion more carefully we would not have this problem.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: It is technology more than policy.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I disagree. A lot of commodities, currently not being handled by rail, should be. Section 96 of the Constitution prevents a lot of this, but I do not know how the truckies can compete with trains which can carry loads the equivalent of the load carried by 50 semi-trailers. The load of 50 semi-trailers can be handled by one train and with only two men up front.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: Many of the trains carry trucks on them.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: They should carry more. We should see very little of the heavy loads being carried on our roads. The fact that this is not so is the reason that why our country roads are deteriorating. If there were more

heavy haulage by rail we would not have to expend such large sums of money maintaining our roads.

I was interested to hear Mr Charlton's comments today, and I know he meant well because of his concern for the country. I would like him to understand the position with heavy haulage, an area where rail shines. We should not have this laissez faire attitude which sees the ordinary motorists heavily subsidising the use of roads by heavy haulage vehicles. I know my view could not be sold to the truckies, but we have to face the facts.

Let us consider damage done to roads by a truck with an 8.2 tonne axle-loading. If we start with a 10 per cent permit and increase that to 15 per cent, the increased damage to roads over a whole year is 45 per cent. If we extend the permit to 30 per cent the increased damage over and above that caused by a 10 per cent limit is 105 per cent. Just a little extra loading creates extreme pressures on our roads.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: In fairness you have to remember that I was talking about 15 per cent for six weeks, and the time that the Main Roads Department assesses the capacity of the roads is during the time of the worst climatic conditions, during winter.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I am simply pointing out the damage that is done by heavier vehicles, admittedly over a 12-month period. I accept that Mr Charlton is talking about a period of six weeks and I accept his point about climatic conditions. Obviously most damage to roads is done during winter. But we must look at the overall situation. Even for six weeks a 15 per cent permit would, looking at this graph, cause damage of 75 per cent over that expected with a permit of 10 per cent.

Hon. E. J. Charlton interjected.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I know some truck drivers carry more than they are permitted, but when they are caught they are in trouble. That is why we have penalties for overloading. No doubt some people cheat just as they tried to cheat the road maintenance tax years ago. The situation was difficult to correct, but there was good reason for the tax. I do not know how we could get it back. The road lobby is too powerful and too many people are employed in this area. Any change we make would have to be implemented gradually.

It is time people were aware of the facts. I have long been a defender of the rail system. It has a great capacity and it provides its own tracks. We ought to be bringing more of these

heavy loads back to our rail service. It would have to be done gradually. We cannot allow people to be put on the scrap heap overnight; I would be totally opposed to that. But we need to realise the efficiency of rail and the savings we could make, especially at a time when our road funds are drying up. Road funds are very scarce.

As I interjected earlier, we have been talking about the moneys collected from taxes for roads, but we have not taken into account the costs we must meet which are not met by road taxes and which are created with people being hospitalised because of road accidents. Even when rail was carrying huge numbers of passengers we saw very few fatalities, none in this State. Considerable costs must be attributed to the road network, and if that is recognised we might get some commonsense in these debates. We must consider how people move around and how we can break their habits of convenience. If we do this in relation to heavy haulage vehicles, which do the most damage to our roads, we would get the money back.

I want to explain what that means in terms of a reduction in the pavement life of roads due to overloading. If a truck 8.2 tonnes axle load is overloaded by 20 per cent, over the year a road's life deteriorates by 50 per cent. The normal pavement life of roads under normal use is about 30 years. Of course our major roads get much more wear than that. So, our roads would last only 15 years and we would have to find more funds if we allowed this extra loading on axles.

I now refer to a question currently before the Government. I have expressed my opinion of the necessity to electrify the metropolitan suburban rail system to all Ministers at committee meetings, at State conferences of the Australian Labor Party and wherever. If moneys are going to be spent in the metropolitan area to accommodate an ever-increasing number of motor vehicles on the roads, if new bridges are required to be built, at astronomical prices, and if the social disruption of people being forced to move out of their homes to make way for highways and so on occurs, then railways may as well be electrified. I have people in my electorate, as I am sure Hon. Phillip Pandal has, who have had to move out of their homes; no doubt other members of Parliament also have such people in their own electorates.

In addition, if money is needed to provide an efficient means of transporting people quickly within the metropolitan area, huge sums will be required because we have a continually increas-

ing population, particularly in the city area. There is only one way to effectively move people and that is by way of public transport, whether it be by bus or by rail. It just happens that currently the suburban passenger fleet has reached the end of its life; perhaps we are fortunate that this has happened all at once because it means we cannot keep putting off the judgment day.

For a while the railway to Fremantle was closed down and then it was reopened. I believe we have gone past that because we are now talking about building huge skyscrapers in Perth, despite the fact that the Minister for Planning does not approve of them. However, when the people come down out of those buildings, they must be transported out of the city centre.

Hon. John Williams: By monorail.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I remind Hon. John Williams that the New South Wales Government currently has a problem in respect of the Darling Harbour monorail. There have been huge protests about it. I have never made a study of the advantages of a monorail system as against surface rail or underground rail but the people of Sydney have indicated they are very unhappy about the proposed monorail. The literature I have read on this subject indicates that the project in Sydney has become more expensive than it ought to be; in fact it would be cheaper to develop existing services, whether these be underground or surface services.

Hon. John Williams: Sydney has more suburban rail systems, in terms of track length, than we have.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I agree. I think that an extension of our rail system is badly needed here; currently we have three-year terms for Government, but if we had four-year terms for Government, proper plans could be made in that respect. Years ago land was reserved to the north of Perth to provide a rail system; I do not know what happened to it—it disappeared.

At this point I remind Ministers that I am a strong supporter of an electrified rail system. I hope they take that on board. I know funds are very short but if we do not grasp the nettle at this point and electrify the service or provide a bus-way, we may as well drop the whole thing altogether. I do not think there is any choice in this matter; we either have a railway or a bus-way, or we dieselise; or if members want, we can go back to steam trains.

Hon. Graham Edwards: I'd like that.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I, too, am nostalgic but we must be realistic. The cheapest and most efficient way of developing a railway system is to electrify it and now is the time to do that. The Government ought to take that on board; I think that will be the forerunner of the development of services into the northern and southern suburbs because once people realise the time-saving as a result of the acceleration potential of an electrified service, they will use it. The braking system with an electrified rail system is so efficient that trains can pull up more quickly than is possible now and they can take off more quickly. I think the run to Armadale would take about 11 minutes by electrified rail. That would be quite a time-saver for people living in outlying areas, and time is an important consideration for them in respect of transport.

Not only can we use this service to bring people in, but it will take them off the roads. If, for example, one travels along Albany Highway, one notices that the situation there has recently grown worse. It is absolutely painful to try to drive along that highway because it is narrow and heavily used. It is a really horrifying experience. We have the opportunity now to electrify the suburban rail system, regardless of the cost, which would be something in the vicinity of \$120 million to \$150 million.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: That was only for the Perth to Fremantle run.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: No, that is the whole lot. I can assure Hon. Bill Stretch that that cost is accurate, although it would depend on what sort of electrified service was provided. If the Government wanted to have very elaborate lounges and so on, so people could relax, costs would be raised. I have read the report of the steering committee and the estimated cost will be between \$120 million and \$150 million. That is not a large sum to be outlaid for the benefits that will accrue.

I believe we have to look to the future; we have been sadly lacking in that respect. If we do that, more funds could be made available for country areas, where necessary, for the provision of good, solid roads. By the same token, it would be possible to take some of the heavy vehicles out of those areas where their loads could be carried by rail. Trains can carry a throughput of a couple of thousand tonnes with no trouble at all, whereas the most that can be carried on one of those large trucks is something like 100 tonnes net. How can one com-

pare the efficiency of movement using one man to haul 100 tonnes as against that which occurs when two men haul 2 000 tonnes plus? It just does not make good sense.

Of course one cannot bring these things in without bringing down regulations. We will have to simply bite the bullet and proceed with it. I urge the Government, when it is considering the future of the metropolitan transport system, regardless of the expenditure—and it will not be more than \$150 million—to electrify the rail system. Going back to diesel is a backward step.

As members know there are some fairly new rail cars around; not too many, but about half a dozen which were received around 1982. I think that was when the first one was received but most of the other rolling stock is perhaps 30 years or more old. I hope my Government takes that on board because if it does not, I will be quarrelling with it. It is a very good Government with a tremendous leader and I will be very disappointed if he does not listen to me and do what I am saying. I hope he reads my speech, if somebody sends it to him, and perhaps he can influence the Cabinet on this particular issue.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: It is important that I enlighten members about the great success of the electrification of the rail system in Brisbane. That is an argument for the electrification proposal. It has cost a lot to convert the railway system in Brisbane from a diesel service to an electrified one. Members may have seen the stainless steel carriages that we had on loan from Brisbane for the period of the America's Cup. They were utilised here as loco haul sets.

Since electrification of the system in Brisbane, there has been an increase in patronage of 60 per cent. That is a tremendous increase.

Hon. Max Evans: Did they break even yet?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I am not sure.

Hon. Max Evans: They may be running at a loss.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I am not sure whether the Brisbane rail authority runs at a loss, but in 1984-85 Queensland Railways had an operating profit of some \$107 million. That operating profit was made on its freight and passenger services.

The most important consideration is that people are utilising the suburban service in Brisbane, and Brisbane is not much bigger than Perth.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It is the population per square kilometre that counts and it happens to be twice as much in Brisbane as it is in Perth.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: That may be so. Perhaps Perth has a greater urban sprawl than Brisbane, but the population number is similar. There are more rail tracks in and around Sydney than we have here in the metropolitan area of Perth. We built the existing rail tracks somewhere about the turn of the century and no Government since has done anything about improving the situation. In fact, I read in tonight's *Daily News* that we are still using an undercarriage that is 97 years old on one of our suburban cars.

Hon. Neil Oliver: It is on the Midland run.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: We would not find too many motor vehicles still running at 97 years of age. That just shows members the value of the rail service.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: They reckon you helped make it.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I know that this place has aged me, but I did not think it had aged me that much.

