

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, 7 July 1993

**THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Hon Barry House) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

## STATEMENT - BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

*Jackson, Lady Mary, Letter of Thanks*

**THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I wish to read a letter from Lady Mary Jackson, addressed to the President -

Dear Mr Griffiths

Thank you very much for your letter and for enclosing the extracts from *Hansard* concerning my husband.

My family and I appreciate it very much.

Yours sincerely  
Mary Jackson

## MOTION - MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

*Minister for Transport, Contempt of the House - Transperth Fares, Multirider Tickets*

**HON JOHN HALDEN** (South Metropolitan) [2.32 pm]: I raise a matter of privilege and, under Standing Order No 155, I move, without notice -

That the Minister for Transport present to this House at the next day of sitting, reasons why he should not be adjudged in contempt of this House for the nature of replies he has given, and statements he has made, relating to the recent increase in Transperth fares, and the action taken by him or his department relating to the supply of multirider tickets in the days immediately preceding the date of the increase and subsequently; and in the event that the Minister fails to provide his reasons as required, His Excellency the Governor be advised that the Minister no longer enjoys the confidence of this House.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Hon John Halden has the floor.

**Hon JOHN HALDEN:** It is a shame, in a case like this, that before I speak a Government member has suggested, by way of interjection, that this matter should not be debated. This is a matter of gravest importance, and to say we should put the matter to the vote immediately reflects the contempt with which Government members hold this House. It is contemptuous that they will not entertain any argument but will use the brutality of the numbers. If we proceed on that basis -

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! We will proceed with the debate.

**Hon JOHN HALDEN:** My motion results from statements made by the Minister for Transport in this House and outside the House which he knew, or should have known, were wrong. As part of his portfolio, the Minister should have known - even from the questions being asked by me and others - that there was a questionable degree of inconsistency between what he was saying and what he was being told and consequently advising the House. We have been down this path before.

I will not go into a wide range of debate about the issue of multirider tickets. I will concentrate specifically on how the Minister has answered the questions and the inconsistencies that have unfolded. It could be simply that the Minister, instead of checking the sources of his facts, persisted with the same line of argument even though it was clearly wrong. It could be that the Minister failed to understand what he was being told and so continued with the same line of argument. It could be that the Minister understood exactly what he was being told but chose to ignore the facts and to continue

to ignore the blatantly obvious. Whichever of those options it might be, the results are clear: At the end of the day, without doubt the statements made by the Minister in this House are misleading.

The reason why the situation has become so painfully obvious and why this motion has had to be moved is that the Minister has continued to argue the same line and the same point despite the fact that it is clear from his statements that what he was trying to say was incorrect. This motion has been moved as a result of the Minister's insistence on continuing to maintain a position that is not justifiable by the facts or by some of his statements. The Minister has failed to acknowledge the obvious. A cursory exploration of the facts would point out the error of his ways.

A Minister of the Crown has responsibility to explain clearly and openly the conduct of his department, particularly in this House, when he is repeatedly asked questions by members of the Opposition. We have been a responsible Opposition. We have not, as suggested yesterday, in any way tried to entrap the Minister. We have not asked tricky questions. We have asked simple questions; and it is the answers to which we respond today - those answers which are inconsistent and which have led to a situation where the Minister for Transport has misled the House. If the Minister cannot get such simple facts right - as those presented since last Wednesday - how can this House at any time be expected to rely upon his answers, the answers that are obviously inaccurate? As I said, the motion does not discuss the issues relating to the multirider tickets; it relates to the Minister's inability to be consistent and concise in his answers to questions in this House.

To repeat the sequence of events during which the Minister misled the House, I start with last Wednesday, 30 June. The Minister answered a Dorothy Dix question from Hon Barbara Scott in this way -

I advise the House that Transperth is not withholding multirider tickets.

Further on he said -

Contrary to Hon John Halden's attempt to mislead the public of Western Australia by saying that people will not be able to buy those tickets, the supply is continuing as before.

To me, and I am sure anyone of fair mind would agree, both statements suggest that the Minister said clearly that the supply of multirider tickets was continuing as before. I am not putting words into the mouth of the Minister; I am quoting directly from *Hansard*. There can be no ambiguity in any interpretation of the comments. Members will recall that, on the same day, I made a personal explanation in which I said that at a meeting on Monday, 28 June at 10.00 am, Mr Brett Inchley, the Business Manager of Transperth, met with the accountant of Newspower, and at that meeting Mr Inchley said that he was under direction to withdraw the supply of multirider tickets. I also advised the House that the remarks had been confirmed by the Managing Director of Newspower. On the next day, at question time, Hon M.J. Criddle asked the Minister for Transport: Did the Minister direct Transperth to stop allocating multirider tickets? Mr Charlton said no, and I accept that answer, but he went on to say -

The flow of tickets to agents has continued so that they can provide those genuine customers with their requirements.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Did they?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: No.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Who said?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: You did. That is the problem.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Who said they did not get the tickets?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: You did!

Hon E.J. Charlton: Read it again!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I am happy to entertain the Minister. Hon Eric Charlton replied -

The flow of tickets to agents has continued so that they can provide those genuine customers with their requirements.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I am asking you if they did.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: No, they did not get their tickets.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Who said they didn't?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will elucidate for the Minister.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That is what I asked you before, and you couldn't understand it, you dumb Dora.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Having said that, the Minister on the same day replied to questions that I asked. I asked the Minister whether Mr Brett Inchley, the Business Manager of Transperth, met with Mr McGrath, the accountant of Newspower, on 28 June 1993. The Minister responded by saying that he had been advised that Mr Inchley met with Mr McGrath on that day. I then asked the Minister whether it was correct that during this meeting Mr Inchley told Mr McGrath that he had been instructed not to supply Newspower with its usual number of multirider tickets. The Minister replied that he understood that was correct. That is the start of the problem and of the Minister's contradictory statements: Newspower was not supplied with tickets, yet the Minister said that the flow of tickets to Newspower had not been stopped. Within two or three minutes of making that statement the Minister said in this House that a meeting took place and the supply was curtailed. The Minister confirmed who was at the meeting and what had happened at that meeting. Towards the end of question time on Thursday, 1 July I asked the Minister a question relating to his response to question without notice 85 of 30 June. I stated that the Minister had advised the House that Transperth was not withholding multirider tickets. I then quoted the Minister's response of the day before that the supply would continue as before and asked whether the Minister confirmed the response that he gave the House the previous day. The Minister, having said that the flow had been stopped or withheld, then said that he absolutely confirmed his statement of the day before that it had not happened. This all happened within a space of 30 minutes in this Chamber. One must say that those two different answers from the Minister to Dorothy Dix questions from his own back bench in two consecutive days were contradictory.

The contradictions do not stop and the Minister continues to say that Transperth did not withhold the supply of multirider tickets - that is in spite of his saying in this House that it did. The Minister had nearly five days to work out, or to take advice, that that was not the case. One of those two statements was incorrect - either Transperth had or it had not withheld the tickets.

So that members in this place are clear in regard to this matter I refer again to the letter I wrote to Newspower last Thursday asking for confirmation of particular facts. These are facts that have not been challenged by the Minister for Transport, and, in fact, have been agreed to by the Minister. Of course in an effort not to be seen to be attacking this Minister I tabled this letter to give him an opportunity to understand what I had written.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Why did you table that letter?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I tabled it of my own volition to encourage the Minister.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You are such a great, open, honest individual, Mr Halden.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I am glad the Minister said that; I appreciate that. No entrapment was involved. I am a little sensitive to the issues raised by the Leader of the Government in this place yesterday. I accept that he must make the best of a bad lot, but in any fair assessment it cannot be said that I have endeavoured to entrap this Minister. Since last Wednesday I have persistently gone into this process, clearly, distinctly and openly and on more than one occasion. I sent a letter to Mr Craig McGrath, the accountant of Newspower, asking him to confirm certain facts; namely -

- (1) That you met Mr Brent Inchley, Business Manager for Transperth, on Monday June 28 at approximately 10am at your Belmont headquarters.

- (2) That at that meeting, Mr Inchley advised you that he had been instructed not to supply Newspower this week with its usual supply of Multi-rider tickets.
- (3) That this meant Newspower's normal supply, due on Wednesday, June 30, would be withheld.
- (4) That Mr Inchley said on June 28 that he was happy for Newspower to blame Transperth for this situation and that Mr McGrath was to refer people, with complaints, to Transperth.
- (5) That your normal allocation of 6000 A2 and C2 tickets have not been provided, as is your normal weekly entitlement.
- (6) That Transperth has only provided 4000 A2 and C2 tickets.

In response, I received a fax at 2.30 pm that afternoon from the managing director, Mr Evans, who confirmed that my list of facts relating to Transperth tickets was essentially correct. Yesterday in this House the Minister persisted with the claim that Transperth had not withheld multirider tickets in spite of the fact that he had admitted on Thursday that there had been a meeting between a Transperth official and Newspower and that the instruction that the Transperth official had given was that the supply was to be withheld on that Wednesday. It is an obvious contradiction.

Yesterday the Minister tabled a letter, dated 6 July, addressed to Mr Stephen Imms, Principal Private Secretary of the Minister for Transport, and signed by Tony Middleton, the Chairman of Transperth. The letter is headed "Instruction relating to multirider ticket sales". I will not read the whole letter, but the salient facts read -

Hon E.J. Charlton: I read this to the House yesterday.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I acknowledge that. The Minister's two stories and his tabled letter have got him into enormous difficulty.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You dill.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Let us stick to the subject.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister can abuse me on any occasion he chooses in or outside the Chamber.

Hon T.G. Butler: It is a sign of a weakness in his argument if he resorts to abuse.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The letter reads -

The following instructions were issued by Transperth with respect to Multirider sales

25th June

Newspower was instructed to provide the one normal delivery during the week starting the 28th June, to provide the normal consignment stock for that agency.

The Minister has said in this House, and in response to my questioning has agreed, that on 28 June Mr Brett Inchley was meeting with the accountant at Newspower to tell him he was instructed not to supply the normal weekly issue. It cannot be clearer: These are totally contradictory remarks. No tricks are involved, just simple, self-evident facts that have been presented to this House predominantly by the Minister. The last part of this letter reads -

At no stage did Transperth require Newspower to instruct its agents to limit sales to customers.

The Minister has confirmed that a meeting was held on 28 June at which the business manager told Mr McGrath that he was instructed by Transperth not to provide that week's tickets; they were to be withheld. The situation is further complicated by Mr Charlton's statement in the Press today, which again highlights this Minister's inability to come to grips with the facts and heightens his effort to continue misleading this House and the public. Mr Charlton, having got himself in a bit of a knot yesterday,

went to the Press, as was reported in the newspaper today, and tried to get himself out of that knot.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You are a disgrace, Mr Halden. You have spent more than the past week going to the Press with nothing more than misconceptions and untruths about everything you have stood for.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I will not respond to that interjection.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): I suggest that the member does not respond and sticks to the substance of the debate.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I intend to do that Mr Deputy President. I could refer the Minister to a quote from the President, but I will continue with my speech. On page 31 of today's *The West Australian* an article states -

Mr Charlton said that when he told the House Transperth was not withholding tickets last Wednesday, it wasn't. It was not until the next day it withheld them.

Members should think about what we have discussed in this debate.

Hon E.J. Charlton: We have already established that about 10 times in the past week, Mr Halden.

Hon N.F. Moore: It will take a long time to sink in.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Let us go through this matter carefully. The Minister went to the Press with the above statement.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That has already been quoted to you last week.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That statement was wrong; that is the difficulty. It is inaccurate and it is made inaccurate by the Minister's statement. The Minister has already agreed that a meeting occurred at which an individual from Transperth said that the tickets would be withheld as from Monday and that Wednesday's supply, 30 June, would be withheld. Mr Max Davies, whom I visited on Wednesday in Amelia Heights, did not have his tickets; they had been withheld by Newspower under instruction from Transperth. I telephoned Newspower on Wednesday morning and was advised that its tickets had been withheld. When I telephoned on Thursday I was advised that it had received 4 000 A2/C2 tickets on Thursday, not on Wednesday as the Minister stated to the Press yesterday. Perhaps the directive was given late on Wednesday evening. I am not in a position to answer that; however, the Minister was wrong yet again. He has continued to mislead in spite of the fact that he has agreed that the tickets would be withheld from Monday and that the normal Wednesday supply would not be available. On that basis it is a simple case and it is quite clear that the Minister has misled this House and the public. The situation is a sorry state of affairs. It is not difficult for any member in this House, bar the Minister, to understand the predicament he has now got himself into. He cannot expect to maintain the respect of this House and his authority within it when he makes totally contradictory remarks. Under the system of Government in which we believe a member, whether on this side or the other side of the House, cannot come into this place and continue as the Minister is doing.

The Minister clearly began - I am being generous - with a wrong assumption. However, it is my view and contention that having started that, he then tried to justify it. As he went down the path of justifying it the hole into which he dug himself became deeper and deeper. One need not be a Rhodes scholar -

Hon E.J. Charlton: That is one thing you aren't.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: - to see that the Minister is neither consistent nor accurate with his responses to this House. The Minister got himself into that position after being given ample opportunity to correct the situation or to apologise. I have provided the Minister with an opportunity to correct his statement on about four occasions; however, he does anything he likes but get it right in this House. On every occasion he has persisted with an absolute fallacy. I refer members to the situation which occurred prior to the election and how the then Opposition, and now Government, demanded an enormously high level

of ministerial responsibility. Members may recall the number of times members who now sit on the other side of the House launched a merciless attack upon Ministers in this House about matters that were nowhere near as obvious as this; they were trivial in comparison.

Hon Graham Edwards: And often personal.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: However, at the moment the Minister out of his own mouth has misled the House and is continuing to do so. The tragedy is that this is not the only matter on which the Minister has got it wrong. The Minister also got the issue about Transperth's debt wrong.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The Minister didn't get it wrong, Mr Halden. The Minister told you how much debt was owing by Transperth and what it had to pay. You heard it last night, but you are too ignorant.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: A difficulty exists because the Minister has it wrong. That is why, when asked a question in the adjournment debate last night, he read from a prepared speech and acknowledged that it was not Transperth's debt but a combination of the debt of Transperth and Westrail. In spite of the generous opportunity provided by Hon Kim Chance for the Minister to correct a statement on that matter in the House yesterday he failed to do so until prompted in the adjournment debate by that member.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Get out of the gutter, Mr Halden.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: At least two examples now exist of the Minister's getting it wrong. However, a sizeable difference exists between what happened yesterday in the discussion on Transperth's debt and what is now happening in this matter. In spite of repeatedly being given the opportunity to correct a wrong and misleading statement in this House, the Minister failed to do so. Any responsible Opposition has only one choice; that is, to ask that this Minister be held in contempt of this House, because that is what it is.

No-one can be fairer than we have been. We have given the Minister every opportunity to explain his actions and he has failed. The House must decide whether the Minister can be believed in the future given the fact that on every opportunity that he has been given to correct the record in this place and to refute the mounting evidence that he has misled the Parliament in his statements, he has not been able to do so. The Minister's performance over the first three weeks of this Parliament has been the most regrettable that I have seen in my time in this place. This Minister is not in control of his department and is not on top of his portfolio responsibilities. To be generous to him, he may have been given the most diabolical advice possible. However, Ministers are responsible for the advice they are given and the buck stops with them. They are responsible no matter how wrong or how poor the advice.

Hon Tom Helm: He is incompetent.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: He is certainly incompetent. When one looks at the record, no matter how bluntly the numbers in this House might have been used, this Minister has misled the House. I say that with assurance because this matter speaks for itself. It is clear that he has misled the House.

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Leader of the Opposition) [3.02 pm]: I congratulate Hon John Halden for the manner in which he has addressed this issue, not just today but over the preceding days of this very young Thirty-fourth Parliament when this issue has been debated. I congratulate the member particularly for the consistent arguments he has so ably advanced with the support of other members on this side. They have not endeavoured to turn the debate into a personal witch-hunt or a personal attack. Nor have they sought to turn the debate into one of personal abuse. That is very refreshing given the abuse that the previous speaker referred to in previous Parliaments. We heard for 10 years how important it is for Ministers to come into this House and respond to questions and provide information that is factual and accurate. It is

unfortunate that Ministers, and this Minister in particular, seem to have scant regard for the necessity of providing accurate information. The Minister has only himself to blame for the predicament in which he finds himself. Hearing the number of times that the Minister has misled the House and watching this argument evolve, I am amazed that the Minister has not sought to make a ministerial statement in order to set the matter right.