The important thing is that people are travelling by a more efficient method than the one-occupant motor car that we see being driven in and out of Perth every day.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Will you catch a train to Parliament when the system is electrified?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I catch the train now. As one gets older it becomes more difficult to cope with the increasing demands and pressures of peak hour traffic.

Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That might be why you catch a train.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: That is certainly the case. I have told members that before. If I had my way, there would be railway lines in every street. However, I do not seem to gather much support for that idea.

I mention the success of the electrification of the Brisbane system also in order to point out the savings in maintenance costs. We would be able to run a very efficient electrified service that would save Governments a lot of money. The initial capital outlay would represent a big burden on the Budget of whatever Government

took the plunge, but there would be benefits further down the track. I hope we have an unselfish Government, one that will look to the future and ask what it can do for posterity, rather than the other way around.

I turn now to the problem that we experienced with respect to the viability of our freight railway service. The viability of the freight service has been undermined because of circumstances over which Westrail had no control. Members may recall that 20 bulk haul trains a week ran between Collie and Kwinana or the other coal outlets where electric power was being generated. Because we had an excess supply of gas and because of the contractual arrangements that were entered into by a former Liberal-National Country Party Government we had to do something about the gas in the north west, notwithstanding the fact that coal-powered electricity could be generated more cheaply than gas-generated electricity. It is cheaper to generate electricity by coal.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: If it is generated on the coalfields.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: On site?

Hon. W. N. Stretch: Yes.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Irrespective of that, it was cheaper to have a coal-generating station at Kwinana than a gas-run power station. It is my understanding that it was still cheaper to use coal, even if only marginally so.

Because we had contracted to take so much gas off the North West Shelf it was necessary to use the gas, as it had to be paid for whether it was used or not. That meant that those 20 trains a week out of Collie are lost until such time as coal-generated electricity is required at a place other than Collie. That would seem to be a long way into the future. What has that meant to Westrail? It has meant that Westrail lost \$17.6 million in revenue and coal haulage per annum of 1.1 million tonnes, a very severe blow.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: They actually lost that to the oil conversion, not to the gas conversion.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: No, this is more recent. It has been changed again. It went from oil to coal and it has now gone from coal to gas. That has meant a loss in haulage contracts of 1.1 million tonnes per annum or seven per cent of Westrail's total tonnage haul. That amounts to a large amount of revenue and traffic lost. Westrail has had to cope with those problems which have affected its revenue-earning capacity and profitability.

Westrail has lost the profitability which was associated with that haulage task. That is added to the two million tonnes of iron ore which Westrail lost when Koolyanobbing ceased to operate. This again was a profitable exercise.

Westrail has taken some pretty severe blows during that period. We are fortunate to have maintained and increased, as I understand it, the amount of grain hauled; but in order to utilise the railway to its full capacity and bring about those economies, it is necessary to obtain more haulage by rail than we currently have.

Those were the important points I wanted to bring forward during my speech. I thank members for their forbearance. I hope they have taken note of my comments. I know some members have. Others may not be as interested. I hope that not only the members of this House but all members of the Government will take note of what I am saying about some of the things which are necessary in my electorate.

HON. DOUG WENN (South West) [7.41 pm]: Before I begin I extend, as have other members of this House, my congratulations to Hon. Joe Berinson for becoming the Leader of the Government in this Chamber, and also to Hon. Kay Hallahan, who has taken on the position of Deputy Leader. I believe Kay will do a tremendous job there. I have come to know her very closely over the past 12 months. I believe she will do a great job, as she has proved to be a very good Minister.

I extend my congratulations particularly to Hon. Graham Edwards. Again I have come to know Graham fairly well over the last year. He is a dedicated person, and I am sure he will carry out his duties on the front bench, as he has already shown to some of the members of the opposite bench that he can handle the situation very well.

With your permission, Mr President, I would like to follow the example of the Leader of the Opposition. I am going to use newspapers tonight for part of my speech. I would like to talk tonight about our affairs, and how they are affected, particularly in Western Australia, by the shifting of the nuclear testing by the French to the Kerguelen Islands.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: It sounded like Koolyanobbing.

Hon. DOUG WENN: That is close. We are not going to let them get that close.

In *The West Australian* of 14 February a full-page article appeared called "Danger Island". In the middle of the article is a map

showing how the prevailing winds carry through to Australia from the area of the Kerguelen Islands. This map takes in the area which Hon. Vic Ferry and I represent. It cuts into the south west of Western Australia, and that concerns me greatly.

The article says that at this stage these are rumours. We know how rumours float around this place, but when French atomic testing in the Indian Ocean is involved, that rumour refuses to die. It has surfaced again.

Those rumours seem to cover a little bit of fact. We read that in 1981 the French weekly magazine *VSD* said that French nuclear testing would switch to the Kerguelen Islands after 1985. According to this article, it is almost there now. The article reports that already there are 30 technicians on the Kerguelen islands researching.

There has to be a reason for them to go there. These technicians are involved completely with the French nuclear testing programme. Those sorts of people are not sent to collect rocks to put on the mantelpiece or find how the terrain lies, because there are plenty of people already on the island to tell them that.

The story goes on to add a little more crunch to the rumours. It says that in 1984 the French Consulate General to Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania created a furor when he said that France would have to relocate its site if French Polynesia gained independence. He said, "My personal view is that the ultimate test site for testing today is the Kerguelen islands." This is a man in high authority representing his country in our country, and he is making statements like that. They do not make those sorts of proposals lightly because they know the consequences when they go back home.

The article says that the Premier, Mr Burke, is urging Canberra to threaten a break with the French. That shows that the Premier is aware of how much we will suffer if any major damage occurs to the Kerguelen islands.

We can laugh, but the article continues—

"Scientists have become increasingly alarmed at the pollution of the south Pacific by toxins, particularly plutonium," he said.

Subsidence and cracking caused by underground blasting at Mururoa Atoll has resulted in radioactive poisons fouling the lagoon and the surrounding seas."

When one looks at the Kerguelen Islands, one sees they are actually on a volcanic line. If these people continue with below-ground testing, what will happen? They say it is safe. If it is safe, why do they not do it in their own backyard? For some reason they will not. They keep coming over to this side of the world. Who cares about us down here? The Russians do it in their own backyard; the Americans do it in theirs; and they suffer the consequences.

When it comes to fallout, one has only to look at the nuclear fallout in Russia with the Chernobyl accident. We all know the extreme radiation which flooded right across Europe. It covered a larger area than the 3 200 miles that we are from the Kerguelen Islands. We have seen the damage done by that fallout many times on TV and in the newspapers. That damage was to horticulture and agriculture in those nations, and it was only from a nuclear reactor in a powerhouse, not from an atomic testing bomb.

How many times did we see shiploads of vegetables and fruit sent overseas returned because the radiation level was too high to be accepted in those countries? One can say, fair enough, it happened; it is an accident which should not have happened, but it did. Possibly countries like Australia which were not affected may have reaped a little benefit as a result of being able to export vegetables and so on overseas. But if this Kerguelen Islands plan is given the go ahead—and there is no doubt it will be because the French have ignored every protest sent to them from other nations in the world—we may be in exactly the same position.

We have a fairly big industry base in the southwest, particularly with the cattle and dairy industries, and the wine industry, because we all know it is the best part of Western Australia. Yet it could be destroyed completely because of the fallout from this nuclear testing.

I have to ask the major question: Why do the French have to continue testing? What makes it more questionable is the fact that they keep testing a similar sort of bomb. If they know one bomb has gone off and is successful, and if they develop the next one in exactly the same way, it will go off and give the same readings, and the same problems if it goes wrong, so why continue? It sounds a little Irish to me. It is like the Irishman who worked in the match factory—he sat there saying, "Yes, that one works, that one works..." Eventually either they will have to do something drastic with this testing or they will run out of material, and by that time they will have flooded this area completely.

The newspaper article goes on, towards the end, to state that a leading Australian geologist warned in 1984 that the Kerguelens may be subject to volcanic activity, increasing the threat of leakage. As I said before, if the French continue with the underground testing all we need is for it to go in reverse, not only throwing the volcanic lava and ash through the air but also the radiation that has been held below the surface for a period of time. With the prevailing winds, as this map shows, we will be the ones to suffer and we will suffer greatly from it. It is a little more alarming than people appreciate.

That article further states—

And experts have warned the predominantly westerly winds and ocean currents would sweep any atomic debris towards Australia.

It has been estimated there could be pollution in all levels of the atmosphere over WA within two days of an escape of atomic dust in the atmosphere.

Two days after a major accident we could be suffering completely from radiation, and I know that I do not want that. I have seen the accidents that have happened and the nations that suffered because of one accident in particular; and I am pretty sure that no member in this Chamber would want that, either. If it continues over a period of time, it is not we who will suffer because we are older and can probably handle the situation, but our children will suffer the most, as is always the case.

The other day I started a Walk Against Want in Bunbury. About 100 people were there and when starting the event I was asked to say a few words. It has become very well known around the world through the peace movement that if even one per cent of a nuclear test budget were donated towards feeding the hungry people of this world, no-one would be hungry. One per cent is all we would ask for.

To sidetrack for a moment, I read a Singapore newspaper a couple of weeks ago which contained a cartoon called "Sun Tan". A Chinaman and his wife were sitting down to breakfast, and Sun Tan looked at his wife and said, "Is that all there is?" His wife replied, "I am on a diet". Then Sun Tan said, "Isn't it amazing? Half the world is starving and the other half is on a diet!" If we could get just a small fraction of the money used by the major powers for nuclear testing to feed the hungry in the world, we would end up with a well-fed world.

What I am leading to is that the attitude of the French towards the rest of the world is coming almost to the point of arrogance. A letter to the editor of *The West Australian* recently read as follows—

THE French Government has shown an arrogance and disregard for inhabitants in the Pacific region and is showing the same contempt and indifference to West Australians by planning to explode atomic weapons in the Kerguelen Islands.

Unless Australia unite in engaging world attention to this French arrogance and unless we protest loud and long through every avenue possible, we shall be treated like any other irrelevant, minor, Third World country. Wake up Australia.

I would like the members in this Chamber to wake up and join the State Government when it protests very strongly and loudly to the French that if they want to continue testing bombs they should take them home to their own backyard and see how they get on.

I will now turn to a few happenings within my own electorate, albeit that that could be part of it as well, and we will watch it very closely.

I have been a member of this place for not quite 12 months. My office is based in Busselton and I operate mainly in the Busselton, Margaret River, and Augusta areas. A couple of things that have pleased me greatly have happened in the last 12 months. I am not saying they are all my doing, but they have happened; and in saying so I would like to thank the two other members representing that area, and the Ministers who have given such a great response. I also thank the local people who have put forward their arguments.

The Margaret River Hospital has now received the go ahead. It took some work and talking, but finance has now been made available. The appropriate investigations are now being made and I hope that soon a start will be made on that hospital. The Margaret River people can be proud of the work done by them in achieving that hospital as—and I have to say this, and I think Hon. Vic Ferry will back me—it was a pretty hard road at the time.

Another matter is the police station at Augusta. Again, the Minister fought pretty hard to give us facts and figures to show there was not a need for a police station there, but we have proved with facts and figures that there is a need. Augusta itself is growing very quickly, and it is growing very large as well because of

the influx of a number of people, particularly retired people, moving down that way. I must admit that, come retirement time for me—which is a long way off, I might add—I would certainly have my eyes on that area.

I thank the other members of Parliament, the people of the Margaret River-Augusta area, and particularly the two Ministers, Hon. Ian Taylor and Hon. Gordon Hill, for recognising the need for facilities down there. Of course, there are many other needs and we will continue to press for further facilities.

Today I was in Bunbury talking about extra services with the Minister, Hon. Julian Grill. He released details of the evaluation made of the South West Mobile Counselling Service. This is a service with headquarters at Margaret River and is run by Mrs Willi Smith and Mr George Smith. They travel over a vast area, and I will read out the names of the places to give members a better idea of the area they cover. They travel to Busselton, Nannup, Bridgetown, Manjimup, Pemberton, Northcliffe, Dean Mill, Boyup Brook, Balingup, Greenbushes, Cowaramup, Binningup, Yallingup, Dunsborough, Harvey, Yarloop, Brunswick, Australind, Collic, Dardanup, Boyanup, Eaton, Donnybrook, Capel, Augusta, Witchcliffe, and Karridale.

During that evaluation period they visited or gave service to 913 people. As in most areas today, the problems they encountered in those towns included marital and family problems, difficulties with children, and low self-esteem, which is basically what Hon. Eric Charlton was emphasising yesterday.

The Minister has given this programme another two years. It was on a one-year trial, but he has extended it to two years and I know Willi and George Smith are really determined to make it work. We can be very proud of the fact that they have managed to get around as much as they have.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: How do they respond?

Hon. DOUG WENN: They get sent to these people. The councils within the area can only handle so much. That is where Willi and George take over the excess. The people are directed towards Willi and George, who started this on their own initiative. George brought up the problem by putting it to the "Bunbury 2000" programme organisers who requested a needs study to be done by Wilson, Sayer and Core in 1985. The need was there and Willi

and George were given the go-ahead to carry out the services. They drive an average of 60 000 kilometres a year.

Hon. Tom Stephens: It is the same company which operated in the north.

Hon. DOUG WENN: They saw a need down this way, so they had the survey done and it has gone from one success to another. They have been given the job of continuing that, and I must say they are doing a great job.

I have not yet been in this place for 12 months, but it is disappointing that I need to speak on the same lines as Hon. Tom Helm did the other night. Hon. Tom Helm, as we all know, is a man who speaks from the heart. I have referred to some newspaper clippings and have spoken about rumours, because that is all they are at this stage. These rumours are becoming fact on a daily basis; people who are sick of the attitude of these people are proving them to be fact.

The other night we sat through a tirade of innuendos, rumours, and newspaper clippings from the Leader of the Opposition. He went on and on, and never came out with one fact or truth. He would say, "You wait and see." If we have to come to this place and listen to that sort of carry-on, then all I can put it down to is cheap political gain. It seems to me that every time some individuals run out of something to say they go to the Press, cause a big drama, and the Press end up crucifying people who have not been proven to have done any illegal act. Some people might say their actions were morally wrong, but then they do not prove that either. We all have different morals and we all look at things with different eyes. Until we see some proof, facts, and something of substance, I will continue to be disappointed with what is coming into this House.

I refer to a letter given to me the other day which talked about trying to get cheap publicity from the Mandurah fisheries area where the shadow Minister has now decided he will side with the estuarine fishermen against the outside fishermen. Mr Watts, who I believe is the President of the Estuarine Fisheries Association, which is a group comprising one-third of the 64 fishermen, said the Opposition is dying to get involved, especially with an election imminent. What is the shadow Minister going to do? Is he going to say to the outside fishermen that they have no right to be there, and no right to make a living? Will he say they have no right to spend upwards of \$100 000 on equipment and then get out so these estuarine fishermen

can come in, take over, and reap the benefits? I would love to hear an answer because I do not think it will be that easy.

What I find more amazing is that this is coming from the Opposition that believes thoroughly in private enterprise. If a man is willing to get in, get the equipment, and have a go, then he should be encouraged to do that. What has been happening here is the complete reverse. If the shadow Minister gets his way, he will put the estuarine fishermen into dangerous waters by allowing them to go into areas where there is better fishing.

I might add that the fishing will not be better because the outside fishermen get about a fifth bite of the cherry. When one looks at the estuary, one sees fishermen on the far end of the bridge, amateurs sitting on the bridge, fishermen on the other side of the bridge, fishermen out towards the channel and, at this stage, the four outside fishermen. I believe one is leaving, so that will cut it down to three; and then we have the deep sea fishermen. One could say the poor old prawn does not really have a chance.

I would like to hear an in-depth answer—not necessarily now—on how the shadow Minister will tackle that problem, who will suffer hardship, and who will be compromised.

Every one of those fishermen, whether they be estuarine fishermen or outside fishermen, contributes to Mandurah. Every one of them buys equipment, particularly for the larger boats. I know two fishermen who bought their boats originally in Mandurah. I would be very interested to see which fishermen the shadow Minister will persecute and how he tackles it.

Hon. C. J. Bell: It is a pity you don't know the whole story.

Hon. DOUG WENN: I have all the details here. Hon. Colin Bell might wish to look at the rules and regulations, and the future of the fishery. It is all there. Is the shadow Minister going to tell the fishermen who have been there for over nine years that at the end of this year they are finished and a \$100 000 boat has gone?

It would be interesting to see how he goes about crucifying them. As I said earlier, this is a group of people who believe completely in private enterprise, and are willing to put up their money and give it a go. We will see how that looks in the future.

I thank members for listening, and I support the motion.

HON. TOM STEPHENS (North) [8.10 pm]: I take the opportunity to join with other members of this Chamber in congratulating our leader, Hon. Joe Berinson, on his elevation to that position. Hon. Joe Berinson is a man of whom we on this side of the House are fiercely proud. We are delighted to have him as our Minister and now as our leader in this place. Over the years he has been in this Chamber he has distinguished himself with a track record which is already second to none.

He is joined on the front bench in the capacity of deputy leader by Hon. Kay Hallahan, another colleague of ours of whom we are again fiercely proud. In her short time in the Parliament Hon. Kay Hallahan has already distinguished herself as a woman of great skill and talent who has brought those human resources to her task as member for her province and now as a Minister. I suppose it is her human capacities and the strong sense of warmth that she evidences in her dealings with people which make her eminently suited for the portfolios she handles.

We are also delighted that another of our colleagues, Hon. Graham Edwards, is joining them on the front bench. He is the third member of our team of whom we are fiercely proud. Hon. Graham Edwards has again distinguished himself in the short time he has been in the Parliament as a man who is popular on both sides of the House—and most definitely popular on our side—and certain to have a ministerial career in which he will distinguish himself in the annals of this place.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: After that fine contribution, you must be next.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I fear the waiting time is probably longer than my life span in this place.

The opportunity to congratulate the Ministry on their elevation to their respective ranks must be coupled with a mark of appreciation which we would all like to place on record as a tribute to the work of our previous leader, Hon. Des Dans. The passage of our colleague from the Ministry would in the normal course of events be accompanied by considerable sadness, except that Hon. Des Dans has made himself available to continue in the Parliament to serve his party, the Parliament, and the people of Western Australia for the life of this second Burke Government. We are indeed fortunate to have a man of his skill and experience available for the remaining two years of the Government's term.

I join my colleague who has just completed his contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate by mentioning yet again the contribution, if it can be called that, of the Leader of the Opposition. It galls me to have to sit in this Chamber and yet again hear our Ministry and the Government of which we are fiercely proud chastised so unfairly and so inaccurately by this pretender to the leadership of Government in this State.

I took the opportunity reluctantly in the last Address-in-Reply debate in this Chamber to chastise the Leader of the Opposition for his remarks after the opening of the last Parliament. On that occasion, as on this occasion, Hon. Gordon Masters reduced himself to negative, carping, cacophonous criticism of the Government. The sad part of his "contribution" is that it contributes nothing to the public interest of Western Australia. It certainly made no contribution to the debate in this place, and I suppose while it may be the least of my worries it should certainly be on the mind of the Leader of the Opposition that his speech did nothing to advance the cause of the Liberal Party in this State.

People who presume upon the intelligence of the Western Australian community and assume that that sort of unsubstantiated innuendo which is trotted out in this place will in any way impact on the minds of the electorate are not only selling the electorate short, but I suspect selling themselves short as well. I could appreciate it if the speech writer was endeavouring to destabilise the leadership of the Opposition in this House. Perhaps Mr Peter Wells contributed to the speech notes as part of some exercise to destabilise the leadership. Perhaps it was to provide an opportunity for one of the frontbenchers to remove Hon. Gordon Masters. Nothing would surprise me. Hon. Gordon Masters' "contribution" was delivered with an absence of fact, truth, and even a sense of sincerity, and I hope no-one in this place welcomed it.