I do not need to reiterate the arguments that have been put so ably and so capably by Hon John Halden. However, in the interests of the remainder of the time of this Parliament and in the interests of Ministers accepting the responsibilities they have to this House, the Government should respond to the complaints that have been put to the House by Hon John Halden. We will not accept second rate answers and we will not accept Ministers coming into this place after being snowed by their departments and then endeavouring to snow the Parliament and the people of this State. We are entitled to the information we seek and we are entitled also to expect that the information is accurate. We are entitled also to believe that Ministers are on top of their departments; it is our responsibility to ensure that that is the case. I support the motion moved by Hon John Halden.

**HON E.J. CHARLTON** (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [3.07 pm]: The motion moved by Hon John Halden is unbelievable. Either he is trying to impress his colleagues that he is on to something and he is trying to convince them that he should be the next leader of the Labor Party in this place -

Hon Graham Edwards: On that side!

**HON E.J. CHARLTON**: Be careful, Mr Halden; that thing you are pointing at me might go off.

The **DEPUTY PRESIDENT** (Hon Barry House): Order! The debate so far has progressed without interjections. I ask members to continue in that vein.

**HON E.J. CHARLTON**: Something other than this issue seems to be driving Hon John Halden. As usual he is not taking into consideration the usual rules which should apply in these debates. He spoke about the integrity of members and their requirement to honour the standing orders of this House, yet such matters are the furthest things from his mind. Mr Halden has demonstrated over a long period that he operates for other purposes. That is what has driven him today to move this motion. He has based his whole argument today, as he has done on previous occasions, on the fact that Transperth forced an agent to go without multirider tickets. He said publicly that I had directed Transperth. Members should remember this: He said, not in this place but outside it, that I had directed Transperth. That is the basis of his accusations.

He shot his mouth off outside this place and then came into this House and formed a series of questions about withholding tickets. When I told him that Transperth was not withholding tickets, he made further inquiries and discovered Transperth had had a meeting the following day with the individual to whom he referred, and had advised that it would not supply that agency with the tickets requested. There is a very important factor here. Shall Transperth be judged to be withholding tickets because it would not allocate the number requested by the agent? Hon John Halden has taken up that point and has built his case upon it. The agency was not getting the number requested and, therefore, Transperth was deemed to be withholding tickets. The fact is that Transperth would not give people unlimited supplies of multirider tickets from which to profiteer. That is why the decision was made and why I correctly and accurately responded saying that the meeting had taken place, and Newspower had been told that tickets would be allocated to it on the basis of its usual requirements to enable it to satisfy its customers.

Hon John Halden does not take that into account because it does not suit his argument. His argument is not about Newspower or the people who want to buy multirider tickets; it is a move under the rules and regulations in this place to direct attention to me and the Government. That is driving Hon John Halden. It is typical of his whole make-up and the sort of individual he is. Members should not be surprised at this behaviour because Hon John Halden will continue in this way for his term in this Parliament. This is typical

of his past actions and that is why it comes as no surprise. It is also a reason that the Government will not get excited about this matter. Hon John Halden is using innocent people and taking advantage of people outside this place to make his points and to do some grandstanding in the newspapers, on radio and on television. He has been to the media and told a whole series of stories which are untrue. He has done so since the beginning of this exercise. We are wasting the valuable time of this Parliament once again debating this matter. No doubt, Hon John Halden will continue to behave in this way because that is how he operates. It is not a problem for the Government.

As a consequence of the second day's activity Transperth advised Newspower - it must be remembered that it has a head office and a number of agencies - that tickets would be allocated. Transperth obviously knew the situation, and I back its response. If Transperth had not given me accurate information, it would have to wear that. At no stage has Hon John Halden demonstrated improper or inaccurate actions that were not in the best interest of the people of Western Australia or the people who use the public transport system. Transperth acted very responsibly to ensure that an organisation would not have unlimited access to these multirider tickets. It must be borne in mind that each ticket can be used for 10 bus rides. Why would any person want to purchase the numbers I mentioned, for example, \$32 000 worth, 400 tickets and other orders referred to? Unlike Hon John Halden I did not take the opportunity to blab the names of those people. I did not admire them for attempting to do what they did, and I could have told the world who those people were. However, I chose to give them the benefit of the doubt and to assume they were simply responding to a perceived opportunity which Transperth, because of its responsible actions, did not allow to happen.

This individual opposite who operates in the way he does decided to make a big issue of this matter which he, with his warped mind, thought presented itself to the people of Western Australia. He decided to take advantage of a situation in which he could demonstrate two things: Firstly, that I as Minister was not answering the question consistently or honestly - I am not quite sure what exactly he is trying to determine; and, secondly, by the very fact that Newspower received 6 000 tickets one week and 4 000 the next, tickets were being withheld. His accusation is groundless, full of holes, and a pathetic effort by him; it is not the first and it will not be the last. The technical factor onto which he has latched is the variation in supplies, and he has built a story about withholding tickets although the bottom line is that Transperth restricted the allocation because it did not want the organisation to take advantage of the situation and profiteer. Further, to demonstrate my point, if the agent had a problem with Transperth would it have sat back quietly or would it have approached Transperth or the Minister for Transport to complain?

Hon John Halden: They did, they went to you.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: Does the member know what Newspower did? It sent me a letter saying that its orders were reduced but it would like to see this matter ended because it did not want any more politicking played around it. Since then, with his despicable attitude to life and everything that goes with it, Hon John Halden has decided to pursue the matter for his own benefit, even though the organisation does not want to pursue it with me or with anyone else. If it does want to do so, no-one has told me about it, which is perhaps an indication of how important it is. The only person pursuing this matter is the member of Parliament sitting on the other side of the House and he should be moved out of the door. This has been his attitude to this whole matter over a number of days. He has been basing his accusations and action against me on the fact that I said Transperth was not withholding tickets, while he said it was withholding tickets because one week Newspower received 6 000 tickets and the next week it received 4 000 tickets. I think Hon John Halden used the term "inaccuracies". However, he has not told anybody that the same organisation on average purchased \$175 000 worth of tickets a week, but on the week in question requested \$415 000 worth. I do not have the specific figures but they are within that range. Hon John Halden is standing up for fair play saying that I, as Minister for Transport, am not honouring a commitment to make sure people are not disadvantaged.



As a consequence of Hon John Halden's pressure, Newspower contacted me saying that tickets were withheld and they know why that happened. I have said this 10 times now and I am sure that everybody is sick to death of hearing it. That organisation also stated in its fax that it did not want to hear any more about the matter and that it had had enough of people playing politics with it. I do not regard that organisation in a bad light. It is in the market of providing tickets to people who use the public transport system, and was advised by Transperth that it could not have unlimited supplies. Everybody was happy with that situation. No complaints were received in my office from anyone about the increase in fares, or about people not being able to purchase tickets. Everybody got as many tickets as they wanted. The only person not happy is the member opposite who wants to play this game to demonstrate to his socialist offsideers that he will be the great white hope of the Labor Party in the future. If the people in the Labor Party pin their hopes on Hon John Halden, they are going down a one way street. That is probably the best thing that could happen.

My response to this rubbish - and by that I mean the motion moved by Hon John Halden this afternoon - is that motions are a very important part of the Westminster system, and I respect that; but I do not respect the way the individual has used it to further his own political activity at the expense of innocent people in the State, innocent and responsible people in Transperth who are carrying out their jobs, and the agents in this State who have done their jobs without a complaint from anybody. It demonstrates what a disgraceful and despicable action it is, and it deserves what it will get.

**HON N.D. GRIFFITHS** (East Metropolitan) [3.20 pm]: The Minister for Transport has given an account of his actions with respect to his dealings with the issue of tickets from Transperth to Newspower and I am of the view that in his dealings with Transperth and Newspower the Minister has behaved perfectly properly. I think everybody on this side of the House is also of that view; but that is not the point. The point is that the Minister said to the House that matters were proceeding normally, then later said they were not proceeding normally and that he took steps - or rather, steps were taken - to curtail the issue of tickets.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Get that right. I never took any steps at all to interfere with anybody's activity.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: I am not quoting from *Hansard*, I am endeavouring to use my powers of recollection.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson interjected.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: If Hon Derrick Tomlinson wants to engage in the debate he can do so in due course. The issue is that the Minister says one thing on one occasion and another thing on another occasion. Every time the matter has been put to the Minister he has given an account of his directions and his involvement with the issue of tickets, and again I say what he did with respect to the issue of tickets was perfectly proper. However, as Hon John Halden has so properly pointed out, the fact is that the Minister has misled the House. He has been given every reasonable opportunity to explain his conduct. As I said yesterday, if he made a mistake, and if he just acknowledges that, that is fine.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What mistake?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: The mistake was in misleading this House.

**HON GEORGE CASH** (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [3.22 pm]: I oppose the motion, because while it is a matter of privilege it appears to be founded on the belief that a contempt may have occurred in this House. A careful reading of the motion will reveal that what Hon John Halden is stating is that in respect of the nature of certain replies that have been received by the House, the Minister for Transport should do certain things.

If we look at the basis of the nature of replies, and the definition of the word "nature", to try to gain some understanding of what Hon John Halden is driving at, we understand that in the nature of the reply we are talking about the general characteristics of those

replies. For the third day in a row I do not really understand what Hon John Halden is driving at. He admitted yesterday that he was confused, and I must acknowledge that I was confused by the arguments he put.

Hon John Halden: I was only confused by your Minister.

Hon GEORGE CASH: However, that confusion in itself is not substance enough for him to move this motion today. Hon John Halden is looking for answers that suit him and that suit his purpose, and if he does not get those answers, quite clearly he will reject anything the Minister for Transport puts forward to this House in reply.

Hon T.G. Butler: You are speaking from a position of experience.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon GEORGE CASH: I missed the first part of the member's interjection, which was probably the most important part.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Interjections are out of order.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Quite clearly, from what Hon John Halden has said, he is keen to get answers that suit him and suit his purpose. It seems to me that if the answers do not suit his purpose, irrespective of the validity of the answers, they will be rejected out of hand by Hon John Halden. Again, that is not sufficient reason for him to come into this House and move this motion.

I said yesterday I believed Hon John Halden had asked a number of trick questions to see if he could corner the Minister when he analysed the responses. We heard the President make a number of remarks yesterday about members in this House using the House by way of asking trick questions.

Hon Mark Nevill: I thought he was talking about you.

Hon GEORGE CASH: This motion is nothing more than a stunt which has been organised to keep Hon John Halden's profile high in this House and in the community from a media point of view. The motion is not worthy of support; it should be put to bed once and for all.

I made the point yesterday that Hon Eric Charlton is a man of integrity. For Hon John Halden to come here today and move this motion, and just hope - and that may be all he is expecting - that he would gain some support from the words of the motion, certainly not the substance of the argument he put forward, is beyond me. No question arises in my mind that the motion itself will affect the integrity of Hon Eric Charlton; the motion will not impugn his integrity because he is the man we know him to be - a man who has served this House in good faith for more than nine years.

I ask members to recognise that this motion is no more than a political stunt, as has already been said, designed to cause conflict between the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who are obviously fighting each other for the top job.

Hon Mark Nevill: I'm after that job!

Hon GEORGE CASH: As such the motion should not enjoy the support of this House. Members would do well to reject it because it has no substance at all.

HON JOHN HALDEN (South Metropolitan) [3.27 pm]: It is a shame that in a debate such as this when we are talking about the Minister's integrity and ability to respond to questions in a reasonable way we should see, by way of defence, a continuation of the personal abuse of myself, and now the Leader of the Opposition, to justify in some way the totally unjustifiable series of answers by the Minister. I have played politics in this House and elsewhere, and I do not mind; members can say what they like, it will not affect me. It most definitely will not affect the substance of this debate.

Hon Graham Edwards: It will not affect the Opposition or deflect us in our pursuit of truth and honesty in this House.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Having given the Minister another opportunity today to say, if he wanted, "I have made an honest mistake", or "I got some wrong advice", or whatever -

Hon Mark Nevill: They are born to rule; they don't make mistakes!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I agree with that. However, the Minister did not say either of those things. He still does not see any contradiction in the series of statements he made in this House. I know how we will vote on this motion; politics has taught me to count.

Hon E.J. Charlton: You sure learned that.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It will be to their eternal shame that the Leader of the House and the Minister made such speeches today because they have made a mockery of the processes of this House. I sought simple clarification of the truth and received not clarification but a litany of personal abuse; if those are the rules, we will oblige, although I have endeavoured not to do that.

I now refer to some of the Minister's statements in the House today. Firstly, he said that he had restricted the number of multirider tickets available, yet within the first three lines of his statement he said that the tickets were not withheld on the Wednesday. Therefore, he said that the tickets were not being withheld, yet he restricted the number of tickets! What does one do when the Minister cannot get it right?

Hon E.J. Charlton: You drongo, Mr Halden!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: I can stand this personal abuse; I will cop it. However, the realities are that the Minister got it wrong. He said that the normal weekly supply was continuing, but 20 newsagents rang me on that Wednesday indicating they did not receive their normal weekly supplies at all because Transperth had instructed not to supply. Mr Inchley commented to Newspower that no tickets would be supplied. The Minister continues to mislead the House; he cannot help himself. He has dug, and continues to dig, a hole for himself.

Hon Tom Helm: Ignorance and arrogance.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The Minister went on to say that if such concerns were held about Transperth withholding the tickets, he would have heard about it through complaints to his office. I do not know what goes on at the Minister's office -

Hon George Cash: You are not likely to either!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: - however, I bet it is pandemonium in there. The Minister's comment was wrong again. On Tuesday, 29 June Mr Max Davies rang his office and was told that tickets were not being supplied. The Minister is not even in control of his office. He keeps going over the same points; he has mislead the House yet again.

Hon Doug Wenn: Resign!

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It was said in this debate that the answers provided did not suit my purposes. Honest answers, given to the best of one's ability, are a requirement of this House. What I think about answers is irrelevant.

Hon George Cash: Exactly! You based your whole argument on what you thought of the answers.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The statements are so obviously in contradiction of each other that it is incumbent on the House to say that the Minister is absolutely beyond it. We must call the Minister to order. He has even made contradictory statements during the past half-hour. Hon George Cash referred to trick questions, but that line has brought only great mirth to the Opposition and the Press. A cursory examination of the questions I asked indicates they are as simple and straightforward as possible. However, the difficulty for the Minister is that he could not answer them correctly; he could not be consistent. A Minister of the Crown cannot be allowed to continue to answer questions in a contradictory manner in a short period of time, and I must draw the House's attention to that point.

As I began speaking personal abuse was heaped on me, and it was started by the Minister for Transport attempting to score points from a cheap Dorothy Dix question; it ran from there. Every time I attempted to obtain an answer from the Minister, he went for the

cheapest trick and attacked the messenger. He did not look at the ridiculous statement he was making as he shot the messenger.

Regarding the relevance of my profile to this debate, as long as this man remains Minister, my profile and the issue of transport will remain high. Basically, the Minister is incompetent. Whenever he continues to show his incompetence in this State, I will be waiting!

Hon T.G. Butler: Be fair, he is no worse than any of the others.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: That is true. The reality of this matter has nothing to do with the arguments raised by members opposite: It has nothing to do with what I have read in answers, my tricking the Minister or my profile. If members opposite have an objective look at what the Minister has done, only one logical conclusion can be reached; that is, that the Minister has misled the House.

Hon Graham Edwards: He has embarrassed people in marginal seats.

Several members interjected.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: It is no wonder that a matter of privilege motion has been moved on such a serious matter. The situation is clearly on the record and relates exactly to the integrity of misleading this House. The record clearly shows what the Minister has done. The Minister was given an opportunity today to correct the record, but on the fourth or fifth occasion he refused to do so. A fair-minded and reasonable House can take only one course; namely, to judge the Minister in contempt. I ask that members support the motion.