This evening in the Chamber we received a copy of a letter of today's date which is addressed to the Premier and signed by the Chairman of the Public Service Board. I take this opportunity to read that letter. The Chairman of the Public Service Board said—

The Board is seriously concerned about a report in today's *"West Australian"* newspaper under the title "Sacking Pledge by MacKinnon".

The chairman is referring to an article on page 4 of *The West Australian* today in which the Leader of the Opposition, Mr MacKinnon, has pledged to sack all advisers and political appointees of the Burke Government within days of winning office. The newspaper reported that Mr MacKinnon said the sackings would take place on the Monday after the election. He said the first person to go would be the new head of the State Superannuation Fund, Mr Tony Lloyd.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Sunday, if possible.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The report goes on to say that Mr MacKinnon added that Mr Lloyd was appointed in April 1983 as a relief assistance director to the policy secretariat of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. He went on to say that four years later he was the State's Deputy Under Treasurer.

It appears from the newspaper article to which the Chairman of the Public Service board is responding that the Opposition is making a hit list of public servants to sack.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Political appointees.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I will deal with Hon. Phil Pandal in a minute. The article means that, effectively, no public servant in this State is safe if we suffer the misfortune of the current Liberal Opposition being returned to Government.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: What exaggerated nonsense and poppycock.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: Let me read to honourable members what the Chairman of the Public Service Board said in his letter about Public Service Board appointments because, after all, Mr Lloyd was a Public Service Board appointee and not appointed, as the Opposition says, because he is a crony of anyone in the Government. He was appointed on his merit.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: How could he not get a job with a local government authority three years ago?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I am confident that Hon. Phil Pandal will not want to trade in his poppycock, as one of his colleagues put it, when I am finished with him. Let us on this side of the House deal with the facts as I hope members of the Opposition benches will eventually do. The letter from the Chairman of the Public Service Board continues—

It appears desirable for the members of both Houses to be made aware of the extent and limitations of the authority of the

Public Service Board with respect to employment conditions and of current employment practices pertinent to the Board's role in relation to the elected Government.

Prior to the last election, Ministerial staff and Advisers were appointed under the provisions of Section 74 of the Constitution Act and approved by the Governor in Council. Such officers were contracted to Ministers of the Crown with respect to Conditions of Service. The contracts were subject to termination by either of the parties provided that three months' notice was given. There are still some officers appointed under those contracts.

One of the reasons I am reading this letter is that Hon. Phil Pandal indicated he did not understand it when he read it. I hope that with my reading it to him he will now understand the import of what Mr Campbell is saying to all members of Parliament. The letter is particularly relevant to Hon. Phillip Pandal because he, more than any other member in either House of Parliament, has made nonsensical allegations that Public Service Board appointments have somehow been unduly influenced by the politics of the Government. The letter continues—

Subsequent to the last election, officers who are appointed as Ministerial Advisers and to Ministers' staff have been given temporary appointments as Public Servants. The appointments are subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act and are for the term of the present government. Should the Government not be returned, their contracts would lapse.

We think that is most unlikely.

Hon. T. G. Butler: We know it is most unlikely.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: Indeed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. John Williams): Order! Earlier today, the President warned members about interjecting and reminded them that the member making his speech should be the only one heard.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The letter continues—

In addition to those officers appointed under the Constitution Act, and temporary Public Servants, permanent Public Servants have been seconded to the Ministers' Offices to carry out specific duties and will return to their substantive position or an

alternative position when required to by the Public Service Board. This could occur at a change of Government or at any other time. All other staff who have been appointed have been appointed to permanent positions under the Public Service Act.

Appointments under the Public Service Act are made under the provisions of the Public Service Act and the Board in making those appointments has regard for the legislative requirements of the Industrial Relations Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. The Board always has due regard for the merit principle and in making appointments to promotional positions, selection panels are appointed to assess the relevant merit of all applicants having regard for the relevant ability, knowledge and skills of all persons who should be considered for appointment.

Where officers are permanent public servants appointed under the Public Service Act the only reasons for separation from the Public Service are retirement due to age or ill health, resignation or the application of the disciplinary provisions of the Public Service Act.

Disciplinary provisions can be invoked for disobeying or disregarding a lawful order; misconduct; negligence or carelessness in discharging duties; inefficiency or incompetency within the officer's control or breach of other provisions of the Act.

Let us consider that paragraph in the light of the reported comments in today's *The West Australian*. Are we to understand that the Opposition is promising the people of this State that it will meddle with the Public Service Act by enforcing its political bias if returned to Government by removing people who have been appointed to positions on the basis of their merit?

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Lackey appointments.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The truth is that the only way such appointments can be made under this Government is by the Public Service Board. The letter continues—

All officers have a right of appeal to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission against decisions of the Board in respect to disciplinary matters.

The Board under the Act has the responsibility as the employer to protect the rights of its employees who had been

selected on merit and who have not contravened the provisions of the Public Service Act and Regulations.

These are detailed in sections of the Public Service Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act and Industrial Relations Act which govern the actions of the Board in these matters. It should be noted that Division 2 of the Public Service Act which relates to promotion appeals was repealed and these appeals are now provided for in Division 4 of the Industrial Relations Act 1979-1984.

The Board as presently constituted, is committed to strict application of the merit principle to selection and appointment of staff and to compliance with legislative provisions relevant to its various responsibilities.

F. J. Campbell
CHAIRMAN

April 8, 1987

cc. Honourable Members of Parliament

It has been clear from the time the Labor Party became the Government and the Liberal Party formed the Opposition that members of the Opposition have been desperate for headlines. Earlier this evening I pulled out a copy of an article which appeared in the *Sunday Times* on 18 May 1986. I held it up earlier to show Hon. Phil Pental what a scurrilous article it was. He took the opportunity to ask me for a copy, no doubt to refresh his memory and I hope to compound his embarrassment. The article was entitled, "'Jobs for the boys' claim by Pental". I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read it, not just because Hon. Phil Pental said these words, but the situation was even more scurrilous because the newspaper even bothered to print it. However, members can make up their own minds about that.

Members may remember that in May 1986 the Government was involved in the appointment of a new head of the Department of the Arts. This article is based on that story and that story alone. It states—

Shadow spokesman on the arts, honourable Phillip Pental—

Hon. P. G. Pental: It did not say "honourable" at all.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The member is right. Fortunately, the newspaper knew the truth of the matter in at least this regard.

To continue—

—believes that the appointments with the Department for the Arts could smack of "jobs for the boys".

That was before a recommendation was made by the Public Service Board.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Keep reading. What does it say in the fifth paragraph?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I will not read any further. The member has obviously read the article and he will be significantly embarrassed if I read any more of his absurd claims.

As members know, that appointment, like all the appointments made by this Government, was made in the appropriate manner by the Public Service Board making a recommendation.

Hon. P. G. Pental: For cronies.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: Even the Opposition would not claim that the department is now headed by a person who was chosen on any basis other than strictly according to merit.

Hon. P. G. Pental: He is a top-line man.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: And yet the member went ahead and tried to claim headlines like that; and in the process he had allies at the *Sunday Times* who printed his claims. It seems to me that it is time Hon. Phillip Pental owned up to what he is about. Is it true that he is trying to make sure his leader does not have any media coverage? Is he trying to destabilise his leader by grabbing headlines which have no substance or basis in fact? One is hard pressed to find any other justification for even making the comment, let alone for its being published.

Hon. P. G. Pental: Is that the extent of your attack on me? I am really devastated.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I wish to associate myself with comments made in this Chamber by one of our parliamentary colleagues, Hon. Eric Charlton. He expressed concern about correspondence that all of us have no doubt received from the Family Association. It contained material which purported to have come from the AIDS Council of Western Australia. To be quite frank, when I opened the envelope in this place I could not believe my eyes. I decided to immediately ring the AIDS Council of Western Australia, hoping that it would confirm that it was some sort of macabre joke being played at its expense. I rang the AIDS Council of Western Australia, and to my horror the telephonist-receptionist who answered the telephone confirmed that the material was, in fact, distributed by the AIDS

Council. I asked whether the material was likely to be withdrawn and was told that it would not be. She said that as an employee of the AIDS Council—I hope she was not representing the views of that council—she was proud of and would defend that material.

Hon. P. G. Penda: Who is the moralist now?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The AIDS Council of Western Australia has been charged with responsibility for administering a programme to address a serious problem within our community. That material goes no way towards doing that; instead it takes the opportunity of promoting a lifestyle that places the participants in that lifestyle at risk.

Soon after hanging up the telephone I spoke to the Minister for Health about this correspondence and the telephone call. I was assured that the Minister had already addressed himself in part to some of the problems drawn to his attention. In an answer given in the other place on 31 March, he indicated that he would be in contact with the new director of the AIDS Council of Western Australia to ensure that this type of material was not the staple diet of the campaign against this dreadful disease now within our community.

I go on record as saying that if the AIDS Council of Western Australia cannot put its house in order, it is time for the task to be removed from that council and referred to another group. Perhaps the Health Department of Western Australia could address itself to solving the problem and promoting material which will advance our attack on the AIDS virus.

Hon. P. G. Penda: Who funds the council?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The member will be aware, as I am, that it is funded by the State and Federal Governments.

Hon. P. G. Penda: Does the State intend to withdraw its funding?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I imagine that the Minister for Health's discussions with that council, presumably with the member's and my support, will be stern, and he will ask for an about-face on the part of that body in dealing with this sort of material. I hope the council will be held accountable.

Hon. P. G. Penda: Certainly with my support.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I am glad the member supports me in that regard.

Hon. P. G. Penda: It should never have happened.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I am particularly concerned about another matter, the infestation of the northern waters and coastal areas by crocodiles. I am more deeply concerned about this increasing phenomenon because of reports, which I have no reason to doubt, which claim that there have been sightings of crocodiles both to the north and south of my favourite beach, Cable Beach. Those who are familiar with my hometown and the beautiful Cable Beach will appreciate the alarm with which I, as a local resident, and other members of our community, and indeed the wider community, react to these alleged sightings. The people involved in the sightings are long-term residents of the north—Dave Rac and his son Warren, and Craig Kennedy and his family.

I fear that over a period of years the people of the north have become less fearful of crocodiles. I suspect I am as guilty as the next person. The Aboriginal people say of the white people, not as an expression of praise, that they have no fear, no fright. It is true. The European community too often takes for granted the risks associated with the country, particularly the northern areas. Nothing is more tragic than the recent dramatically reported case of the young American lass taken by a crocodile on Prince Regent River. I have covered a fair bit of the northern territory of this State, and I can remember on occasions at Point Warrender fishing at a remote section of the Kimberley northern coastline adjacent to the CRA bauxite deposit at Mitchell Plateau. I fished there as the tide went in and out, day after day, and I used to watch the crocodiles.

A member: Where did you get the spare time?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: This was before I became a member of Parliament.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: This was in the old idyllic days.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: This was in the days when that was part of my job.

Several members interjected.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I remember watching the crocodiles going up and down, and one particular crocodile—this was salt water—at some considerable distance from ourselves—

Hon. P. G. Penda: Did they take any interest in you?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: Not a personal interest, until at the end of the fourth day when the tide was going out, on which the crocodile

normally went out as well: it was backpedalling towards us where we were fishing, so we moved on. The place at Willie Creek where the recent sighting was made is frequented by many residents and tourists alike. The area is familiar to many members of Parliament. Hon. W. Grayden and a party of parliamentarians were in that precise vicinity, and they went out looking for mud crabs in the very area where the crocodile has since been sighted.

I am not calling for massive destruction of the species, but as a result of this I would strongly advocate, as a member for the area, that this Government very quickly set in place an assessment of the locations that are most regularly frequented by residents and visitors to the area, to assess which of those sites will have to be cleared of this species. As the population in the northwest increases, there will be a demand for recreational land for residents and the many visitors to our beautiful region. Those recreational areas are going to include areas that are the natural habitat of this species.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: So you think the crocodiles take priority over people, or people over crocodiles?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: No. Once it has been established which areas of land should be available for public use, those areas need to be cleared of this species. This beast is a particularly territorial animal. Once it establishes itself in a locality it does not move from its declared location very much.

A member interjected.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: That is what the students of the species tell us, and I hope they are right. We have to address ourselves to this problem, and that is my proposed solution. It fits in well with a problem that is highlighted by the increasing population that resides in the north and visits the north, and that is the demand for recreational land, some of which is located on land that has declared land-owners. Rather than creating a hullabaloo, as some Opposition members have endeavoured to do about the fact that land-owners have rights in regard to land and might like to keep those tracts of land free from the interference of vast hordes of people trekking over their property, let us arrive at some solutions to those problems.

My solution for the crocodile problem is to identify within the region those locations that are going to be needed by the wider community for recreational use, and then through a process of proper planning and negotiation between the

relevant Government agencies, both State and local, identify the places needed for recreational use, and then come up with a strategy for the proper vesting of that land, arranging access to that land, and ensuring proper management of the land involved.

Hon. E. J. Charlton: How far would you have to shift them? Are you going to cull them or relocate them?

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: There are plenty of crocodile parks that are anxious to have this species within their wire mesh, and so far as I am concerned that is where they can stay. I suspect if there is no need for them within the wildlife parks that specialise in crocodiles, that is the time when we start looking at culling. I have no objection to that process. If any member wants to object, I would be quite keen to arrange for the transfer of that species down to his electorate for populating the waterholes and recreational areas of that electorate, because I am sure that member will quickly start to change his viewpoint.

Several members interjected.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: I notice that one of my colleagues is ready to spring to his feet. There was more that I wanted to say on more issues but that can wait for another time. I support the motion.

HON. MARK NEVILL (South East) [8.45 pm]: I wish to support the motion moved by Hon. Garry Kelly and also compliment the Governor on the fine job he has done over the last four years. He brings tremendous integrity to his position and is a person we can be very proud of as our head of State.

There are three matters I want to talk about tonight. The first matter is the Western Australian Conservatorium of Music. The second matter should exercise members' minds a bit more, and that is the diversity of species in our forests. The last matter concerns the recent taking of sea lions at Esperance.

The Western Australian Conservatorium of Music was set up about two years and three months ago by this Government. It was set up at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, which has been generously funded by the present Government. The conservatorium is one of the outstanding achievements of this Government. In its short time its development has been very significant, both in the metropolitan area and in country areas. Since 1985 there have been 10 new full-time staff members added to the staff. Three of these new staff members have been appointed

to regional centres; one in Port Hedland; another one in Kalgoorlie; and one who was recently appointed full-time to Esperance.

Enrolments at the conservatorium have trebled in the last year or so. The undergraduate programme now has a degree of Bachelor of Music, which was approved without reservation by the Western Australian Post Secondary Education Commission. This State is very fortunate to have Richard Gill as the director of the conservatorium. He is doing a marvellous job, and I can only see the conservatorium going from strength to strength. I think the good it will do throughout the State as it reaches its full potential is absolutely tremendous for the money involved.

The conservatorium has five choral groups at the moment. It has a chamber orchestra and a chamber music ensemble. It is the home of the WA Youth Orchestra. In any one week something like 500 or 600 music students pass through it. It is unique and probably the most isolated conservatorium in the world. That in itself creates problems for the conservatorium. Nevertheless it is operating really well and is really stimulating the music environment in the State.

The growth of branches in regional centres has also been phenomenal. I do not know what has been happening in Port Hedland, but the first person appointed in Kalgoorlie in 1985 was Peter Moore, a very talented man. He established an outstanding programme of music appreciation classes, theory classes, choral singing and orchestral playing. He really did develop that latter area well in his two years. He was replaced by Matt Stapleton just recently.

The Esperance branch started in 1985 when a violinist, Neil Barclay, from the WA Symphony Orchestra came down on a part-time basis and set up a string programme. That went well for the first two years. Just recently we have been very fortunate in having appointed a full-time lecturer in music, a young married chap from Canada, Bruce Nasmith, who had been here only a few weeks when the job was advertised. The people of Esperance are really fortunate in having him in their community because of his talents. He is an organist of international standing and is a very accomplished pianist. He also holds high qualifications in classical guitar and he also teaches the violin, the recorder and other instruments. He is almost an orchestra in himself. The appointment of Bruce Nasmith will have a dramatic effect on music in the area.

Already most of the music teachers of the area are taking special coaching from him. Music qualifications like all other qualifications become less relevant over time, particularly perhaps if one is based in the country. One needs to upgrade his skills. He is upgrading the standard of private music teachers in Esperance and eventually this will result in a much improved standard of tuition and performance in the Esperance community. Also attending his evening classes are most of the school music teachers. The effect of this has been quite dramatic because in the two months he has been in the town he has organised an orchestra and choir. I attend the choir on those Thursday nights when I am not here. This Easter we are putting on a performance of a few Easter hymns including a chorus from Handel's *Messia*. At the end of the year we hope to put on a full production of Handel's *Messia*.

The Esperance facility is at the old cannery, which was upgraded with the help of a CEP programme, so the only overheads for the conservatorium in Esperance are the lecturer's wages. Fees are charged for private tuition. At the moment 90 people attend the Esperance branch and, as I said before, the work that has been done there has been targeted at the area which will produce the most benefit, and that is particularly at music teachers there.

It is hard to look into the future, but one day I would like to see the Conservatorium² of Music taken from the Academy of Performing Arts and located perhaps in the Perth Technical College site area, opposite the Alexander Library. Perth has plenty of theatres the conservatorium could use for practice sessions. Another ideal site would be the Swan Barracks, but I do not expect that the Army would be happy to give away that territory to musicians.

The Conservatorium of Music is something worthy of special attention. The Burke Government will be able to look back with great satisfaction and see it as a lasting achievement.

I turn now to comment on another subject, namely the destruction of forests around the world, particularly the tropical rain forests. I will comment on a concept which has been around for a number of years and which has been receiving some exposure over the last couple of years, and I refer to the concept of bio-diversity. This was thought of about 10 years ago by a small group of biologists working in tropical rain forests. It has probably not come to prominence because of the more excit-

ing areas of biological advances such as molecular biology and cellular biology. It is in those areas that all the action seems to have taken place and all the money has been spent in areas such as genetic research.

The tropical biologists have been plugging away at this matter for years and at last people are starting to take notice of what they are saying, which is basically that the future of the earth depends on our conserving the diversity of species. That may sound a bit far-fetched, but what they mean is that if we cause species to become extinct, the planet will eventually be impoverished.

Our tropical rain forests are being felled at the rate of 92 000 square kilometres each year, which is an area slightly larger than Scotland. That is the most realistic estimate I have read and it was not made by some radical conservation body.

A friend of mine who is a geologist has been working in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of the old Borneo. He has been involved with gold exploration programmes there for a long time. He finds it hard to come to grips with the reality of the amount of logging done in the forests there, where just about all the tropical forests have been logged.

Over the last 10 years we have also learned that tropical soils are not soils which are all rich; they are not as resilient as we first imagined them to be. In fact the soils and plant life are very fragile, and when the forests are cleared away the mud builds up.

Hon. G. E. Masters: I thought the soil was rich.

Hon. MARK NEVILL: No. If the Leader of the Opposition thinks about the people in New Guinea he will realise that they farm a patch of land for one year and move on. If the soil was rich they could plant the same area year after year. I would imagine that tropical soils are highly leached because of the rain.

Hon. Margaret McAleer: It would not be true of Indonesia.

Hon. MARK NEVILL: Certainly not of Java, but it is true of some of the other islands.

The point I am trying to make is that these tropical rain forests harbour about half of the world's species of plants and many of them have not yet been identified, let alone studied. Plants in those areas are rapidly becoming extinct and we do not know anything about many

of them. It is something that our descendants will find it difficult to forgive our generation for.