#### *Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

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Ayes (11)		
Hon Kim Chance	Hon John Halden	Hon Bob Thomas
Hon J.A. Cowdell	Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan	Hon Doug Wenn
Hon Graham Edwards	Hon Sam Piantadosi	Hon Tom Helm ( <i>Teller</i> )
Hon N.D. Griffiths	Hon Tom Stephens	
Noes (13)		
Hon George Cash	Hon P.R. Lightfoot	Hon W.N. Stretch
Hon E.J. Charlton	Hon P.H. Lockyer	Hon Derrick Tomlinson
Hon M.J. Criddle	Hon Murray Montgomery	Hon Muriel Patterson ( <i>Teller</i> )
Hon B.K. Donaldson	Hon M.D. Nixon	
Hon Max Evans	Hon B.M. Scott	
Pairs		
Hon Cheryl Davenport	Hon Peter Foss	
Hon Mark Nevill	Hon R.G. Pike	
Hon T.G. Butler	Hon N.F. Moore	

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Question thus negatived.

#### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

##### *Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed from 6 July.

**HON TOM HELM** (Mining and Pastoral) [3.45 pm]: It is with pleasure that I speak on this amendment and congratulate Hon Sam Piantadosi for bringing the matter to the attention of the House. On reading the Governor's speech, one can understand the need to move an amendment of this nature. One can also understand the need for the people of this State to appreciate what is the agenda of this group of people elected to govern the State. They have not made much of a fist of it since they were elected. On page six of his speech are two sentences regarding the health of the people of the State. Members

should be aware that the Governor's speech was written by this Government. The sentences read -

There will be several Bills to address deficiencies in the health delivery system. These include quality assurance (confidentiality) conciliation. . .

*Sitting suspended from 3.48 to 4.00 pm*

Hon TOM HELM: Only two sentences in the Governor's speech, which as members know is written by the Government, are devoted to health. Considering what this Government has done to some of the other delivery services in this State, it is understandable that the Opposition should question what it means when that speech states that this session there will be several Bills to address deficiencies in the health delivery system. The Opposition has a right to be dubious about the Government's intention. The way this Government has chosen to improve the meat delivery service in this State is to close Robb Jetty and the way it will improve railway services is to close the Midland Workshops. Prior to the election this Government did not say it would close Robb Jetty, but it did say it would improve the Midland Workshops. My colleagues and I are concerned at what the Government really means when it says it will address deficiencies in the health delivery system. After all, the Health portfolio takes up a large proportion of this State's Budget and for that reason the Government has a responsibility to tell the people of this State what it intends to do with the health delivery system. By moving this amendment Hon Sam Piantadosi is endeavouring to ascertain whether the Government intends to reintroduce the secret methods it used when it was in Government 10 years ago.

I will outline to the House what cuts to health services will mean to people living in country areas. The people in these areas cannot afford to have deficiencies in the health delivery system. Is the Government prepared, as it states in the Governor's speech, to address these deficiencies? I am a little suspicious of the Government's motives when it allocates only two sentences in the Governor's speech to health, especially when I consider the Government's intentions for the Northampton District Hospital. Hon Kim Chance pointed out at some length during the debate on the Northampton hospital that the facts and figures presented to the Opposition and to the people in that area determine that that hospital will become a glorified nursing post. The Government plays around with the facts and figures to justify its action. This Government will not come clean. It says one thing and does another. The Government must say exactly what it means.

If health services in the north west are reduced it will certainly affect the people living in the area. They already have to contend with increased taxes and charges and losing jobs which are going to people from overseas. Is this what the Government means by better management and more jobs? During the election campaign it said one thing, but now it is doing the opposite.

We must also take into consideration the health issues concerning the Bunbury region which were brought to our attention by my colleague, Hon Doug Wenn, in his contribution to the Address-in-Reply. He referred to the foreshadowed privatisation of one part of our health system. This Government believes it can address deficiencies through privatisation. The Opposition will not welcome the privatisation of services provided to people in the country.

It is a pity the Minister for Health is not in the House this afternoon. I appreciate he is in Canberra doing whatever Ministers for Health do when they meet with the Federal Minister for Health. I hope his deliberations will benefit this State. I am not very confident that he will be successful, because I recall the Premier saying on the ABC news last night that negotiations in Canberra were very difficult. I wonder whether the Minister for Health will take a leaf out of the Premier's book by going to Canberra and feeling naked and alone and being bullied by the Federal Minister for Health and the Prime Minister.

When this Government was in Opposition it would often say no to certain issues, but it would not explain why it was being negative in its approach. The Opposition fears that

when it comes to the delivery of health services to country areas the Government will react in a negative way. We should consider the philosophy this Government has adopted in the few months it has been in power. It would not come into this place for several months because it feared parliamentary scrutiny. Since its actions have been scrutinised the Government has been found wanting and this was illustrated in this debate earlier today.

Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), the region you represent will be affected if there is a cut in health delivery services. You, more than any other member in this House, would understand how important a hospital is to a community. It is not in order for me in this debate to describe the importance of a hospital as the social centre of a community. A reduction in health services and staff will affect an entire community in the same way as a reduction in education services and staff.

I refer now to the health service expectations of people who live and work in the country. The Port Hedland hospital services the entire Pilbara region. People from towns like Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Newman and Karratha expect the best health services and health care that can be provided by the nurses, doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists and associated ancillary staff and they are rarely disappointed. The dedication of the hospital staff is second to none and the reason is that they are an integral part of a close knit community. Their contribution goes further than their skills in providing health care. They assist not only in patients' convalescence, but also they contribute to the social welfare of the residents of that region and this is well documented.

You would be aware, Mr Deputy President, that when funding is reduced and people's skills are reduced because the number of tools with which they are provided is reduced, the heart of the provision of health services is reduced because people lose the morale that makes up that community. I hope that the Minister for Health will respond to this amendment, and that when he responds he does not give us the fancy figures that he provided in response to the questions asked by Hon Kim Chance. I hope he does not tell us what he thinks the statistics mean, when we who live in the area know that they mean something else. I hope he does not give us the view that he knows best, particularly when we consider that, as far as I understand, he has never visited Port Hedland and has not been north of the 26th parallel since he became a Minister. I do not mean that as a criticism. He has only been a Minister since February.

Hon Doug Wenn: He has been to Sydney.

Hon TOM HELM: Yes, and also to Canberra. I know that when he went to Canberra on the first occasion when he was a new Minister for Health he got a bit petulant about the amount of funding that was available to this State through the Medicare agreement, and he made some complaints about his treatment there. I think that is forgivable; when one is new at a job, one is bound to make mistakes. I am sure that if Hon Peter Foss did make mistakes, he would be the first to admit them, unlike some people in this Chamber. He has been over east quite a lot because of the Medicare funding arrangements and the heads of Government meeting, so perhaps he has not had time to go up north to look at the health services for which he is responsible. I expect him to announce to this House soon when he intends to go up north. He should make a point of going to Port Hedland Regional Hospital, because if he went there he could not possibly justify any cut backs in the services provided by that hospital. He could not possibly be convinced by any of his less caring Cabinet colleagues that the services provided by Port Hedland Regional Hospital and other regional hospitals should be reduced. The reason that those services should not be reduced is that even though we hope we will never need to receive services from one of those hospitals, the fact that those hospitals exist allows people who live in regional areas to have a degree of certainty that their health needs will be provided for.

A danger has been presented that those two sentences in the Governor's speech at the opening of this Parliament, the deafening silence about the way in which this Government will deal with health services, and the whingeing and moaning from the Minister about what he thought was the correct funding for health in this State and about the additional funding which his conservative colleagues in New South Wales and

Victoria were able to screw from the Federal Government, may give the Minister the excuse that he needs to reduce services to people in the bush. I hope the Minister will continue the excellent services that were provided by the Labor Government when it was in power. I hope he will continue to allow Port Hedland Regional Hospital to provide services, and that he will support the staff at that hospital to the extent that they have been supported in the past.

I recently attended a meeting of the Friends of Yalunya. Yalunya is a nursing hostel attached to Port Hedland Regional Hospital. It caters for between 13 and 15 of the old people in the area. It is assisted by the Health Department in respect of the provision of beds and cleaning and catering services, but peripheral services, such as television sets, outings and special food for those old people, are provided by the community. That enables those old people to be provided with more services than could be provided by the taxpayer. Some of those old people are far away from their community, and others have spent a long time in Port Hedland. The community demonstrates its appreciation for what those people have done in the past by providing the additional services which Friends of Yalunya was set up to provide. It is easy to see that if any building block in the provision of services were taken away, the whole structure would be undermined. The community can provide additional services to that hostel only because the basic services are provided by the Health Department. Members can imagine the importance of that hostel for those people in Port Hedland; if it were not available, they would have to go to a facility in Perth.

I am trying to demonstrate that the provision of health services affects the whole community. I lived in Karratha for six years. For many years, that community lacked old people. It had few elderly aunts, uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers. The difference in Port Hedland is that there are old people. Old people who live in Port Hedland can feel secure because they know that, if they become ill, a health service is available to provide for their care and they do not have to leave their families in order to receive care. The loss to a community when old people leave it was demonstrated to me clearly when I lived in Karratha. This time of year, the weather in the Pilbara is glorious. One would not want to be in this Chamber or in Perth, or anywhere south of the 26th parallel, when it is so beautiful in the Pilbara. This is the time when old people return to the community. When the grandmothers and grandfathers or aunts and uncles step off the bus, the children run to them. Some relatives live in the Eastern States or in New Zealand and cannot come to see the young people, so the young people adopt an old person; in that way we become a complete community. The children are seen going to the shops with the visiting relations but that only lasts from, say, May through to October or November when the weather turns hot again. At that time, the elderly visitors return to their homes. That is the situation in Karratha.

In Port Hedland, it is not unusual for families to have grandfathers and grandmothers living with them because the adult daughter or son may work for BHP or for one of the other major companies in the town. Those people can afford to keep their parents with them. We also have other elderly people who have lived their lives and have brought up their families in Port Hedland. The linchpin for all these people is the hospital and the provision of a nursing home. For that reason, I must emphasise that any reduction in health services means a reduction in the ability of the town to deal with the day to day accidents in the north west, but we must recognise the important role that the provision of a hospital or nursing post plays in the community.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: You are the only country member who is interested in his electorate. Not many of the others are interested.

Hon TOM HELM: It is strange that the member would say that because I think Hon Phil Lockyer, who is a Government member - and he is as surprised as I am about that - and who is away on parliamentary business, would either move such an amendment or at least be part of the debate. Hon Norman Moore is also a country member.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: He is only interested in Ningaloo gold - black gold!

Hon TOM HELM: Were members to listen to my remarks they would agree with me. It

is not a matter of attacking the Government for not including Government policy on health services in the Governor's speech. It is not a matter of attacking the Government for what it did about Robb Jetty or the Midland Workshops. Those actions are a worry, but they should be considered in a different context. If we follow the Government's philosophy on health services, the danger is that some members on the Government side of the House, those who have been a part of the misinformation and the hidden agenda, will agree that the figures can be transposed and used to affect many people's lives - not that they would care very much -

Hon Sam Piantadosi: They will sell out their constituencies.

Hon TOM HELM: I was not about to say that, but now that members opposite form the Government they must keep quiet. With the appointment of five Ministers in this House I thought we would have five Ministers to whom we could talk. I doubt that we have seen five Ministers together in this place, but that is up to them. My point is that if members are convinced that the best way to provide health services to the bush is to treat those areas in the same way as they treated people at Robb Jetty or the Midland Workshops, I must emphasise that that should not be the case. Health services in this State should have been one of the jewels in the speech delivered by the Governor on opening day. Health services in this State are the best in Australia. The previous Labor Government left the State in that situation, and that situation remains. Our health services are the best in Australia. In Government, we were criticised often by our Federal colleagues in the Labor Party because we were considered pampered as a result of the health services in this State. That is not the case.

When Premier Richard Court demonstrated to Prime Minister Keating that Western Australia is one of the States that would lead this country out of the recession it was not far from the truth. However, saying that we are able to provide the impetus to move out of the recession because of our resource development does not represent the full equation. Resource development does not just happen. The resource does not jump out of the ground and go to Japan. People must dig out the resource, and the workers must be cared for. I am not saying that we need bitumen roads all over the north west. We do not complain about our roads very much. We might complain during the wet season, but if it is not too wet the roads are pretty good and our cars suit the roads. We do not complain about wages, although they have not increased much over the last seven or eight years. We have a responsible trade union movement that understands that the consumer price index has not increased and therefore wages have not increased. We do not complain about that, and we do not complain that we do not see the latest movies, plays, or theatre productions. However, we do think it is important that we are able to look after families; that the State and the nation, as Premier Court pointed out to Prime Minister Keating, deserve to have adequate health services and adequate education services.

Members on the Government side cannot deny that the previous Labor Government provided the best education and health services in this country. The current Government must try to match that record. Members opposite may try to undermine the situation in some way, but I hope I am incorrect. The Government may use the facts and figures to justify a reduction in the State's health services.

[Quorum formed.]

Hon TOM HELM: Members may have noticed that my remarks have been directed to the non Aboriginal sections of our communities in the north west. That is an important part of our community, but I should draw to the attention of the House the effect of any reduction in health services on Aboriginal communities. Members probably heard, as I did, the shock expressed by the Federal Minister for Health, Hon Graham Richardson, when he visited a few Aboriginal communities and witnessed the state of health of the people who live there. That has always been a problem which has been acknowledged by the previous Labor Government. We always sought to provide an adequate health service for the communities in the western desert and the more remote areas of the north west.



There is a need for excellent health services to be provided there because of the conditions in which some of those communities live. It would be remiss of me not to mention the nurses who occupy the nursing posts in those areas. Those who live in reasonably sized regional centres or in the metropolitan area tend to forget that, although the remote communities have gone beyond the use of pedal radio to communicate with the outside world, the people who live in the more remote communities in the desert away from regional centres and mining towns still have a need for medical care. In those areas a group of people choose to go off and to live in their traditional way of life as best they can, as would have been the case had white settlers not arrived. Those groups are still vulnerable to car accidents, to plant and machinery accidents and to disease caused by viruses.

As a policy decision almost every community has a nursing post which employs somebody to take care of its medical needs. Those people are the modern day heroes in our community. Almost all of the people are female and take on the responsibility of becoming almost mothers to the community. They administer medicines and drugs that doctors are often reluctant to administer because of the potency of the drugs. They can fix broken bones, punctured lungs and smashed skulls. They quite often make life or death decisions which are made during or following telephone advice from a doctor at the closest regional hospital, such as that located at Port Hedland. It is a very stressful job, one that commands real dedication but not a high wage. It commands an ability to live roughly in some of those remote areas. Sometimes the nurses have to attend car accidents or disasters as was the case two or three years ago. Those nurses deserve the best that society can provide.

If members have an opportunity to go to the remote communities, they will see nursing posts which comprise a house that is separate from the rest of the community and which usually has a beautiful garden attached to it. It will be clean and well stocked with modern medicines and equipment. It will have a number of modern radios and CB radios with which to contact the Royal Flying Doctor Service. A smiling, cheerful laid back person who has a high standing in the community and who is well respected will be on hand. The communities recognise that that person is their lifeline, makes life and death decisions as a matter of course, and gives care to the community that others cannot provide because they lack a medical background.

Hon Norman Moore has said perhaps schools could be closed down and amalgamated in larger centres. I am concerned that Hon Peter Foss may do exactly the same with nursing posts. It costs a lot of money to build them and to put in the facilities to enable the nursing posts to do their job. Government members would be attracted by the proposition to provide those health services in one place, to take them out of the communities and to put them into a regional hospital, as was the argument for the services provided at the Northampton hospital. The Government said, "Never mind the local people going to the Northampton hospital; let us whizz them down to the Geraldton hospital." I suspect that the same philosophy will be used to close down the nursing posts in remote communities and to bring the people to the closest regional hospital for treatment.