It is difficult to attract public attention to this concept. It is easy to get people excited about nuclear radiation because they find that frightening, or to get people concerned about whales because they are beautiful creatures and the thought of their ending up in cat food products is not very appealing. However, getting people to come to grips with the totality of rain forests and what we are doing to them has been a slow and difficult process.

I have read that 25 per cent of all prescriptions filled in the United States take their active ingredients from higher plants. Pharmaceutical compounds are locked up in many of those plants and we depend on them for our survival. The same article I read said that not one pharmaceutical company in the US was carrying out any active research programmes to investigate new plants. The United Kingdom has something like 1 200 species of plants and hundreds of those are used in medicines. One that comes to mind is digitalis which comes from the foxglove plant; it slows a person's pulse without diminishing the force of the heartbeat. There are many other examples. So in the UK there are 1 200 species of which countless numbers have pharmaceutical and other uses.

In the south west of WA we have 5 000 plant species, and no-one has ever really looked at them. About 25 per cent of the species in the south west are used for grazing or house plants, or one thing and another. In Esperance there is a local enterprise initiative group—

Hon. Graham Edwards: They do an excellent job.

Hon. MARK NEVILL: Yes, they are very progressive groups down there. One group of farmers is studying a native bush which they are using for cattle fodder. Another person or group has been testing some of the eucalypts in the Esperance region for oil, and to their surprise they have found that two of the species there contain twice as much oil as the best known species from which we derive eucalyptus oil. The point is we know very little about Western Australian plant species. We have totally ignored the plants which the Aborigines use for their medicines. If people paid close attention to that aspect they would do very well.

Hon. G. E. Masters: That applies all over the world.

Hon. MARK NEVILL: Yes, but in the UK most of the species have been studied over the years by herbalists and pharmaceutical companies, whereas in the rain forests the majority of species have not been identified, let alone studied. In the south west of WA we have probably identified most of the species, but few have been studied and we do not know what benefits we might derive from them.

This week the Government announced the extension of the Fitzgerald River National Park and added another 51 000 hectares to the northern central area of the park. That area contains an estimated 1 750 species, or one-third of the species in the south west. That gives an idea of the richness of the flora, in particular, of the Fitzgerald River National Park. It is estimated there are 2 500 species in total in that park. The fauna in the park is also significant. The ground parrot is barely represented now in the southern areas of the State where it was once fairly common, but it is present in this park. There are also a number of rare mammals. The dibbler is present and so is the red tailed wambenger and a wallaby, the tammar. As recently as three or four weeks ago another marsupial, the short ridged native mouse, was found. It was thought to be extinct and had not been seen since 1931. That marsupial has turned up in the Fitzgerald River National Park. The new area to be added to the park is also important in terms of its landscape value and it protects the upper catchment area of the Fitzgerald River.

We really know very little about plant species, particularly in our own State, and the destruction of native vegetation, whether in Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, or in the tropical rain forests, is something we should be careful about. We need to be certain we do not speed up the extinction of thousands of species, as we are doing at the moment. A little sanity must be brought into this area so that we can preserve species for the use of future generations. This whole concept of biodiversity says that it is essential that we maintain a very diverse range of species of both plants and animals if we are to survive on this planet in the long term.

While discussing conservation matters, I will now comment on the recent saga surrounding the capture of sea lions at Esperance. I support

the views of those people who were opposed to taking the sea lions for the Atlantis Marine

Park. In my view, if people wish to see sea lions, they should come down to Esperance to do so and not take them away from the area.

When those sea lions were taken, a number of conservationists came into the area. The locals were aware that the sea lions were to be taken and they wanted to protest against that. Their intention was to do so by protesting peacefully; but prior to the actual protest a number of what I would term "radical" conservationists came from outside the area—from Perth and from the Eastern States. The locals hospitably welcomed these people and put them up, but they received very little return for treating them well. A couple of people have spoken to me about this matter and are quite happy for me to make these comments here. Two people in particular had telephone bills of \$200 or \$300 run up in the couple of days that these people were staying with them. Another person had a bill sent to him for \$2 000 for the printing of posters with sea lions on them; the posters featured sea lions basking on the Abrolhos Islands. I suppose they expect the locals will pay these bills as well.

However, during the protest these strangers successfully stirred up the locals and, when feelings were running very high, they just moved to the sidelines before the police moved in and the locals were arrested. Three people were arrested: one is an invalid pensioner, another a Vietnam veteran and the third a local woman who is some months pregnant. I believe the local people were taken in by these visitors; but now a court case is pending and they want to protest outside the courthouse in order to publicise the issue. The message I have to give them is one that I hope they will accept, for they are not wanted—that is, stay away.

The net result of these people coming down to Esperance is that three days have now to be set aside for a court case; there are QCs involved and what was originally going to be a peaceful protest was totally altered. Those radical conservationists, in my view, simply used the goodwill of the local conservationists for their own ends. I think their behaviour was quite despicable.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. V. J. Ferry.

MAIN ROADS AMENDMENT BILL*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 12 November 1986.

HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South) [9.15 pm]: This Bill amends the Main Roads Act of 1930. That Act was passed by this Parliament, to remove a board of control and in its place appoint a commissioner. Since that time several commissioners have maintained the Main Roads Act, and the Leach Highway was named after one of them. The present commissioner, Donald Hector Aitken, was appointed in 1965 aged 40; and under his guidance, with the assistance of several young and equally innovative fellow engineers in the department, the department was set a new course. His assistant commissioner was Albert Tognolini, who was recently awarded the Order of Australia, which indicates that he, as an assistant commissioner, has a reputation in his own right, as does the other assistant commissioner, Bob Mofflin. The contribution of these three people since 1965 is well known.

One of the objectives of the Bill before the House is to set up an advisory committee to be known as the Main Roads Board, and I really wonder why. As I pointed out, in 1930 the Main Roads Act was designed to remove a similar board and yet after 21 years of office of the present team, and despite their experience and the contribution they have made to the roads of this State, an advisory board is to be put over these men.

When one looks at the Bill and tries to anticipate what the Minister will require of such an advisory board, one notices that proposed new section 12E reads as follows—

12E. The functions of the Board are to advise the Commissioner and the Minister as to—

- (a) such matters as are referred to the Board by the Commissioner or the Minister; and
- (b) any other matter relating to the administration of this Act, as it sees fit.

That is really rather nebulous; it is a definition which allows them to do everything and anything.

I believe we ought to examine the manner in which the Main Roads Department works; and the 1985-86 annual report of the department probably gives a valuable insight into this mat-

ter. I quote from page 6 wherein is outlined the organisation and the objectives of the department. It reads as follows—

The major function of the Main Roads Department is to plan, build and maintain the Highway and Main Road system throughout Western Australia. The Main Roads Act and other state legislation confers the following additional powers and responsibilities on the Department.

Payment of Statutory Grants to local governments.

Assisting local governments in the improvement of secondary Roads.

Assisting with the construction and maintenance of Unclassified Roads, including Tourist Roads, roads in National Parks, and Forestry Roads.

Design, installation and maintenance of traffic control signals.

Provision and maintenance of traffic signs.

Planning major routes in the Perth metropolitan region.

Giving technical advice to local governments.

Quite frankly, when one becomes aware of the functions of the Main Roads Department, one wonders what a board of amateurs will be able to do towards improving the contribution made by the commissioner and his assistants in the manner in which they run the department. I wonder where the board will fit into the department's work.

On page 6 of the fifty-ninth annual report of the Main Roads Department, we find the department is managed as follows—

The Commissioner, Mr Don Aitken, heads the Executive, which is responsible for the overall direction of the Department.

The other members of the Executive Group are the two Assistant Commissioners, Mr Albert Tognolini, Operations, and Mr Bob Mofflin, Engineering, the Director Management Services, Dr Jim Gill and the Director Administration and Finance, Mr Des Warner.

The Executive meets fortnightly and meetings are expanded to include all other Directors every six weeks. Larger meetings of Senior Officers are held quarterly.

The objectives of the department are as follows—

To plan, design, construct and maintain the State's network of Highways and Main Roads.

To assist and co-operate with Local Government and other agencies in planning, providing and maintaining Secondary and other roads.

To achieve these objectives with due regard to Government and community requirements.

I guess that if one wanted to one could expand on those objectives. Obviously, the department has to respond to Government policies and directives and to keep the Minister informed about road matters. It must take a forward view of road needs and adopt appropriate strategies to maintain and improve the road asset. It must respond to community needs and enhance the environment where possible and improve the safety and capacity of the road system. The department must cooperate with other authorities in planning for road development. It must provide a satisfying work environment and assist each employee to realise his or her potential in pursuit of the department's objectives. Also, it must promote high standards of occupational health, safety and welfare and carry out research.

The department has laid down its objectives very clearly and quite frankly. I cannot help but feel that the establishment of a board will add to the difficulties rather than enhance the activities of the department. Most of the people who will be appointed to the board will have very little knowledge about the activities and objectives of the department which are largely technical.

In endeavouring to find the reasons behind the Minister's intention to establish a board I found in *Hansard* the Minister's reply to the second reading debate in the other place. I refer now to page 4010 of *Hansard* dated 11 November 1986 where the Minister, stated—

... it will advise the Minister and the Commissioner of Main Roads on specified activities, projects and decisions.

During the Committee stage of the debate on this Bill the Minister said that the estimated cost of between \$70 000 to \$80 000 for the op-

eration of the board out of a total budget of nearly \$300 million was only 0.02 per cent of the Budget. He then went on to say—

If this board can unlock the road funding formula—which is not agreed to by local government despite the fact that there is agreement that a greater concentration of funds should be spent on road maintenance—it will save \$80 000 in its first two months of operation.

One can read between the lines to see that what the Minister is hoping is that the board will undertake the negotiations for which he, as Minister, is responsible. The Commissioner of Main Roads does not have the responsibility to negotiate with local authorities concerning the amount of funding they will receive for the maintenance of their roads and how the money will be distributed among them.

As a previous Minister who was responsible for undertaking similar negotiations I am well aware that it is not the commissioner's responsibility but that it is a ministerial responsibility. I found no great problem in dealing with local authorities and I found that they were very reasonable. At that time, we set up a formula based upon the population of the local authorities and the length of roads they maintained. When it came to the metropolitan area we also set up a priority list for some of the major projects. I am of the opinion that it worked satisfactorily and I can only say that we had few hassles.

I do not believe that there is good reason to set up an advisory board. Indeed, the main problem associated with the department is that of finance. There is certainly not a need for a board to start telling the department what to do. There is no way in which the board will obtain additional funds for the department.

The consequences of distance to the development of Australia are well known to those who live in remote areas. These consequences were highlighted in Dr Blaney's book, *The Tyranny of Distance*, in which he pointed out that without a reasonable road and transport system the development of Australia would collapse.

The interesting point is that in spite of the recognition of this point, there has been no effort to have as representatives on the board people who live and operate a business in remote areas. During the Committee stage it is my intention to move amendments to correct this.

I also draw to the attention of the House the fact that both the State and Federal Governments are determined to tax the different components of transport by taxing fuel, both petrol and diesel, as well as charging high fees for motor vehicle registration and transfer.

It has been illustrated that today it costs up to \$3 000 to transfer the licence of a large semi-trailer. Of course, there are other taxes involved such as stamp duty and sales tax on new vehicles. All these Government taxes and charges undoubtedly place an unreasonable burden on the shoulders of those people living outside the metropolitan area. It appears that this Government is determined to tax isolation.

There has been an increase in the State taxation charges on petrol and rather than put this money back into the road system we have seen it go to Transperth. Those people who live in the metropolitan area and who do not make a major contribution to the petrol tax are receiving the benefits. Indeed, the average person in Perth who uses a car daily would probably only fill his petrol tank once a week whereas persons in the country would use a tankfull of petrol just to do the weekly shopping. They do not have the opportunity to use public transport as do those people living in urban areas.

We should have a close look at how our roads are funded. Once again, this information is readily available in the Main Roads Department's annual report. Of the money available to the Main Roads Department in 1985-86, \$102 million came from the Federal Government under the Australian Land Transport (Financial Assistance) Act, formerly known as the Road Grants Act.

Another \$57 million came from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund. That made up the Federal funding of \$160 million. Of the State sources of funding, almost \$64 million came from motor vehicle fees and \$46 million from fuel franchise licence fees. In all that came to \$300 million or thereabouts.

Although that seems like a lot of money there is great concern in local government and among others who are aware of the financing of the building of our roads about what will happen when the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund is terminated on 31 December 1988. That is a very short time indeed. Commonwealth road funding will then fall by one-third and instead of \$161 million the figure is likely to be closer to \$100 million.

That will be quite disastrous for the funding of our roads. However, at the same time the State is hopping in and using money from the one source from which we can get money for our roads, a tax on fuel. It is grabbing that money and using it for a transport system around Perth.

Hon. Bill Stretch has already raised in his speech today the question of maintenance of our roads. It is worth quoting briefly from the commissioner's overview in the annual report in which he said—

Although the life of a road is dependent on a number of factors, including the standard of construction, drainage and the volume and type of traffic that uses it, 35 years is considered to be an acceptable lifespan for a properly maintained road. In the 1950's and early 1960's—

I can recall that that was when we started to get going after the war. It continues—

—the Main Roads Department scaled considerable lengths of Highways, Main Roads and what were known as Important Secondary Roads at that time, which are now approaching the end of this 35 year lifespan. It has been estimated that some 2 900 kilometres of Highway and Main Roads will need reconstructing within the next ten years, or an average of 290 kilometres per year. The actual length of road reconstructed last year was 90 kilometres, well below the target amount. The State is therefore falling well behind this reconstruction target each year, the consequences of which will become increasingly apparent within a few years.

If that is not a stern warning from the commissioner to his Minister, I will walk east. He went on to point out that much of the national highway, particularly the Eyre Highway and large sections of the Great Northern Highway, are too narrow for modern conditions. He said that some sections are sealed only 3.7 metres wide. Those who use these roads are aware of how quickly they are deteriorating. Perhaps after what I have said they will realise the roads are approaching the end of their 35-year life span. There will be a great need for maintenance and the current rate of reconstruction—90 kilometres a year—is quite ridiculous when one considers that in order to maintain the

construction rate of previous years it would be necessary to reconstruct 290 kilometres a year. The report continues—

The Department provides a substantial sum to Local Government authorities for Statutory Grants and Specific Grants. Last year these grants totalled \$54 million. Local Roads, of course, form an important part of the State's total road network. Expenditure on Local Roads needs to be maintained in real terms to avoid the situation which has occurred in some other States where sealed roads have been ripped up and returned to a gravel surface because of a lack of funds to apply resals.

Fortunately we have not quite reached the stage of ripping up our sealed roads and returning them to gravel. However, at the rate we are reconstructing roads that could well happen in this State as it has in other States.

Unfortunately Western Australia's share of roads funds is falling. We now receive 12.4 per cent of the Commonwealth funds allocated to roads but in the past we received a far greater share. Indeed, when Mr Whillam was in power we received 19 per cent. This has decreased to 12.4 per cent but it is recommended that in the future we receive only 8.7 per cent. That recommendation is made despite the fact that Western Australia occupies one-third of Australia and has 27 per cent of Australian roads.

One of the purposes of this Bill is to grant that money to local governments and a schedule within the Bill sets out the specific grants to local authorities for 1985-86. This is the last grant and it will be used as a basis until 1990; the amounts will be either raised or lowered depending on the amount of money coming from the Federal Government. I have no argument with that. I do not know how the advisory board will help in any way with that because it has already been determined.

The third objective of this Bill is to allow the commissioner to delegate his authority, not only when he is interstate but also permanently from the point of view of some of his minor duties. It is interesting to note the delegation powers set out in clause 7 of the Bill, page 2, proposed subsection 10B(2) which states—

Where a function of the Commissioner is performed in accordance with a delegation under this section, that function is deemed to be performed by the Commissioner.

That has always been accepted but it is interesting to note how often we have heard Ministers of this Government try to dodge that issue and say they are not responsible for actions taken by one of their staff. Indeed, one Minister who has departed from this House—

Hon. Graham Edwards: What does it have to do with the Bill?

Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I just quoted from the darned thing.

Hon. Graham Edwards: What does it have to do with the powers of delegation contained in the Bill?

Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It is a clause of the Bill.

Hon. Graham Edwards: What does it have to do with the Ministers trying to evade responsibility?

Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: They are happy for the commissioner to have that responsibility but—

Hon. Graham Edwards: Are you supporting it or are you opposing it?

Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am pointing out what the Bill says and what we are voting on. If the Minister will allow me to do that, I will continue. The Bill explicitly states that the commissioner is responsible for any activity which he delegates to his staff; as the saying goes, the buck stops with the commissioner. It is remarkable how the Ministers of this Government seem to think otherwise when it refers to them.

Traditionally when the Ministers of this Government are asked a question they reply that they understood this or that they were told this or that. I was referring to Mr Dowding, of course, for when he answered questions in this House he used to say, "I am led to believe" or "I am told by the department".

I just make that observation, and I see nothing wrong with the Minister being fully responsible. One of the things one has to accept when one accepts full authority is that one is still responsible for any authority delegated to others. I am sure the present commissioner will have the utmost confidence in his assistant commissioners, and that they will not see him in too much trouble.

This Act came into being in 1930. For 50 years the commissioner has managed to survive without delegating authority. However, suddenly the need has become apparent and is to be included in the Act. The argument is that

when the commissioner goes overseas or interstate, the Governor-in-Executive Council has to sign an instruction.

Hon. Tom Helm: After 50 years he noticed a change.

Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It could not have been too serious. I certainly went through it all three years ago with the same commissioner, and did not see him finding any great difficulty in delegating his authority. I cannot see any reason for the great rush to do it, but I am quite happy to go along with it. It is not unreasonable, but I do not think it is entirely necessary either. Delegation is only one of the reasons why this Bill is before us. The main one is this matter of setting up an advisory board.

I am realistic enough to realise that the Minister could set up this board whether or not the Act was amended; and while if we wanted to we could throw the proposal out, one wonders really what one would achieve by doing so. So rather than that, our duty in this House should be to amend the membership of the board to make it more acceptable and useful; but I admit I would lose no blood if this House decided to totally defeat the clause.

Looking at the membership, my intention is to add three members to the board, one of whom will be able to make representation on behalf of farmers, another on behalf of pastoralists, and a third on behalf of the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. My reasons are, firstly, farmers seem to have a permanent problem with road use. We heard three speakers in the Address-in-Reply debate referring to this problem, and in particular to the overloading of vehicles used by farmers to cart their produce to the railhead. There are good reasons why a farmer should be on this advisory committee in his own right. It may be argued that farmers could turn up in the representation from local government, but at the same time there is no reason why they should, and if we are going to have shire elections with everyone who lives in the town having a vote, there is more likelihood in the future that farmers will not be taking such an active part in local government in their area.

Not only do farmers have overloading trouble with vehicles carting grain, but also with stock, and they have an overall dependence on roads for both social and commercial purposes. I believe the Western Australian Farmers Federation, with its 1 300 broadacre

farmers as members, should be a suitable body for the Minister to consult in his efforts to seek a suitable member.

While the Pastoralists and Graziers Association may not have such a large membership, it would have an obvious area of contribution as its members occupy nearly half the total area of the State and have an immense knowledge of outback conditions and the use of low-grade roads. Pastoralists actually construct and maintain at their own expense the station tracks used by the public, including those exploring for minerals, those travelling along the coast for fishing or as tourists, or Aborigines going on walkabout or visiting sacred sites.

The third group which I believe should be represented is those who are involved in commerce both in urban and rural areas. Those who have businesses in the metropolitan area can be greatly affected by the placement of freeways, traffic lights, median strips, and the like. Indeed, their businesses can be affected greatly by such decisions, as can those that the chamber represents in rural towns which are bypassed by new highways.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry has 4 500 members, with affiliated chambers in 46 towns from Carnamah to Kalgoorlie and Esperance. If we are going to have an advisory body, it can only be enhanced by the addition of the three members who are proposed.