Kiwikurra is the community that is furthest west of Port Hedland, between 800 and 1 000 kilometres away. It is on the border of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Most of the people who need treatment are serviced by the facilities in Alice Springs, rather than those at Port Hedland. Those people would prefer to have a nursing post rather than being forced to travel a large distance. They choose to live in such a remote area because it is as far from booze as they can get. The elders have decided that the only chance the young people have of flourishing is to be as far away as possible from the things we are exposed to on a day to day basis.

Because of their remoteness, they are entitled to a nursing post, a school and an airstrip. As a community we need to encourage that idea. God knows we have tried everything else. We should provide some benefits to the Aboriginal people who have decided that they want a way of life that is different from ours. I am concerned that some Government members - not necessarily the Minister, but other nasty people - may say,

"We can save X dollars if we close down the nursing posts and bring the community into one of the major centres." This would not contribute to better health of those in the remote communities. When they are forced to go to the major centres, even the provision of better food and medical treatment makes them feel uneasy. They would be like a fish out of water. I can bet my bottom dollar that the conservatives, if not in this place in the other place or some of their Cabinet mates, will feel quite happy to say, "We can avoid their feeling of unease; do not worry about them; let us bring them into the regional centre."

If we do that, we will end up with all the problems that the Labor Government ended up with; that is, the result of re-establishing the services that had been discontinued, rather than maintaining the standards that are better suited to the people in the remote communities. It is always a worry that those in a conservative Government - I will be totally honest; this also applies to the conservative element in the Labor Party - believe that because they are elected they know what is best and they will govern in the way they think is best for everybody else. That has been demonstrated in the few short months of the new conservative Government in this State. We have seen the lack of desire of this Government to negotiate with, or to find out from, those people who have been affected by decisions, what they believe is the best for them.

When I was first elected to the Shire of Roebourne in 1984-85, one of the major problems was to try to convince the then Labor Government that people in the north west knew how best to spend the taxpayers' money which was allocated for use in that region. It was hard to convince the bureaucrats that we should have some say and some responsibility for the funds available to the region. My colleagues and I achieved some measure of success and we were able to convince, not necessarily the politicians or the Ministers, but the bureaucrats who worked for them.

To a certain extent my greatest fear is being realised by some of the responses given by the Minister for Transport to the questions asked of him by Hon John Halden. The Minister is giving the impression that the answers he provides are the best he can provide and that he does not have much responsibility for the answers, given that the entities under his control provide those answers. Therefore, it is not his fault if he is wrong. In the short life of this Government conservative Ministers have demonstrated that they are attracted to the decisions given to them by public servants. The shiny tails of the metropolitan area visit the north west in the winter - never in the summer. They spend a day or two in the region and then come back and advise the Minister of the best way to deal with a matter without ever speaking to or asking the opinions of those people on whose behalf they are making the decision. Health care is far too important an issue for decisions to be made by the fly in, fly out advisers of a conservative Minister who does not think there is much joy in consultation, or a conservative Cabinet that would not know how to spell the word "consultation", or a conservative group of bureaucrats who think they know what their Ministers want and, generally speaking, give them what they want. Members should be pleased to have five Ministers in this House, because it will give them an opportunity to question their decisions - it would, if they appeared in the House now and then.

One can look back to the time when these same Ministers sat on the front bench of the Opposition. They would move amendments to Bills and even send the entire Bill to the Legislation Committee. When a Minister sent a Bill from the other place they would automatically say, "No." When they were asked why they would not support the Bill, they could not tell us. I suspect that they said "No" just because they could. The demeanour of the Minister for Transport this afternoon, and others on the front bench, demonstrates their attitude: I will do what I like because I can do it. I do not really need to consult anybody. I do not need to justify anything; I can do what I want. I hope that this conservative Government will realise that this is 1993 and not 1983. What might have been suitable for that time is not suitable now. The Government must get out of its time warp and away from the philosophy that the previous Liberal Government espoused. If that does not happen the north west faces the danger of demonstrations of the sort we had on opening day. If members of the Government think that people are pleased about

the changes in workers' compensation law and a proposal for individual employment contracts, they are in for a shock.

The north west region now has a television station and local news reporters, not just cub reporters. We will probably get Cable News Network Inc reporting in the north west. The previous conservative Government got away with many things in the north west up to 1983 because we did not have Golden West Network Pty Ltd or a local newspaper, and a lot of things happened which were not reported. It is 10 years on and this conservative Government will not get away with the same sort of things because they will be reported by the media. The north west has some of the finest reporters in the State, and if any attempt is made to reduce health care services to the people of the north west and other country areas that will be publicised as fast as it happens.

I make a plea - it may also be a threat - to those people who make the decisions, to those people who live in the metropolitan area and who are advised by people who live in the metropolitan area, to those people who think that they have to follow the same philosophy with Richard Court as they did with Sir Charles Court: We intend to keep the services that exist in the north west. The ability of Sir Charles Court's Government to hide certain things from the public gaze in the north west 10 years ago does not exist now. Although this mob opposite may not have the same mind set as it had 10 years ago, they are employing people who were around at that time. I have seen a few old faces around this place, a few jobs for the boys, which they might think is an attractive proposition. I am looking forward to hearing Hon Phil Lockyer's comments. He knows that this Government will not get away with what happened in the 1980s; he knows that is not on the cards.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Are you really serious?

Hon TOM HELM: I am watching Hon Phil Lockyer, he is on the Government benches now. The rules have changed.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Since you have sat on that side of the Chamber you have become sillier and sillier.

Hon TOM HELM: If representatives of the Mining and Pastoral Region do not support this amendment that will be broadcast in their electorates. All that "Hail, fellow, well met" kind of jazz is now on the line because instead of being the Opposition they are the Government. We did our best for 10 years to teach them what being in Opposition was about. They did not learn very well. Let us hope that they know what being in Government is about. If they try to put back what they had 10 years ago, it will be a different response from what it was then. I support the amendment.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [4.50 pm]: I appreciate this opportunity provided by the amendment moved by Hon Sam Piantadosi to broaden the debate on the country hospitals issue. I have much to say about country hospitals which is essentially based on what occurred at Northampton District Hospital. Although I will mention Northampton once or twice in my speech, my thrust will be to broaden the debate. My mentioning of Northampton will be to illustrate what may flow from a decision made at Northampton across the rest of rural Western Australia.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Who are your colleagues in the Agricultural Region?

Hon KIM CHANCE: My colleagues in the Agricultural Region are the Leader of the National Party and Minister for Transport, Hon Eric Charlton, Hon Murray Criddle, Hon Bruce Donaldson and Hon Murray Nixon. I have the highest regard for all of them. Members opposite may not understand why I have not drawn Government members into debate on this question. I have done that deliberately for the same reason I have tried to be non-contentious in this matter. This is a matter of utmost importance and I do not want to see a mistake made by this House when the Minister for Health is in this House, and I do not want to see that mistake contributed to by my actions or the actions of other members on this side of the House. If we had made the debate contentious the possibility always existed that we could have had the opportunity to change the Minister's mind. I appreciate much of what the Minister has done; however, in this area he has made a mistake and it is our job to illustrate that he has done so.

The other reason I have not drawn members opposite into this debate is that it is a local issue; certainly one member of this House lives close to Northampton. I genuinely feel for the position of the Minister for the Environment in another place. I know the embarrassment that a Government member can feel when a Minister makes a decision which affects him or her deeply in the electorate and when one finds out that the Minister does not do much to help out. I have experienced that, as I think every member of this House has, and it is not my place to rub it in. Hon Murray Criddle has done everything that a Government member could reasonably be expected to do to establish good relations between the Northampton people and the Minister. I am not here to take away anything from Hon Murray Criddle. This is a question of key importance and something about which I feel strongly. In the months that I have been a member of this House I do not think I have been involved in anything about which I felt was of greater importance. Perhaps members have dealt with matters that are as important; however, we could probably not do much about them.

The difference with this issue is that we can do something about what will occur. It will have a critical effect on country people now and in the future. I will cite an expression of why country people believe this issue is so important. On Monday last week the Minister for Health visited the Geraldton Regional Hospital to open a new \$600 000 computerised axial tomography scan facility. It was one of those functions that Ministers have the privilege of performing and was a happy and auspicious occasion. It is the first time a CAT scan facility has been provided north of Perth. As he entered the hospital grounds the Minister found a small but vociferous demonstration waiting for him. The kinds of people that attended that demonstration are the last people one would expect to turn up at a public rally. The group included elderly people and children; remember that it was a working day and not many workers would have been able to attend. Although the Minister spoke to them, I am told that he spoke briefly but dismissively. That is a shame because the Minister should have recognised that for people to have attended a public demonstration and carry a banner in broad daylight for the first time - it was probably the first time they had taken such an open action in their lives - the issue must have meant a great deal to them. The Minister should recognise how deeply the people feel on this matter; not only the people of the Northampton community but also the people of all rural communities.

I have received letters from a number of shire councils which are expressing grave concern for what may happen to their country hospitals if the decision relating to Northampton flows on to them. I will address this speech to those shire councils and the people they represent. When the Minister spoke to my urgency motion on Thursday, 24 June he raised a number of matters of importance which he said were the reasons for his decision. In part they were a response to what I had said in speaking on the motion and in part they were the result of his thoughts and those of his department which have led to the publication of a document titled "Western Australian Government Health Policies", published in June 1993. I will be referring to that document in this speech.

Hon John Halden: It is somewhat different from the coalition health policies.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes, but I am not sure I want to get into that area.

Hon John Halden: It is a wonderful area to delve into.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is a interesting policy. Although I do not want to pre-empt what the Minister for Education and Employment and Training will tell the House subsequent to the release of the Vickery report, I think two approaches will be seen, diametrically opposed in the devolution and centralisation of power. However, that should be left out of this debate.

Hon N.F. Moore: Can you tell me what is in the report?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Not just now. Let us leave that matter until after question time and the Minister can tell us what it contains.

Hon T.G. Butler: We are keeping it a secret from you.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I took careful note of the Minister's scholarly treatment of the

debate. Since 24 June I have carefully read the document to which he referred in his speech, "Western Australian Government Health Policies".

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon KIM CHANCE: I will go through some of the points raised by the Minister in his contribution to the debate, because it is important we consider his point of view in response to the questions I put. One of the key points made by the Minister on 24 June was that it was highly probable, because of the current health policy and certain physical factors regarding the availability of hospital beds in country areas, that some people who were admitted to hospital in Northampton, and by extension probably other hospitals, would not have been admitted to a metropolitan hospital if they had presented in the same condition of health. His argument was that if people who were not really sick were admitted to the hospital one of the results was that the cost of running that hospital on a daily or admission basis would be lower than in a hospital where really sick patients were admitted. The logical extension of that point of view was, according to his claim, that this would account at least in large part for the Northampton District Hospital's very low cost of operation. The contribution of the Minister for Health to the debate is reported on page 391 of *Hansard* -

One of the things we must look at is why people are in hospital. Currently in Perth, it is hard to get into a hospital. A patient wanting admission to hospital in Perth would have to be pretty sick because if he is not sick he would not get in.

I recognise the fundamental truth of that. If one were a hospital planner, if one were able to effectively cull the patients that present themselves at the door and send the sickest to some other hospital and maintain only the patients who were relatively well, and if they could cook their own meals - the Minister said this - the end result would be that even I could run a pretty cheap hospital, and my knowledge of running hospitals is hardly extensive. While I can accept the commonsense of that argument, the more I analyse it the less it stands up. Patients whether sick or not do not cook their own meals. It does not make one blind bit of difference whether the patients are sick or not; it will cost the same amount to cook the meals for them. If one has eight sick patients and eight super fit, really well people in hospital the odds are that it will cost more to cook for the well people because they will eat more. One always has to maintain the costs involved in the kitchen, and the so-called hotel staff that service hospital operations; it does not matter whether the patients are sick or not.

One can carry that logic a little further. Both the Minister and I referred to the necessity, in a legal and industrial sense, to maintain the 3:1 shift ratio; that is, three shifts of nurses and two nurses on each shift. That is the bare legal minimum recognised in industrial awards; it is not a matter of a restrictive work practice. So many emergency procedures require trained staff. Frequently - and I will acknowledge that the Minister is quite correct - small hospitals do not have enough to occupy those two trained staff. Nonetheless, there are occasions when it would be very dangerous to try to work without those two trained staff. Given that legal and industrial requirement it still does not make any difference to the cost of running the hospital whether the patients are sick or not. Whether the hospital has eight patients who are well and two nurses on two shifts servicing their needs, it does not make any difference to the cost of running the hospital that those nurses might be playing cards all night. They still have to be paid. It does not make any difference if the hospital has really sick people and those two nurses are overworked all night. From the point of view of the hospital administrator, at the end of the day the cost per day of the nursing services is exactly the same whether the patients are sick or well. The hotel and nursing services are the two key components of the cost of running the hospital. The sheets still have to be changed and the kitchen must operate whether the patients are sick or not; and of course the critical and the largest cost of running a hospital is in nursing wages. Those costs will be the same whether the hospital has eight sick patients or eight well patients; it will not make a bit of difference.

Initially I found the Minister's argument to be even mildly amusing, but I did not find it convincing. When one examines the fundamentals of his points, one finds they do not

stand up. I can see that in some other areas it might be more expensive to nurse sick patients than well patients. That would largely be as a result of capital equipment employed in the hospital. If patients were all well, the expensive resuscitation gear would not be required. However, these hospitals are not established or funded for well people; they are built for sick people. They are all equipped for sick people; they were not designed to sort the system. That expensive resuscitation equipment in the hospital for eight sick people must, by law, exist in a hospital which is staffed, maintained and funded as an acute care hospital.

I have mentioned briefly the effect of the industrial awards on a hospital and the cost of running a hospital. The reason for the established eight bed model, and that it is a critical mass for a hospital, is largely that the industrial awards limit the staffing capacity of the hospital to those three shifts, with two nurses per shift. Hon Peter Foss said a great deal about modern medical technology. I agree that it allows for faster processes and is usually better, but I am not too sure that it is more expensive. That may be true; he will certainly be better advised than I am on that. Nonetheless, from my knowledge, some medical technology, particularly that used in the less intrusive surgery of which he spoke when he raised this point - he referred to the throwaway nature of some of the components of that technology - may well be expensive; but so too was the technology it replaced. In each case less intrusive surgery is about changes in medical technology initiated not only to ease patient trauma but also to ease the huge cost of those surgical procedures. I am not entirely convinced, although I would accept the evidence, that modern technology is always necessarily more expensive than the technology it replaces.

Even if the Minister were able to provide me with advice from the Health Department that that is the case, the bulk of nursing needs still does not revolve around high technology. If it did, we would need relatively low cost hospitals in which those patients would need to recover. However, the country and district hospitals and those of similar nature in the metropolitan area are still required to cope with patients with acute illnesses who need nursing. Members should cast their minds over the many reasons that people are hospitalised - from the traumatic accidents which may be life threatening, to the problems associated with age, such as rheumatism. Those illnesses do not involve high technology nursing. I am referring to the kind of nursing that was developed - not pioneered, but brought to an art form - on the battlefields of Crimea. That kind of nursing has not changed all that much.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Very few soldiers have problems with arthritis.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Perhaps they do 20 or 30 years later. Certainly, the traumatic injuries which make up a large proportion of hospital patients are very similar to the injuries that Florence Nightingale and that wonderful band of women associated with her introduced to medical technology in Crimea.

The Minister said that Northampton's really sick people go to Geraldton Regional Hospital; that is the culling process - it is the less sick people who go to Northampton District Hospital. Initially, I was prepared to accept the logic of that argument. Geraldton Regional Hospital now has a CAT scanner which was opened only last month. It would therefore probably be attractive to the wider range of doctors available in Geraldton. That statement should be taken one bite at a time and analysed. It may well be true of patients needing high technology equipment, but they are not necessarily sick people. Patients who need high technology diagnostic equipment, or equipment associated with surgical procedures, will be inclined to go to hospitals where those facilities are available, based only on the availability of the equipment. However, that does not mean they are the sickest people; it means they are going to where the equipment is, because it is cheaper or because the diagnosis is better. There may be many reasons why a doctor recommends Geraldton Regional Hospital. However, it does not mean people are necessarily sick.