I will not make a comparison between those I propose and those who are included in the Bill. There are some 11 members. The manner in which they are selected is constituted in the Bill itself. Nevertheless, I believe the three I have mentioned could well play just as important a part, or even more important, than some of those that are included.

I notice the chairman is to be appointed by the Governor. That comes as a surprise to me because I thought Hon. Joe Berinson introduced at one time a Bill into this Parliament to say that when the Minister appointed someone, it would be written into the Act and we would do away with this business of saying the Governor was doing something when indeed the Minister was. We all know the Governor will have no say at all in who will be the chairman of this board, despite the fact the Act says he will be appointed by the Governor.

The commissioner will be there ex officio, as will be the permanent head of the Department of Transport; in other words, the public servant who is administering the Transport Co-ordination Act. The rest of the positions will be

filled by the Minister and it will be his choice as to who will be members of the board. It is interesting that when it comes to a representative of the unions, one shall be an employee of the commissioner who is a paid wages employee, appointed to be a member of the board by the Minister after having been elected for such appointment by employees of the commission who are paid wages. So the unions are allowed to elect their member, whereas all the others are appointed by the Minister after consultation. It is interesting that the same words could not have been used in the case of a union representative.

One wonders whether it is not a case for the Equal Opportunity Act when one finds such a difference between the various representatives. I notice that among the people who will be on the board is a person appointed by the Minister after consultation with the Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.) and such other persons or bodies, if any, as the Minister considers should be given an opportunity to make representations in the interests of environmental conservation. In the past these needs have been met by the committee known as the Road Verges Committee. It has played a spectacular part in getting more wildflowers on our roadsides. It developed a method in which the topsoil could be taken from the roadside without destroying the wildflower seeds by composting. Now one often sees the greatest display of wildflowers after road construction, rather than before. I would like the Minister to tell me whether the committee will remain or whether it will be replaced by the representative of the person appointed after consultation with the Conservation Council.

I wonder whether that person will agree to the cutting down of the magnificent karri trees which are being used to supply the timber needs of this State. Will that representative agree to the planting of trees on roadsides by the Main Roads Department or by adjacent landowners? The practice of planting trees on our highways started as a sesquicentenary project when I was Minister in 1979. In that year 10 000-odd trees were planted, and since then the number of plantings has increased and there has been a great improvement to our roadsides. Regrettably many ideological conservationists believe only trees native to the area should be planted. That is a fine principle if there are trees which are native, but I point out that there were no trees on the sand plain before trace elements were added to it. In the late 1960s the planting of trees on the roadsides

in Esperance was allowed, but it was no longer permitted by the 1970s because it was not considered to be in the best interests of conservation. Fortunately some trees are once again allowed to be planted.

It is vital that more trees are planted in our new-land areas. I hope we will not see this board recommending that no more trees be planted on roadsides because they are vital in our rural environment.

I do not wish to go over the ground again. This Bill raised three principles; one is to give delegation of authority to the commissioner. As I have said, he has gone 50 years without that power, so I do not think it is any great thing.

The second proposal is to set up a board, and the Minister in another place has said he hopes it will be the answer to a Minister's prayer of unlocking a road fund formula. The commissioner hardly needs an advisory board for that because it is not his duty—it is the Minister's duty. The third reason for the Bill is to incorporate a schedule of grants to local government to be used for the next three years. With that schedule in the Bill there is no great need for a board to help unlock a road funding formula.

I will be circulating amendments as proposed.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. H. W. Gayfer.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

On motion by Hon. J. M. Berinson (Leader of the House), resolved—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 28 April.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: ORDINARY

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.55 pm]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Acts Amendment (Electoral Reform) Bill: Amendments

I draw attention to proposed amendments to the Acts Amendment (Electoral Reform) Bill which have been distributed to members in the

Chamber this evening. Because of the special importance of this legislation I advise members that it is proposed to bring in the Bill for debate to completion in the week commencing 28 April. That will allow almost three weeks for consideration of the listed amendments, and to further assist that process members will be

provided in the next few days with an explanatory memorandum. This will be forwarded to them direct by the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.56 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WATER RESOURCES: UNDERGROUND

Licences: Gelorup

44. Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is it necessary for land owners in the Gelorup area south of Bunbury, in the Capel Shire, to obtain a licence from the Western Australian Water Authority to sink a bore for a water supply?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) how much does each licence cost the applicant;
 - (b) is the licence a once only event;
 - (c) is the licence fee a once only charge or is it an annual or other periodical charge?
- (3) From the time an application to sink a bore is received by the authority, how long does it take for the application to be processed and approval granted?
- (4) Have any applications for licences in the Gelorup area been declined?
- (5) If so, how many and for what reasons?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) Yes, Gelorup is within the Bunbury groundwater area.
- (2) (a) No charge;
- (b) no—licences remain current for up to five years;
- (c) answered by (a).
- (3) For domestic use, up to two weeks, with the majority issued within one week. For more complex industrial or irrigation proposals, up to three months.
- (4) No.
- (5) Answered by (4).

WATER RESOURCES: DAM

Harris River: Funding

54. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is the Harris River Dam the Government's first priority in the application of Federal funds for water schemes?
- (2) When was the Federal Government first approached by the State for finance for the Harris River scheme?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) The Harris River Dam is the State's first priority for Federal funds for new water projects.
- (2) 1985-86.

WATER RESOURCES

Rainwater Tanks: Concessions

55. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Water Resources:

Has the Government considered giving concessions to householders who provide rainwater tanks for personal use?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The question of tax deductibility for costs borne by farmers for the provision of rainwater tanks was raised with me during a recent visit to Narrogin.

I am currently making some investigations, and also intend to refer the matter to the Minister for Agriculture.

STOCK: CATTLE

Johnes Disease: Vaccine

60. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Sport and Recreation representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of reported new developments of a vaccine in New Zealand to protect cattle against Johnes disease?
- (2) If not, will he make urgent representations for the Western Australian Department of Agriculture to be brought up to date with such research and development?
- (3) How many farms have been quarantined because of Johnes disease in the last 12 months?
- (4) How many cattle have had to be slaughtered because of this disease?
- (5) How much money has been paid out in compensation for the slaughtered cattle?
- (6) What was the source of the above compensation funding?

Hon. GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

- (1) The New Zealand authorities have licensed a vaccine to be marketed by May and Baker. It is expected to be used in dairy cattle to cut down the severity of disease effects.
- (2) See above.
- (3) Three.
- (4) 224.
- (5) \$132 810.
- (6) Cattle industry compensation fund.

WATER AUTHORITY

Storm Surge Barrier: Bunbury

65. Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Water Resources:

What areas of responsibility does the Western Australian Water Authority have in the performance, operation, or any other facet of the storm surge barrier at Bunbury?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The storm surge barrier at Bunbury is the responsibility of the Department of Marine and Harbours.

On behalf of this department, the Water Authority—

- (i) maintains the structure and equipment as necessary;
- (ii) operates the barrier fortnightly to ensure against possible failure during an emergency;
- (iii) carries out underwater inspections twice each year;
- (iv) monitors weather conditions and operates the barrier in storm surge situations in accordance with standard procedures set by the then Harbours and Rivers Branch of the Public Works Department in 1980.

ENVIRONMENT

Governor Stirling's House: Ruins

67. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that in the 1940s ruins believed to be those of Governor Stirling's house at Woodbridge were identified?

(2) Are the ruins still visible today?

- (3) Will any effort be made to protect or preserve any such ruins, especially given the bicentenary next year?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) I am aware that the records of the National Trust indicate that Governor Stirling's cottage was located near Woodbridge, close to the junction of the Swan River and Blackadder Creek. The cottage still existed, though in poor condition, in the 1920s. However, today the land on which it stood is occupied by buildings of the Governor Stirling High School.

The site is marked by a memorial erected in 1931 by the Royal WA Historical Society. This appears to be located approximately 40 metres north of the exact spot where the cottage was placed.

- (2) and (3) No ruins are visible today as the site has been built over. Clearly it is not possible to preserve any part of the cottage, although an archeological dig might be worthwhile if some of the school buildings were to be dismantled in the future.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meetings

68. Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Attorney General:

On what dates has the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee met over the last 12 months?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

For the 12 months to 31 March 1987, meetings were held on—

9, 16, 21, and 28 April; 12 and 19 May; 2, 16, 23, and 30 June; 7 and 14 July; 4 August; 8 and 22 September; 20 October; 3 and 17 November; 1 and 22 December.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN: CABINET

Functional Review Committee: Task Force Report

69. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Education:

I refer the Minister to the task force report to the Functional Review Committee referred to in his letter to me of 31 March 1987.

- (1) Was the report of the task force taken into consideration when the decision to adopt the "Better Schools" programme was taken?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, why is the report not to be made public?
- (4) Is Ms S. Brown, a member of the task force, the same Ms Brown who has been appointed Director of Curriculum?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) No decision has been taken to adopt the better schools programme. The document proposes new directions but will be subject to review following the extensive consultations which are at present being pursued.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Functional review reports are reports to Government, and it has not been Government practice to release these reports.
In the specific case, not all of the recommendations were considered to be educationally desirable; but those which were considered to be both feasible and desirable have been included in the better schools document.
- (4) No appointment has been made to the position of Director of Curriculum. The position is being filled in an acting role by Ms Brown, who was for a time a member of the task force.

EDUCATION

"WA Education News": Publication

70. Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister for Community Services representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) When was the publication *WA Education News* first published?
- (2) How many issues have been produced in each of the years since its inception?

Hon. KAY HALLAHAN replied:

- (1) 5 March 1981.
- (2) 1981—19
1982—21
1983—20
1984—20
1985—19
1986—19
1987 to date—4

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

PINJARRA RACE MEETING

Rescheduling

21. Hon. B. L. JONES, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Labour, Productivity and Employment:

Is the Minister aware that due to heavy rain the Pinjarra race meeting which was set down for today has been washed out? Would he give his permission for that race meeting to be held on Sunday?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

I am advised that permission has been granted.