Hon W.N. Stretch: It means they are definitely sick.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It may well mean that they visit Geraldton because of the need for that advanced diagnostic equipment when they are not sure whether they are sick. One

way or the other, sick people end up in hospital. The choice they make when they decide on one hospital or the other does not necessarily mean that it will be influenced by the availability of technology at that hospital. On the other hand, it may well do so. I do not think the matter is as cut and dried as the Minister led us to believe. Certainly, in surgical cases, it is clear that Northampton District Hospital does not have a theatre.

Hon M.D. Nixon: All surgical cases will go to Geraldton Regional Hospital or some other hospital.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The Minister spoke of the need to rationalise services to meet the medical needs of all country people. In essence, I have no complaint with that principle. If it were not firmly established beforehand, it was most certainly established once the report of the Joint Select Committee into Country Hospitals and Nursing Posts was presented. It was recognised even then that at some time in the future it might be necessary to close hospitals. If my memory serves me correctly - it is some time since I have read the report - that was the first time I have seen reference to the term "multipurpose centre". It was certainly flagged that, in the future, we could well see the kind of change for country hospitals that the Minister is presenting to us. I have no real argument with the Minister over multipurpose centres. In fact, I can see circumstances where those centres may well be highly appropriate. It seems to me that the two he has chosen at Kalbarri and Dongara are entirely appropriate. What concerns me is that the finance required - in Kalbarri's case to upgrade an existing service, and in Dongara to provide a new service - will be drawn from the services currently provided at Northampton. That is where our problem starts.

When I look at any policy that someone suggests we should adopt I analyse it in this way: I go through it bit by bit and pick up what I want to pick up and I reject what I want to reject. It makes a lot of sense to read a policy with as open a mind as possible and then ask oneself what would be the end result if the policy were implemented or what would be the logical extension of the policy to try to build a big picture in one's mind of, in this case, a rural medical service. I believe that we would not have that many hospitals as we understand them with 24 hour accident and emergency services and acute beds. They would not exist. We would have a number of nursing posts which would provide a broad range of services but not a 24 hour accident and emergency service and no acute beds. A handful of miniature Royal Perth Hospitals would be scattered around the State; that is, high technology, acute bed hospitals which would be, perhaps, world leaders. When I refer to Royal Perth Hospital in the context of this argument it should not be thought that I have less than profound respect for that institution. It is one of the world's great hospitals of its type and it provides leading world services. However, we already have those services in the metropolitan area. Do those of us who live in the country - I appreciate there are a number of country members in the Chamber tonight - want to finish up with that sort of service in our towns? Do we want to finish up with no country hospitals and only nursing posts? If we have nursing posts and no country hospitals, where will we get our doctors from and if we do not have a doctor, where will we get a pharmacist from? It would follow that, if we did not have a doctor and a pharmacist, why would we bother with a nursing post and we would end up with nothing at all? There is no bias in my argument. If we are going to change hospitals like the Northampton District Hospital into something else we should ask ourselves whether Northampton will have a doctor in five or 10 years' time.

Everyone who lives in the country knows that doctors do not stay in country towns because they make huge amounts of money; they do not. If members talk to doctors they will find that many of them wish they were in another profession so that they could make a decent living. What gives them the edge is their ability to be able to use the facilities in country hospitals. If those facilities were taken away it would be less and less attractive for a doctor to stay.

Late last night, I listened in the other House to the Address-in-Reply speech by the member for Avon. I guess we have all heard before the point he made last night. He referred to Pingelly which is not far from the edge of metropolitan Perth. In fact, he said that if one tripped over the edge of Perth one would fall into the town of Pingelly. It is a

wealthy, stable, pleasant community. However, the people there are having all kinds of trouble finding a doctor. I was not aware that Pingelly was having that trouble and it is in my electorate. I am aware that a great number of other country towns are desperate for doctors and these were towns in which there was a very close doctor-hospital relationship.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: It has been like that for 10 years.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes, it has become critical in the last 10 years. Mr Trenorden identified all kinds of reasons for that happening. I would like to talk to him about some of them in more detail before I could pick up his point. Nonetheless, he identified a problem that has existed for 10 years or more and it is serious.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: An excellent report was prepared by Dr Max Kamien in 1982.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is an excellent report. I have read at least part of it and I have read a critique of it. However, the doctor shortage has occurred while we have had hospitals. I ask members to project their minds into the future and take away the ability of the doctor to use the hospital facilities and then ask themselves what is that doctor's future. Obviously, if the doctor were taken away, the next question that should be asked is: What is the future for the pharmacists? I do not think I need to expand on that.

The Minister has told us that medical services are being duplicated - I believe he meant across the State - and it is something that we cannot afford to do. However, let us take that on face value. If services are being duplicated - and possibly they are - I ask him to show me how. There are 586 admissions annually to the Northampton District Hospital or there were in the year ending June 1992. Were all of the admissions related to a duplication of medical services or does he mean that some, most or all of the admissions need not have occurred? I do not think we can say that. What is the Minister's response to that duplication? He has told us that the 586 admissions to Northampton District Hospital will not take place once the hospital changes its status. I should be accurate: He said not all of them will take place because patients who require less than 48 hours in hospital may still be admitted, but a large number of the 586 admissions will end up in the Geraldton Regional Hospital. However, members should remember that no increase in funding has been allowed for that hospital in the Budget and the Geraldton Regional Hospital does not have a really good record of staying within its budget. It is a busy hospital and its staff work extremely hard. I am not criticising it. However, we will load a fair proportion of those 586 admissions onto the Geraldton Regional Hospital each year but we will not increase the Geraldton Regional Hospital's budget. The Minister talks about eliminating duplication of services. I and anybody else who wishes to be serious about this subject has to say to him, "Okay, that is fine. Show us how?" Does he mean he will eliminate duplication of services or does he mean he will eliminate the services? Sadly, I expect it is the latter.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm*

Hon KIM CHANCE: I find it very difficult to accept the Minister's arguments about duplication of services, and I have said that, without an increase in the budget of Geraldton Regional Hospital to take up the additional demand from Northampton District Hospital, there is no way that Geraldton Regional Hospital will be able to stay within its budget. When I put that view to officers of the Health Department at the mid west/Gascoyne health region office in Geraldton, I was told they would get around it by shortening further the average length of stay in Geraldton Regional Hospital. The average length of stay in mid west/Gascoyne regional hospitals is 3.65 days. That is a shorter length of stay than in any other region in Western Australia, and it is half that of some of the health regions in Western Australia.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: People get better more quickly in Geraldton!

Hon KIM CHANCE: I think I made the point on another occasion that the Minister must believe that mid-west people are either tougher than the rest of us or more expendable than the rest of us.

Hon M.J. Criddle: Come on!



Hon KIM CHANCE: Hon Murray Criddle feels that they are tougher. There are certainly some very tough people, but when the average Statewide length of stay in hospital is 5.15 days, and the mid west/Gascoyne health region has an average length of stay of 3.65 days, I find it a little difficult to accept the Minister's suggestion that we can shorten further the length of stay in hospital. I can look at all of the arguments put by the Minister and say this may be right or that may be right, and I may be wrong about the assumption I am making in this case, but when we talk about the average length of stay in hospital in regions which perform identical services, we are really comparing apples with apples. When we talk about one region and the rest of the State, we can expect to see a position where we can compare the two. The mid west/Gascoyne health region has a very much shorter length of stay in hospital, yet it is in that region that the Minister and the Health Department say they can reduce further the length of stay in hospital - in fact, to the extent that it will take up virtually all of the acute bed demand from one fully operating hospital with a budget of around \$800 000, which is quite a substantial degree, to find efficiencies in another hospital.

The Minister referred in his speech to the means of delivering services and funding that delivery of services from within the region. The Minister states at page 391 of *Hansard* of Thursday, 24 June -

How can I, as Minister for Health, provide that when I am saying to people, "I am sorry, more cuts will have to come. I will have less money next year and you will have to look at your operations"? How can I, in those circumstances give more money to Kalbarri and to Dongara? How can I address their needs? I address their needs by balancing all of the requirements of the region.

When the Minister states that he will balance all of the requirements of the region, he means effectively that he will take from Peter to pay Paul, but within that region. If one looked at the option which the Minister intends to pursue, which would eventually deliver within that area no 24 hour accident and emergency services, and no acute beds at all - and that is what we are talking about in the northern part of the region; the only acute beds would be available in Geraldton - one would be inclined to say, "No, I don't think I want to do that." I believe that is exactly what the community of Northampton is trying to say to the Minister.

The Minister differentiated strongly between the needs and wants of a community in respect of hospital services. The Minister states, again at page 391 -

If I turned up at the Northampton hospital to be admitted, I would not be put on a waiting list. In Perth, a decision must be made sometimes between the sickest of two people waiting to be admitted. The decision is based on whose need is greatest. However, that problem does not exist in Northampton. As I said, if I turned up at the Northampton hospital, I would get in. Based on perfectly proper reasons for deciding that people in Northampton should be put in hospital they will get into that hospital with a far less need than people in Perth.

The Minister has said "based on perfectly proper reasons" to get into hospital, yet he is also saying that, for some reason, we should take account of the fact that a person in Perth who is not quite as sick as another person would perhaps not get into hospital. What is the justification for that argument? I find that a difficult argument to weigh, to ascertain equity or any other standard of judgment. Sick people should be admitted to hospital because they need to be admitted, not because they are sicker than some other person. Those are the kinds of judgments that had to be made in the Crimea many years ago.

Hon Doug Wenn: But, as the Minister said, people who are on the road and are going to hospital may bypass the local hospital to go to Perth.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I will get to the economic effect of that if I have time. The justification seems to be that because it is allegedly more difficult for people in Perth to get into hospital, it should be more difficult for country people to get into hospital. I cannot find any other justification in what the Minister said. The Minister said that

Northampton District Hospital is used by patients recuperating from operations in Geraldton Regional Hospital. I can believe that. The Minister said at page 392 -

A lot of the use of the Northampton hospital has been by people who are discharged from the Geraldton Regional Hospital and recuperate in the Northampton District Hospital. My advice on a medical basis is that that is not sensible. A person who is well enough to be discharged should go home; a person who is not well enough to go home should stay in the original hospital. Northampton District Hospital has done a good job with domiciliary care, but that does not mean we could not do better.

I want to know - and perhaps it was not appropriate then for the Minister to tell us - why patients are necessarily better off in the original hospital, if the original hospital is one of these high technology, acute care type hospitals. Why are patients who require 5.15 days of recuperation better off recuperating in a high technology hospital than in a very much cheaper, but every bit as efficient, hospital nearer their home?

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Because they are sick.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am not sure that it is appropriate to call someone who is recovering from an operation sick. One hopes that if the operation were successful they would be cured but need recuperation. It is the high cost of that recuperation -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Why have hospitals for people who are not sick, Sir Humphrey?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I thought I made that clear. I will try again, and put it in simple terms: If people are recuperating from an operation I do not regard them as sick. They require nursing and observation and continued care but one hopes that the operation was successful and that they will soon be well. Is the system of carrying out the expensive surgical procedures in one hospital and allowing recuperation and observation, on average for 5.15 days, in a cheaper hospital - and the cheaper hospital would be properly equipped for that purpose - not better than retaining the people in the original hospital; that is, the RPH-type hospital? I find it difficult to accept the Minister's argument in that respect.

Hon Peter Foss said that the Commonwealth's attitude to nursing home patients is wrong, particularly in respect of the adoption of the minimum 30 units. I agree with the Minister. I support his views. I hope that in his meeting with the Commonwealth Minister for Health on 28 July - or whenever - he will have some success in putting his view. I have been asking the question: Where will we end up if we follow the Minister through with this policy? If we take the Northampton hospital decision and extend it logically we will have a rural area with very little access to medical services as we know them. Eventually, we will need to ask ourselves: If we achieve the aim of the very efficient series of nursing posts servicing small RPH-type hospitals, will we still have a rural area in which we can feel safe raising our families? It is from that point that we must view the policy as a whole - what will be left? Really that picture of a series of nursing posts and RPH-type units is not one that I want, and not one that country people want.

The Minister's view has been driven by three factors: Two financial factors and one which probably can be described as techno-demographical. The first financial factor is the overall State Budget cuts which every Minister must address. In that respect, we have heard a great deal about the state of the economy of Western Australia. We must remember also that even as recently as pointed to in the McCarrey report, I understand, the growth rate for Western Australia is anticipated to average around five per cent. If it reaches anything like that figure, the Western Australian economy has a very bright future. Our growth rate and lack of negative growth through the recession has always been a leader in Australian standards. Our per capita debt is also modest by Australian standards; we are either the second or third lowest. Our economy is not in such bad shape. We do not have tremendously high debt; and we have a growing and prosperous economy. I am asking whether that factor can be used as a legitimate lever to drive down our fundamental medical services.

One of the real strengths of the national Medicare arrangement has been that it has imposed some discipline on medical costs in Australia. For all the faults that members may be able to identify in the system, we have not had the problem that the super socialist systems have in, say, the Netherlands or Scandinavia or perhaps in the United States, which has a more market driven health care system. In both those types of system, medical costs run away unfettered. In Australia, despite our problems, we have been able to maintain at least some control. In spite of that control we still have burgeoning medical costs. Sound technical reasons exist for that. I will not go into that in any great depth. It is necessary to say simply that we are under funding our health system under the current arrangements.

As to the technical and demographic reasons: The pressure that is applied on country hospitals is well understood by country members, and the effects of depopulation and leakage from country hospitals is a factor that must be considered. I have spent hundreds of hours in consultation, research and thought on the issue even though it does not fall into my area of responsibility. I appreciate the Minister's thought provoking approach that he has taken in facing this problem. Every time we see a new Minister approaching a problem as serious as this, it is good to hear some new thought put into the equation. I appreciate what the Minister has put to us regarding his approach to finding a solution. I even believe that the multipurpose centre arrangement is a good concept, but like the curate's egg it is good in parts. If we end up with a solution that is anything like the practice which has been introduced at Dalwallinu District Hospital we will have gone somewhere near achieving the correct balance. What has been achieved at Dalwallinu is a great credit not only to the Minister and his department but particularly to the Dalwallinu community and the hospital board. The Dalwallinu multipurpose centre has retained its acute beds. It has a unique funding arrangement where both the Commonwealth and the State-sourced funds are available to the board to meet the needs that it has identified. When the funds for one program run out the board does not have to cancel a program; it can draw on funds which may not be heavily used in another area. It is a very intelligent program. I would like to see it extended across the State.

If the Minister's program has weaknesses it is because he embodied in it his solutions, driven entirely from those three factors, the two financial and one demographic. I do not think that the Minister has covered the entire equation. In particular he has not seriously considered the effect of the social needs of rural communities and the effect that health spending has on rural communities. The earlier speech delivered by my friend, Hon Tom Helm, put far more eloquently than I ever could the importance of country hospitals to country people. I do not believe the Minister has matched problems with appropriate solutions. For example, we have a perceived surplus capacity in country hospitals and yet we have an apparent shortage of medical facilities in the metropolitan area. That suggests to me that we can use one problem to solve another. That is nothing new; it is not a brainwave. Country general practitioners have been saying that to the Health Department for years. In some areas it works. People in my electorate who need major hip or knee reconstruction do not look towards the Perth metropolitan area for that work. They look to the Kalgoorlie Regional Hospital. In those cases they do not have problems with waiting lists which they would have if they nominated a metropolitan hospital. If we have a problem with a perception of the country hospitals being under-used, and we have a problem with waiting lists in the city, why cannot we try to address the two problems with the same solution?

I still cannot see - perhaps the Minister will tell me when we return to this place - what is wrong with the logic of using Geraldton Regional Hospital as the acute centre and Northampton District Hospital as the recuperation centre. I also wonder whether there is room to negotiate different enterprise agreements for staff with the health care unions. At the moment we accept that the eight bed model is an indestructible model and it cannot be broken down to a five bed model without losing viability. The reasons for that, as the Minister has pointed out, relate to the industrial and legal provisions. I do not know to what extent the Minister has tried to negotiate different arrangements or whether that would be wise or safe; but this needs to be canvassed.

I do not think it makes sense to treat 586 Northampton patients at a more expensive hospital. That is getting to the bottom line. I am not sure that domiciliary care can operate as effectively from a nursing post as it can from a hospital. My view is that domiciliary care not operating out of a hospital would have a fairly limited life. I am not convinced that the savings which have been projected at about \$350 000 in the Northampton example can, or will, be as large as anticipated. Will the apparent \$350 000 saving be dissipated in the extra travelling costs, by the additional ambulatory costs or by lower Medicare receipts? A number of factors have not been fully accounted for in respect of those savings.

I am asking whether our communities will lose not only their hospital services but also, as a consequence, ultimately the nursing posts that were set up to replace them. Having lost those, will we go on to lose our doctors and pharmacists? Without a fully serviced hospital, why would either stay? We should be asking whether we can develop a new model incorporating the Dalwallinu principles that I have outlined and compete with metropolitan hospitals for their patients. If country hospitals can deliver a service more cheaply, why is it not reasonable that they should be able to compete with metropolitan hospitals? If it makes sense to cart all of the country patients to the very expensive, overloaded metropolitan and regional hospitals, why does it not make sense to cart some of the metropolitan patients to the cheaper country hospitals?

Hon Tom Helm: Heaven forbid!

Hon KIM CHANCE: Maybe the Minister has addressed that question. Perhaps commonsense is a scarce commodity within the Health Department. Surely if we have a common resource that we all need, we should all have the same interest in making sure it is used and not closed. Surely, if very sick people cannot gain admittance to a city hospital, they will not object to a three or four hour ride in an ambulance.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Hon KIM CHANCE: I appreciate the assistance of the House and I promise that I will not take long. Surely people who have the prospect of being on a waiting list for some time -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It is not because there are no beds; there are sufficient beds. In fact, wards are closed.

Hon KIM CHANCE: There are insufficient staffed beds. I am saying that there are sufficient staffed beds in country areas to cater for more people.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: There are beds in Perth that are staffed and empty. There is an 80 per cent occupancy rate and wards are closed. It is not a question of finding a bed.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Could the member tell me what it is? I have 15 minutes available to me.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! The member has promised that he would not talk for very long.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Irrespective of what Hon Derrick Tomlinson has said -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Regardless of the truth.

Hon KIM CHANCE: No, regardless of the level of occupancy in city hospitals. I have said that the non-teaching hospitals in Perth are occupied at about 76 per cent. The fact is that one of the reasons why these country hospitals are being looked at sideways - particularly when we go to the Health Department document - is the relatively low level of occupancy. The Northampton hospital chose to use a type of representation of the figure which is quite alien to any other representation of the occupancy figures used anywhere else by the Health Department, which is a matter for its own consideration, and by using that figure the number was effectively halved.

The Health Department made an issue of the apparently low occupancy rate in that country hospital and, by extension, other country hospitals. Hospitals in the south west, the central wheatbelt and the great southern health regions cost on average \$150 a day

less per patient than do metropolitan non-teaching hospitals. I do not include the teaching hospitals in this figure. The Minister has to explain how we make it cheaper in the overall sense by closing acute beds in the country and transporting all of our patients to Perth where the beds cost \$150 a day more to operate. Somewhere there is a logical explanation. I have given the matter some consideration, but I just cannot see it.

While I have regard for much of the work that the Minister has done, I do not agree with his conclusions. I believe he has either ignored or misinterpreted many of the important facts, the culture and the needs of country people. Frankly, I am much less impressed with the information I have been able to access in this debate from the Health Department of Western Australia. I hold the view that departmental managers have displayed a clear agenda which is inappropriate, given that they literally have responsibility for people's lives.

**HON J.A. SCOTT** (South Metropolitan) (7.58 pm): I have two main reasons for speaking in this debate. The first is that, coming from a country area, I have some understanding of what it is like for country people who do not have the services that the people in the city expect. As a four year old, having drunk chateau kerosene, I was rushed to Kellerberrin hospital. From the information my family has given me I am told that I was within minutes of surviving which, of course, would have prevented my being in this place tonight.

The second matter is that I have a different perspective to add to this debate. From what I have made of the arguments of Hon Peter Foss and what I have read, I believe he is doing his very best to reduce costs, and he should have credit for that. That could be done largely by putting sick or injured people through hospital more quickly. The quicker the Minister gets them through the system the fewer the beds that will be required and so on. This is a limited area in which savings can be made and has a risk of endangering people's lives if taken to an extreme.

I would like members to think about an area which has been largely ignored in this State by this Government and the previous Government; that is, the area of prevention. Governments tend to isolate systems such as the hospital system from the rest of life. They do not count the costs of some other facets of the way we live, such as the percentage of money that is required by our hospitals as a result of car accidents. Motor vehicle accidents are the major cause of death of people under 25 years of age in this part of the world. I am not sure of the figure, but it would be a big cost for the State. Moves towards reducing public transport and having more people return to the road in their cars are bad. They will significantly add to hospital costs. Other factors, such as cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, glue sniffing and other drug use are also costly to society. The use of such substances results from other causes, and is often due to a feeling of alienation and a feeling that people, particularly our young people, have nothing to offer in life. We must work on these people to reduce our hospital costs.

I understand that people who are out of work are sick more often than people who are employed. That is a symptom of the same feeling of alienation. We could do a lot more to get people back to work. A great deal of hospitalisation is the result of factors such as upper respiratory disease which is caused by pollution. People in the area around the Kwinana coal fired power station have around three times the national average of upper respiratory disease. We should be doing something to reduce that figure. That would be a good area to begin when aiming to reduce hospital costs. The power station at Kwinana has no scrubbers and produces 240 megawatts of electricity. That figure could be increased to 400 megawatts if the station were changed to a gas system, because the facility is capable of burning gas as well. We would save not only on hospital costs but also on generation costs.

The use of pesticides also has an effect on health. We should have a much wider appreciation of what is causing people to end up in hospital. Prevention is a real area in which savings could be made in this State. We should be looking at assisting people before they get to hospital, not once they are there. Prevention is not being addressed and it should be. When our Premier attends the Premiers' Conference as a representative of

Western Australia the argument is put that we should get a reasonable share of the Commonwealth handout because we should have a diversity of services in this State. That should apply to country people as well. I thank members for their time.

**HON M.J. CRIDDLE** (Agricultural) [8.04 pm]: I have a particular interest in this hospital debate, as many members would know, since one of the hospitals in question is the Northampton District Hospital, which I and my family have used for a long time. I have also had the opportunity to travel with the Minister for Health to the wheatbelt to gain some feeling of what the people throughout that area feel about the multipurpose health centre. We travelled through Northam, Cunderdin and Merredin, and found varying degrees of acceptance; much depended on the discussion which had occurred within the community and people's understanding of a multipurpose centre. That is the problem facing many people in the Northampton district. It was a pleasure to visit Dalwallinu, where the health system is working well and funding is available. All the funding sources have been taken into account and have been pooled into one amount. As the Minister said the other day, Goomalling has taken the step of proceeding with the 48 hour care system. It will be interesting to see how that system performs. The restructuring process itself has been in place for quite a while and reports have been presented on that. The real issue has come about because of the lack of funding available throughout this State as a result of the debt load we carry. We have been left with a burden that must be taken into account when we give consideration to those additional services.

I will explain to members what happened with the Northampton District Hospital. With the downgrading of that hospital came the opportunity for services to be added to Dongara and Kalbarri. The people in those areas are quite happy with the announcement. The downgrading at Northampton met with quite a deal of acrimony among the people because a total community understanding of what the multipurpose hospital was about did not exist. After 23 April I contacted the Minister and a group of four of us met with him in Perth. He was quite amenable to the idea of setting up a consultative committee after a public meeting. Hon Kim Chance telephoned me just before that meeting to ask whether he could give me a hand. I said that was up to him. He and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ian Taylor, came along with Hon Kevin Minson to the meeting of more than 500 people, which was chaired by the shire president. Quite a few points of view were put at that meeting. Interested persons put their names forward and members of the consultative committee were selected a few days later. That committee consists of 11 people: Two from the Northampton Shire; one from the Chapman Valley Shire; two from the hospital board; one from the Mid-West Development Authority; one from the Health Department; a representative of the Aboriginal community; and three other community members. They have the job of sifting through all the available information.

It was apparent to me from that point on that a lot of the opportunity for funding had not been fully investigated. The terms of reference of that consultative committee were to undertake a health needs analysis for Northampton and the hospital's primary catchment area. There was some discussion whether all the catchment area had been taken into consideration, because a part of the Chapman Valley Shire is also involved in that process. Other terms of reference were to assess appropriate health delivery systems to best meet the established health needs within the announced recurrent budget; to identify any remaining unmet health needs; and to identify appropriate and alternative funding sources to meet those needs. That is crucial to the hospital consultative committee's investigations. The final term of reference is to identify capital and minor works requirements. The Minister recently announced a \$85 000 grant to upgrade the accident and emergency services unit at the Northampton hospital which will form part of the multipurpose health centre.

The local community group should look at the Avon Valley model. If it decides to go down this path it will need Federal Government funding. Hospital beds would then become available for acute care in one part of the hospital and in the other part nursing beds would become available. Not only two beds will be available for 48 hour acute care patients; up to six or eight beds may be available, but they may not all be occupied at the

same time. This is something which the community does not understand. The Minister announced that a birthing suite will be a feature at the hospital; this will give local women in the area the opportunity to give birth to their babies in that suite. It is a plus that women can give birth to their children locally. Everything should be done to provide the very best for the community. I understand there is a division between some of the local community groups. The consultative group should be given time to settle down to allow it to come forward with decisions which will assist the needs not only of the hospital, but also the community.

I have taken this opportunity to explain to members what has happened at this hospital. The dilemma facing hospitals will have ramifications throughout the Agricultural Region. I am sure that the Northampton model will be a guide to other country hospitals. I hope the Minister considers the findings of that committee. I will continue to assist country people to attain their medical needs providing the Minister for Health looks to the needs of the people, as he said he would.

**HON DOUG WENN** (South West) [8.13 pm]: I support the amendment moved by Hon Sam Piantadosi and thank him for doing so. As members would be aware from my contribution to the Address-in-Reply last night, I have grave concerns about the future of country hospitals and the way in which this Minister is implementing his views. I do not want to take away from the contributions by Hon Kim Chance and other members, but I would like to bring them back to the real world and refer to Bunbury where the real people live.

Last night I outlined the concerns I have about the Bunbury Regional Hospital. You, Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), are aware of the problems confronting the Busselton District Hospital. It is unfortunate that the Minister for Health is not here tonight; as Hon Phil Lockyer said, perhaps we should adjourn this debate until he is here. I have already expressed my concern about the proposal to privatise the Bunbury Regional Hospital. It is not a hospital only for the people of Bunbury; it is a regional hospital and it caters for all the people in the surrounding districts.

In the last three days I have done a lot of research to find out what is happening in other country hospitals around Australia. My attention has been drawn to the Port Macquarie Hospital in New South Wales. I received several faxes from people in that State, one of which said that it is one of the biggest issues confronting State politics in New South Wales. In the last elections in that State the local member of that area lost his seat. That illustrates the importance that was put on the Port Macquarie Hospital issue. To his credit, the Minister for Health in that State took the issue to a referendum of the people of that town. To his discredit he refused to accept the result of the referendum and implemented his plans. I would like to illustrate the alarming similarities between the Port Macquarie and Bunbury hospitals. Members in this House should hear the warning bells and do something about it. I am looking forward to hearing the contribution to this debate from my colleagues from the South West Region who are on the Government side of the House. I hope they will advise the Minister that his actions are incorrect.

I have received many phone calls on this issue today from people all over of the State. People in Perth and the country areas, particularly Bunbury, are concerned. If members believe that the Bunbury hospital issue will be pushed aside, they should visit a psychiatrist because they are wrong. The Port Macquarie Hospital issue is one of the biggest issues in New South Wales and the Bunbury hospital will be one of the biggest issues not only in Bunbury, but also across this State. Prior to the Federal election the leader of the Liberal Party made it very clear that if his party were elected to Government he would look seriously at the American health system.

**Hon John Halden:** God help us at that point.

**Hon DOUG WENN:** I will come back to that because I have some information which I will refer to at the conclusion of my speech. It is alarming that this State, or any other State, would contemplate implementing a system based on the American system. I have a fear that the Minister for Health is looking to a similar system.

The information I have received today about the Port Macquarie Hospital refers to the monopoly over health services. It states that the Port Macquarie contract will establish a monopoly over health services and the successful tenderer, Health Care of Australia, already runs the existing private hospitals in New South Wales. In addition, patients will have a freedom of choice - I said this yesterday in relation to the takeover by the St John of God Hospital administration at Bunbury. Patients will have no control over who will provide their health care. Health workers will have no choice of an employer and those who want to continue treating public patients will have to become private sector employees. The situation is so bad in New South Wales that even the supporters of privatisation, for example the private hospitals association, oppose the monopoly that prevails in that State.

I referred last night in my speech to the equity of access. The information I have indicates that privatisation of the Port Macquarie Hospital will see public patients short changed on hospital facilities. Only 40 per cent of hospital beds will be for public patients - 60 per cent will be for private. However, privately insured patients make up only 25 per cent of the Port Macquarie population. Public patients will have to wait in ever increasing queues to get into hospital under the privatisation system that the Western Australian Minister for Health is talking about imposing on the people of the south west. In response to a question I asked a week ago about the quality of care in Bunbury, the Minister said that the quality of that care would improve. I said in this place last night that the quality of care in the Bunbury Regional Hospital is second to none. There is a great fear in New South Wales about changes there and it has been pointed out that hospitals are not factories. Health services are about care, not the lowest unit cost. One cannot write care into a contract. The pressures to maximise profits will create an incentive to cut services.

I made a point last night when I asked a question about whether the Government is trying to help the Bunbury St John of God Hospital out of a debt crisis. I did not have the paper I sought in connection with that question but I now have the article, which states -

St John of God Chief executive Tim McDonald revealed last week that Bunbury's private hospital was on the brink of closure just two years ago after recording big losses.

He said the hospital was now viable, but admitted colocation was "a major strategy to ensure a private hospital remained in Bunbury". . . .

Mr McDonald said Bunbury's population was just big enough to make a stand-alone private hospital viable.

If the St John of God Hospital in Bunbury was on the verge of closing two years ago, what is to say that it will not be in the same position in two years' time after the new hospital has been established? What is to say that will not happen under this Minister's guidance when Bunbury will not have the reasonable hospital service that it has today? What is to say that its administration will not run into a brick wall in two years' time and ask the Government for help? What will be the effect on private and public patients in the period leading to that? Of course, that is all hypothetical, but if the hospital was on the verge of closure two years ago, it is possible that sometime in the future it will be in that position again, particularly if the current situation continues. I refer once more to the paper sent to me from Port Macquarie -

Under privatisation community health services will be run by the private contractor. The principles on which community health services depend will be abandoned. Community health services are designed to keep people out of hospital.

That point was raised by Hon Kim Chance, and that is what this whole question is about. It continues -

The profitability of private hospitals depends on increasing patient numbers.

Let us again look at the cost of privatisation of hospitals. The report states with regard to New South Wales -



Health privatisation would lead to a blow out in health costs:

- the Port Macquarie private hospital will cost the people of NSW \$50m more than a public hospital;

I said that under the American health system - the most privatised and most expensive system in the world - Americans pay more than 13 per cent of their gross national product for health care. That does not sound much, but in Australia we pay only eight per cent towards our health care. That is probably one of the reasons so many hospitals throughout Australia are being downgraded.

Hon Kim Chance: Only the wealthiest Americans have access to that health system.

Hon DOUG WENN: The report continues -

Privatisation means the Government, that is the people, will lose control over their hospitals. Health planning will be geared to profits, not quality of service nor medical need. There is no obligation on the contractor -

That is an amazing word to use in this context. A person entering a private hospital is entering into a contract. I can imagine an elderly person going into hospital under a contract system dying of a heart attack before receiving the treatment needed, because of the use of the word "contract". The document continues -

- to keep up to date with medical developments - the people of Port Macquarie will be kept in a 20 year time warp.

They believe they will fall behind 20 years with the medical system. Again under the heading "Equity of Access" it states -

Privatisation means public patients will have fewer public health facilities.

They will have to wait in ever increasing queues for elective surgery.

Hospitals are not factories. Health services are about care, not the lowest unit cost. You cannot write "caring" into a contract. The need to maximise profits will create an incentive to cut services.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson said that tonight. When hospitals are not meeting their financial costs they close beds, wards and operating rooms in an attempt to meet their costs. Therefore, services to the south west, in this instance, would be reduced. The privatisation system would result in a disaster. These people are very scared that they will have reduced facilities available to them. A paper put out by the residents in the district states under the heading "Arguments for Public Hospitals" -

Health is a core responsibility of government. Labor has no difficulty with the existing private sector in health.

We cannot afford to hive off public hospitals to the private sector, for the reasons I have briefly explained. The final argument in this document is that public hospitals are more efficient and only there can patients receive the latest medical treatment. Also, overall public health is cheaper. It keeps emphasising the money side of the equation. I referred last night to a press release in connection with the future of the St John of God Hospital which states -

For SJOG, one of the problems with moving to Blair Street is what to do with its current building and how it will be compensated for walking away from its multi-million dollar investment.

Just a few years ago, SJOG spent \$9 million on a new wing.

It's been suggested that SJOG could lease or sell the building to the government and be used for old age, Alzheimers or psychiatric care.

If we are to allow private enterprise to take over the health care of the region because we need a new hospital and the Government believes it will save money by this proposal, why pay \$50m for that building? Basically, that is what it is coming down to. We are helping someone out at this stage, but no-one can produce figures to support this move.

America pays up to 13 per cent of its gross domestic product on health; for Australia - and England - the figure is eight per cent. Prior to the election the Federal Government was heading towards the American system of health care and, undoubtedly, this Government is heading down the same path. If we follow that line, the consequences will be dire.

Several cases were related to me regarding American health care costs. American families have been destroyed by skyrocketing health insurance premiums. One Californian family found the premium to be in the order of \$US16 000 a year after a daughter was diagnosed with a slightly incapacitated kidney. In other words, this family had private health coverage that was within their means, but when the daughter was diagnosed with an illness the private health coverage blew to a level beyond their capacity to pay. If we follow this path, nobody will have private coverage and everyone will be chasing unavailable public facilities.

In July of last year a man aged 27 from Ohio contracted pneumonia. He could not afford a GP; it was out of the question. At the first hospital he visited he was asked for cash or an insurance certificate - he had neither. He was turned away from the hospital, and by the time he arrived at the second hospital he was dead. Americans are now left with the bill to take care of his widow and four young children for the rest of their lives.

Another case involved a recent community meeting on health care held in Brooklyn, New York which attracted thousands of angry patients. A speaker at the meeting went to the Kings Cross Hospital emergency unit in New York and waited from 6.30 am one day to 11.30 am the next day with an infected foot. By the time he saw the doctor he was told that the foot had to be amputated. However, that was not the end of his ordeal. No beds were available and a junior doctor had to do the job. The amputation was mid-thigh. This man, who only had an infected foot, suffered because he had no private health coverage. Again, the State must take care of that man for the rest of his life.

If we continue down the path of privatisation at Bunbury Regional Hospital, we will be on the road to disaster. The people of Bunbury are telling the Government not to go ahead with this decision. I ask the Minister to find out the real feelings of the people of Bunbury and the general south west. He should not be like the Minister for Health in New South Wales who held a referendum, then ignored the result.

Margaret River can be grateful that a Labor Government delivered a hospital to that town. Mr Barry Blaikie will stand alongside me, as he did alongside the then Premier, Hon Carmen Lawrence, and give his thanks to the Labor Government which delivered that hospital. That member had been fighting for over 12 years for that hospital. If the system the Minister is currently pursuing had been in place at that time, that hospital would never have eventuated, nor would the Augusta hospital senior citizens centre.

The situation at the Busselton hospital is grave, as it is trying to reduce staff levels. Staff are worried and rightly so. I wrote to the Minister for Health asking him to meet with people involved, but he has not responded to my request. I hoped he would do so this week, although I did not realise he would be away. Nevertheless, he sits three metres away from me in this Chamber and he could have said, "Yes, I am willing to meet these people" or "No, I am not willing to do so." I fear that the Minister will make a decision about staffing levels at Busselton hospital before he meets these people. You know as well as I, Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), that many people in Busselton are concerned about this issue. The Silver Chain nursing staff are concerned about staffing levels at that hospital, and this trend will continue in many hospitals throughout the State. If the Minister can find an opportunity to privatise hospitals, he will do so.

Prior to coming to Parliament tonight, I received a telephone call requesting that I ask the Minister a question. I said I could not do so because he was in the Eastern States. If I were to ask the question I would have to do so through one of the four Ministers or the Parliamentary Secretary - who does not know what he is doing - in this Chamber.

*Distinguished Visitor - Mr Chris Haiveta, MP*

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): I seek members' indulgence for a

moment to welcome on behalf of this Parliament a guest to the President's Gallery. I welcome Mr Chris Haiveta from the Papua New Guinea Parliament.

Members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

*Debate Resumed*

Hon DOUG WENN: I did not want to ask the Minister representing the Minister for Health this question as I wanted a direct answer. We are about to enter a three week break, and a public meeting will be held on Tuesday. I will then take this opportunity to ask the Minister these questions: Has the Government employed the consultants Peat, Marwick and Mitchell as advisers on the health system in Bunbury? Is it also true that this advisory group is the same one which advised the New South Wales Minister regarding the Port Macquarie debacle? If we are to employ the consultants who advised the New South Wales Minister, we are heading for deep trouble. That Minister held a referendum, and ignored it. I have no doubt that over the next couple of weeks, you, Mr Deputy President, and I, along with other members representing the South West Region, will be conducting long discussions about the Bunbury situation. We are on the road to disaster.

Hon N.F. Moore: We are off the road to disaster. The people just tipped you out of Government.

Hon DOUG WENN: We are on the road to disaster, and this started when members opposite won the election! That is so whether Hon Norman Moore likes it or not.

It will be a disaster if elected members representing regions of the south west do not take control and get direct answers from the Minister. We do not need stupid answers like the one from Hon Peter Foss saying that because people are on the road they will drive past Bunbury and come to Perth. That is just ridiculous. We do not want vague answers telling us that care at the Bunbury Regional Hospital can be improved. We need direct answers, and for the Minister to take the people of Bunbury and the south west seriously. The privatisation of the Bunbury Regional Hospital is not the way to go. I thank Hon Sam Piantadosi for moving this amendment. It has given members in this House an opportunity to produce new evidence and I hope that members will take advantage of this opportunity and think seriously about what is happening in Bunbury.

HON B.K. DONALDSON (Agricultural) [8.41 pm]: I could not keep out of this debate for a number of reasons. The first is that I was pleased to see so many caring members of the Opposition; that is especially so of those Opposition members who in their maiden speeches advocated the abolition of the upper House. It is a truly conservative Opposition that fills the benches opposite tonight. I am pleased with the electoral system as it exists, because country people have a voice.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: They have had a voice for a long time.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: It will continue. I am sure the question of representation in the Legislative Council will be a very great debate in this House. I see Hon Alannah MacTiernan nodding her head.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: As long as you leave Iron Bar at home.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Wilson Tuckey is a very good advocate of country people. He is an excellent member for O'Connor, a doyen of the people of O'Connor. I said that in the House on opening day. I will quote my maiden speech where I referred to education and quality of life expectations. I said -

I foresee many heartbreaks if this situation is not addressed by the Federal Government and if it does not recognise its obligation to ensure that all Australians receive an equal opportunity to participate in this nation's quality of life expectations.

That is very much the case with health. Those of us who live in the south west - and I know Hon Doug Wenn lives in Bunbury and is very fortunate because he has access to

doctors in Bunbury - should spare a thought for those many country towns which over the last few years have been struggling to find a doctor. There have been some changes, and I give credit to the previous Government -

Hon Kim Chance: Remember, you are on record.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: Yes, and I will give credit where it is due. One of the major impacts on rural Western Australia has been the recession. It has bitten into many family incomes. One of the causes of the diminution of population has been the advance of technology into farming. Many of us have one tractor or one big implement that can do the same work in 15 or 16 hours that once took three tractors with three men. That has had an effect in every country town. I refer in particular to my home town of Koorda, where once every farmer employed a married couple and usually a son on the farm. One finds now that very few married couples are employed because the farmer cannot afford to keep these people on. This has had a terrific impact on small country towns. Of course, the slide in population in those towns has put a strain on the delivery of health and education services. The number of school kids suddenly dropped, and in small country primary schools that meant the loss of a teacher. It has a snowball effect; it is difficult to attract bank managers who have children into country towns which do not have a school.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson mentioned Professor Max Kamien. Many members would understand why I say that country people owe Professor Kamien a debt of gratitude. Professor Kamien highlighted a shortage of doctors in country health services. That is what is happening in New South Wales now. He chaired a committee which consulted with people in rural and remote areas and identified those areas which had problems which needed addressing. The implementation of the Kamien report was a credit to the previous Government. The Kamien report, firstly, established the rural and remote medical centre connected with the faculty of medicine at the University of Western Australia. Secondly, Professor Kamien suggested the possibility of a foundation of some sort to encourage country based students to take on general purpose medicine studies. That would need an allocation of places within the faculty of medicine. This was consistent with a scheme that was occurring in America. Thirdly, and most importantly, in picking up the recommendations of the Kamien report the then Minister for Health, Keith Wilson, gave the Country Shire Councils Association, with which I was involved, a tremendous amount of support in the establishment of a country medical foundation.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: He is a very fair man.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: We approached the late Professor Gordon Reid to become patron. He remarked to me that the greatest thing we could achieve would be the allocation of places within the faculty of medicine for country based students, because traditionally those country based students would return to the country to practice medicine. We then approached Sir James McCusker from Town and Country Bank Ltd, who agreed to become chairman of the board of trustees when that fund was established. Country shires and regional groups throughout Western Australia in those remote areas agreed to contribute on behalf of their ratepayers to crank up this foundation. It was to their credit that they provided over \$500 000 over four years in pledges. We were then able to retain Harry Perkins, the Chairman of Wesfarmers Ltd, to set up the fundraising committee. Our aim was to raise \$3.5m to provide money for scholarships. Members who live in the country will realise the high cost of educating children, especially at tertiary level. It is difficult and sometimes financially embarrassing to many parents who cannot see their way clear to help those students. Keith Wilson and the Government of the day offered a dollar for dollar arrangement to provide up to \$75 000 a year to help with the funding of those scholarships. The country communities rallied around us and firms such as Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd, Wesfarmers Ltd and many others kicked into that foundation. Unfortunately, we launched it as the recession started and many families who would have liked to contribute were not in a position to do so.

The Kamien report also recommended the establishment of training centres at certain regional hospitals where doctors could train during their five years of medicine and

internship. It was important to give them an idea of the medicine they would be administering later and whether they felt comfortable about it. For many years country areas have experienced a shortage of doctors while there has been an oversupply in Perth. I guess the students coming out of university are tempted into the multipractices in Perth where they can work four days a week and play golf or enjoy their family life for the other three. One cannot always blame them. It is very difficult to attract a doctor with a young family or children being educated at high school level to take up practice at one of the country or remote areas at which some of the necessary facilities are not available. They are on call 24 hours a day. It is also very difficult for doctors to find locums and to ensure not only that their knowledge is kept up to date, but that they also receive further training as medicine changes. One doctor who undertook some of that training said that when he returned to his practice he worked for the next two months to pay the locum because of the high cost of attracting somebody for that period.

Many members who have not lived in small country towns would not know exactly what I am talking about.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Have you any suggestions of how to overcome that difficulty?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: A recommendation was made to form a group of doctors who would be prepared to do that locum work. That has been established on an ongoing basis. Although I fully support the argument that all the small country hospitals should stay open, it is also important to ensure that a doctor is available to administer medicine to the patients. It is a two way arrangement - it is not possible to have a hospital without a doctor. Unfortunately, many small country towns have found that to be so.

The other good point which arose from the inquiry and the establishment of the Country Medical Foundation was the improved consultative process which now takes place among rural doctors. There was a complete vacuum between doctors in each town. An orthopaedic surgeon undertook two or three operations in Bruce Rock and returned to Perth. Two days later he was back in the Merredin hospital for more orthopaedic operations. That was a crazy situation. An improved process is in place and doctors are now talking to one another.

Hon Kim Chance: The key is to encourage that commonsense approach.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: That has been developed. The previous Government took up the running of that and as a country person I appreciate that. I do not think anyone in the country would not have appreciated it. The present Minister for Health and the Government have given that same commitment to the Country Medical Foundation and to the rural and medicine centre that that work will continue. An even wider base has been established to provide scholarships to country students who wish to take up nursing. Some members of the board of trustees of the Country Medical Foundation are, for example, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Country Women's Association, local government, people from industry and the Government of the day. Keith Wilson was represented on the board; now Hon Peter Foss has a representative from the Health Department. It is a consultative board headed by Sir James McCusker. The Town and Country Bank has been very big benefactors of the Country Medical Foundation.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Can you see the same situation where nursing could be attached to a rural education scheme for potential participants?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I have always been a bit concerned about nursing. I made a statement a few months ago about the roles of enrolled nurses and registered nurses today. I came under considerable attack from the Director of Nursing in Western Australia. However, the funny thing was that I received a tremendous number of telephone calls from country areas supporting what I said. The registered nurses are now becoming mini doctors, which is what I called them. The Director of Psychiatric Nursing said that in a few years' people would have to be picked from the street to empty the bedpans because the number of enrolled nurses had diminished. I am not too sure whether the old style of nursing training was not the best. Country hospitals are being staffed by people who have re-entered the work force. Without those people, some of the

country hospitals would be hard pressed to be staffed. Some people may not agree with me, but that is my belief. I was pleased to see Hon Kim Chance and Hon Eric Charlton agree with me.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Can you see the rural education scheme expanding to take on nursing?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I hope so. I feel that the process can be better than it is at present. The Minister must address the matter. The Government is considering maximising the resources it has, but it is a very costly business. Health is allocated to 20 per cent of the State Budget. The Minister is trying to ensure that the health service users are accountable. For argument's sake, the St John Ambulance service should not be provided with \$10.5m and be allowed to spend it where it likes. It must have a focus to ensure that that taxpayers' money is put to good purpose. That service is of course second to none. We should support it, but we must ensure that that money is being used properly and not directed into one particular area. We must also ensure that the rural and remote areas receive equity of service.

I have given credit to the previous Government; I will now give it a serve.

Hon Graham Edwards: At least you were decent enough to give it some credit. That must be because of your background in local government in dealing with fairness. That is something you and I share.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: It is a sense of balance we both share. Hon Graham Edwards may remember that in 1986-87 about 10 hospitals were placed on a cost cutting list. I know that one was at Wongan Ballidu; I think another was at Kununoppin and possibly Wyalkatchem. I cannot recall the names of all the hospitals. However, the then Mayor of Kalgoorlie, Ray Finlayson, who was also the President of the Country Shire Councils Association, and I, approached the Minister at the time, Ian Taylor. The Minister was considering very carefully the closure of those hospitals on the list.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is not true, is it?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: That is a fact. Luckily, Ian Taylor said those hospitals would not be closed; the matter would be reconsidered because they needed only approximately \$700 000 each to continue running. He said that was like petty cash when the Government was spending \$1b on health services. He also realised the need for those hospitals to remain in those communities.

Hon Graham Edwards: Sometimes the bureaucracies have a view. The same happened with police stations. The Police Department believed that one man police stations should close in some country towns. Broomehill springs to mind.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: The advice may well have come from the Health Department, I do not know; I am not privy to that information. I am trying to make the point that it is very easy to criticise what the Minister is doing. No doubt much more money was available within the whole system in 1986-87 than there is now. Even then, the Government was examining ways of maximising its resources. In the last two years the health regions have been established for that very purpose. They will try to ensure that the delivery of health services are regionalised so that no region misses out. That is a form of rationalisation. There was a shifting of the delivery of services from certain centres. The Federal Government has an excellent policy of making money available for frail aged hostels attached to hospitals because many small country hospitals have catered for this C class patient; namely, the aged person who is beyond being able to look after him or herself. Because those small country hospitals have catered for those people, they have been able to stay close to their families. Fortunately, that is working very well. Where those people were unable to look after themselves, they were moved into the hospitals to be looked after. I guess that is when the bureaucracy said that hospitals had to be altered to make them more conducive to accepting those types of patients. Patients in the Wyalkatchem-Koorda hospital have been there for a number of years. They did not suffer as a result of the facilities provided. In fact, they had their own rooms or even shared a room when they were very frail and aged. However, they were far happier there

than they were in a nursing home in Perth or a regional centre because their families were there. It is the old question - how far does one take a member of one's family when that person cannot look after him or herself? In my case, do I take the patient from Koorda to Northam or to Perth? In many cases, those people have family living in Perth and they do not have any family or friends in Northam. Therefore, we should not get too hung up on changing the hospital to meet needs because they have always been met over the years without any problem. That is some of the resource sharing that is necessary and the Minister is looking very closely at trying to address that issue.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Are you suggesting there is a possibility of joint State-Federal funding?

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I did not say that. The Commonwealth is already providing funds. The community and the shire are helping to raise the balance of that money. A frail aged hostel was recently opened in Dalwallinu on a three-thirds arrangement. The community raised a considerable sum of money, the shire allocated some of the ratepayers' money and the Commonwealth provided approximately 50 per cent. That program has been very beneficial to the frail and aged in country areas.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Obviously having people in those hospitals makes it more viable to have a doctor there.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: That is exactly what we are trying to do.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: You should make that suggestion to the Minister.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: He is aware of that.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! I would have expected the mover of the amendment to put those points of view earlier in the debate. It was a constructive interjection.

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: People who look at the raw statistics say there is a leakage of patients who need to receive treatment to the capital city. That often goes against a small hospital in a country town continuing to operate or it puts it under attack. That leakage often occurs when a birth is imminent. Often a GP recognises that the welfare of a mother and baby would be best served if the mother were transferred to a hospital in Perth or to a regional hospital where the facilities are far better in case of complications. That accentuates the figures relating to the number of people who physically spend time in a hospital - the day bed ratio drops and the bureaucrats say that the hospital's patient rate is dropping. Many hospitals have survived by looking after the frail aged as C class patients. That utilises a resource and that is pretty important.

One of the greatest things that came out of the Kamien inquiry was the recommendation for places to be provided in the faculty of medicine for country based students. That is very important because students from country schools usually achieve an aggregate lower by about five or seven per cent than students at metropolitan schools. I am not criticising the quality of teachers in country schools but it is traditional. However, they do not make worse doctors because, at the present moment, the aggregate needed to enter the faculty of medicine is very high. Therefore, they are still well above the normal intelligence level. Fortunately, the university senate and the faculty of medicine have decided to run with that and have allowed these country based students to fill places. I think at present it has made available five places, but it could be increased to 10 in the future. Hopefully these students will go back to country areas after they have completed their internships in a hospital in Perth or in regional hospitals. That will be of great assistance to country people.

There are other ongoing activities in the delivery of health services. It is a wide ranging area. The local and regional councils in rural and remote areas have committed themselves to the Kamien report. Max Kamien should be congratulated for his enthusiasm and dogged persistence to ensure that country people are not disadvantaged. I know I have misinterpreted some comments by members opposite, but a couple of members opposite said that this Government is an uncaring Government.

Hon Kim Chance: Heaven forbid!

Hon B.K. DONALDSON: I knew it was not deliberate and I wanted to get involved in the debate to make sure that members opposite know there are caring people on this side of the House. There are five members from the Agricultural Region, including Hon Kim Chance, sitting across the Chamber. I can assure the House that that group will ensure that health services and equity of access to those services will continue. I am sure that the Minister, with what he is trying to do, will make sure that the quality of delivery of health services to rural and remote Western Australians will continue in the most economic way possible for the taxpayers of this State. I am very pleased to see so many country representatives in this House. I am very impressed by the electoral system that elects members to this House because it enables country members to stand up and fight for what we believe is best for the country people of Western Australia.

**HON GEORGE CASH** (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [9.09 pm]: The amendment invites the House to consider restructuring the provision of health services to country areas. We have heard from a number of country members about what they feel about health services being delivered to their areas. One of the threads that has run through this debate is that all members have expressed in a sincere way their views about their region. I refer in particular to the Agricultural Region because of some of the difficulties that are being experienced in that region at the moment. It is important to note that the restructuring of health services in small rural communities towards multipurpose services and, indeed, multipurpose centre arrangements is consistent with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Country Hospitals and Nursing Homes, chaired by Hon Julian Grill. One of the key recommendations of that committee was that there be further development of the multipurpose services concept, or MPS. It further recommended that rural hospitals be modified along MPS lines to incorporate the mix and scale of health and related services most appropriate to each community's needs, and that such entities be called hospital and health centres.

Hon Tom Helm: It did not recommend a reduction in services.

Hon GEORGE CASH: It referred to a modification and restructuring. I join with Hon Tom Helm in expressing the hope that there will not be any reduction in services. The point I make is that while the amendment to the motion criticises the Government for working through a program of restructuring, members will recall that Hon Julian Grill was the chairman of a select committee which dealt particularly with the needs of country areas. The legislative mandate for a broader role for hospitals and nursing posts will in fact be contained in new health services legislation as the current Hospitals Act is not appropriate, given its focus on the hospital system. The select committee suggested that the provision of health services to rural health communities was more than just the provision of acute care services. It should be noted that the majority of Ministers who attended the Australian Health Ministers conference in September 1991 - and I recollect that Hon Keith Wilson was the Minister for Health in Western Australia at that time and that he attended that conference - were prepared to support the development of a multipurpose service. Apart from that endorsement at that conference, it was suggested at that time that the multipurpose services concept would promote, encourage and require better targeting and effectiveness of health services to meet all health needs.

The MPS concept is supported by the rural health reference group, which, as members would be aware, comprises country consumer groups and professional associations, including the Country Hospitals Board Council. I advise also that the State currently provides aged care services in small rural communities. That is a current Commonwealth responsibility, but the State has taken on that role in some small rural communities, at a cost of about \$17m in 1991-92. The development of MPS has seen the Commonwealth take up its responsibility to fund nursing home care in small rural communities. The Commonwealth funding of nursing home beds at Dalwallinu, for instance, has allowed resources to be freed up to address unmet health needs in that area. A new mental health service, a new home and community care service, and improved allied health services, were able to be provided through the resources that were freed up.



Hon Sam Piantadosi: Are you proposing an amendment to my amendment?

Hon GEORGE CASH: No. I am trying to point out that in respect of health care -

Hon Sam Piantadosi: You do not seem to be against it.

Hon GEORGE CASH: If I do not appear to be against it, it may be because the former Government, through its Health Minister, Hon Keith Wilson, was in favour of the multipurpose services concept. It recognised that some restructuring was required in order to achieve that objective. It is my understanding, from listening to Hon Peter Foss in his capacity as Minister for Health, that that is the general direction in which he is travelling. We would all like to think that he could do it a little differently in our respective areas, but I believe it is fair to say that Hon Peter Foss is on top of his portfolio and is a caring Minister, and that he will do his best to ensure that Western Australians are provided with the health service that we all want to enjoy.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: That is why I asked the question, because, as I indicated to Hon Bruce Donaldson, that concept is quite favourable, so I guess I have nothing against it. Perhaps you could amend my amendment to read along those lines.

Hon GEORGE CASH: Were I to amend the amendment before the House at the moment, I would have to take out a substantial number of the words, because the amendment reads in part that, "we regret to inform Your Excellency that the House does not support the Government's announced intention of", and it then refers to restructuring the provision of health services and the means by which health services are provided in country areas.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Do I gather that we can sit down and work out a new amendment for another day?

Hon GEORGE CASH: We probably can. Indeed, were the Minister for Health with us tonight - and the reason that he is not here is that he is in Canberra attempting to negotiate with the Federal Treasurer a financial package, so he is working on our behalf to try to get some more funds for the State - I am sure he would be pleased to address any amendment that the member would care to move in respect of the restructuring of health services in Western Australia.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: And you would support it?

Hon GEORGE CASH: I would support it if it were realistic.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: Along the lines that you have highlighted? You are not changing your mind, are you?

Hon GEORGE CASH: No, I am not. I will support an amendment which recognises the good work that is being done by Hon Peter Foss as our Minister for Health. I said earlier that the common thread is that we are all trying to achieve a better health system in Western Australia. I listened to Hon Kim Chance speak for at least an hour; he used his full entitlement of time. I thought that his comments were, in the main, fair and reasonable. His comments indicated that he wants a particular style of health service to be available in his electorate. I support the general thrust of his comments. I am not sure that I support the way in which he suggested that health service be delivered, but there is no question that there is a need to restructure our health service in Western Australia, and Hon Peter Foss is currently working on that. In the end, it seems to me that the optimum position that we want to achieve is that the quality of health care that is available to country people will increase because of the range of services which can be accessed. The change toward the MPS concept will enable people to receive the primary care and home based care services that they require in their local community, rather than the present situation where, in many cases, people have to receive those services outside their community.

Amendment put and negatived.

*Motion Resumed*

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Stephens.

**ACTS AMENDMENT (ANNUAL VALUATIONS AND LAND TAX) BILL***Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon Sam Piantadosi) in the Chair; Hon Max Evans (Minister for Finance) in charge of the Bill.

**Clause 1: Short title -**

Hon MAX EVANS: I take this opportunity to answer questions raised in earlier debate by Hon Mark Nevill. The first question was: What formula is used to determine the interest rate for the purposes of the land tax instalment scheme? Clause 17(c) of the Bill provides for regulations to be made to allow land tax to be paid by instalments. The provisions of this clause set down only the broad principles on which any such scheme may be based. They do not, for instance, specify the number of instalments which may be allowed or the method of determining the charge which may be imposed in respect of instalment payments. Although these regulations have not yet been drafted it is intended to provide for a maximum of three instalment payments, under the following arrangements -

- (a) If the full amount of the assessment is paid by the due date specified in the notice, a discount will be allowed;
- (b) if an assessment is paid in two instalments, there will be neither discount nor additional charge; and
- (c) if an assessment is paid in three instalments, a charge will be added.

The rate at which this charge is to be applied has not yet been determined. However, it will be kept to reasonable proportions.

The next question was: How are valuations determined for mining tenements for which agreement Acts specify peppercorn rentals? The Valuer General advises that the Valuation of Land Act requires the unimproved valuation of land held under an agreement Act be calculated as 20 times the annual rental. I understand from the Valuer General that if the rental is a mere peppercorn, his office fixes a minimum value of \$1.

Hon Mark Nevill's third question was: Is land tax assessed against mining tenements? The Land Tax Assessment Act expressly excludes mining tenements from the application of land tax. I now quote from the considerations of the reconvened committee addressing this matter, and relating to the valuation of mining and petroleum tenements for rating and taxing purposes -

As recommended by the 1989 Report input from the mining and petroleum industries and local government representatives was canvassed, however, due to the differences of view, a working group was set up under the Chairmanship of Mark Nevill MLC. This group was unable to reach a consensus view. In reporting this outcome in December 1991 Mr Nevill indicated his support for a rating valuation system that set unimproved values at 20 times the annual rent levied by the Department of Minerals and Energy. For Agreement Act mining leases the rent was to be assumed to be that which would have applied if it were a lease held solely under the Mining Act . . .

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 2 to 17 put and passed.**

**Schedule put and passed.**

**Title put and passed.**

*Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon Max Evans (Minister for Finance), and transmitted to the Assembly.

**ACTS AMENDMENT (COAL MINING INDUSTRY) BILL***Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon Sam Piantadosi) in the Chair; Hon George Cash (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

**Clause 1: Short title -**

Hon MARK NEVILL: The Opposition supports the Bill.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 2 to 23 put and passed.**

**Title put and passed.**

*Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon George Cash (Minister for Mines), and transmitted to the Assembly.

**EMPLOYERS' INDEMNITY SUPPLEMENTATION FUND AMENDMENT  
BILL***Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 6 July.

**HON JOHN HALDEN** (South Metropolitan) [9.30 pm]: This Bill is essentially the same piece of legislation that was dealt with in this Parliament last year. The Labor Government introduced this Bill as the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill in about mid-1992. For the Minister at the beginning of his speech to say that this Bill did not have priority with the then Labor Government is ungracious. To say the least, that is not reflected by the facts.

There are very few changes to this Bill, one being the name. I am not sure why the Government of the day would want to change the name. Perhaps it was to provide an avenue to make those ungracious remarks. If so, so be it. We always accept those opposite making a cheap point. When this Bill was finally debated towards the end of the session the then spokesperson for industrial relations in the other place delivered a particularly distasteful speech indicating that he was not happy to deal with the Bill at that stage of the session, having delayed it from mid-1992. The then Opposition spokesperson caused delays by saying that he was not ready to deal with the legislation, that it had not gone to the party room and, eventually, this Bill was dealt with in the dying days of the last Parliament.

It has always been the Labor Party's view that this legislation should have been passed last year. This Bill will enable funds of insurers who have become unfinancial to be pursued and will allow recovery of the outstanding funds owed to the workers' compensation general fund. One substantial difference between the former Bill and that introduced by the Government is the insertion of a new section 6A which will enable the Treasurer to direct payments of money to or from the general fund.

I have read the second reading speech of the Minister in some detail and am not satisfied at this stage that this new amendment is required. I see no reason to delay the Bill if, in his response this evening, the Minister can give reasons for this difference. I will be interested to hear the reasons for this change and why it had to be added to the Bill. Of course, the now Opposition is quite pleased to support the legislation that it originally introduced which was, in a very cavalier manner, blocked by the then Opposition of the day in the mid-1992 parliamentary session. The Opposition will support this Bill provided that the Minister can give an answer to my question.

**HON GEORGE CASH** (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [9.33 pm]: I thank

the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his support for the Employers' Indemnity Supplementation Fund Amendment Bill on behalf of his party. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for allowing this Bill to be debated tonight. It is important to place on the record the fact that the Bill was introduced into the Parliament only last night. In normal circumstances, under arrangements between the Government and the Opposition, as was the case during the last Parliament, each party is given at least a week in which to consider the legislation that is presented to the Parliament. That was not possible in this case as this afternoon I received advice that if this legislation was not processed through the Legislative Council as a matter of urgency, there would be complications due to the end of the financial year.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have graciously agreed that the matter could be dealt with tonight, and again I thank them. In respect of the comments made by Hon John Halden and, in particular, his question as to proposed new section 6A - I know this section has caused him some concern - I can satisfy the member by advising him that it does provide that, where the Treasurer is satisfied that the balance of the fund is in excess of the requirements of the legislation, he may direct the Insurance Commission of Australia to pay the whole or part of the excess into the workers' compensation general fund for use in accordance with the legislation. That may set the member's mind at ease. There was said to be a loophole in the original Bill that did not provide for that circumstance. It has now been corrected by the addition of proposed new section 6A. With those comments, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *Committee and Report*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the House), and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.39 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## WESTRAIL - TOURIST BASED TRAVEL PROMOTIONS

15. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What policies, programs or incentives has Westrail implemented to encourage tourist based travel?
- (2) How are these policies, programs or incentives being promoted?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

Over the past 20 years Westrail has conducted packaged tours which combine travel on the *Prospector*, the *Australind* and Westrail road coaches. These incorporate accommodation and local tours with regional tour operators to areas extending to Exmouth, the Goldfields, Esperance and the south west. Westrail coaches operate exclusively on seasonal wildflower tours which run during August, September and October. The tours, which are described in attractive booklets, are sold by Westrail and travel agents nationally and internationally in cooperation with the Australian Tourist Commission and the Western Australian Tourism Commission. Westrail also conducts its own promotions at shopping centres, travel shows, and country community events. Advertising is carried out in travel magazines and newspapers.

Concessional fares are available on Westrail country train and coach services to members of the Youth Hostels Association, and to members of the Backpackers Association. In addition, an arrangement with Australian coach lines was introduced this year, whereby holders of Australian coach lines bus passes are able to interchange their tickets for travel on Westrail's Perth-Bunbury-Manjimup-Albany routes.

RAILWAYS - CURRAMBINE TERMINUS, NORTHERN SUBURBS RAILWAY  
*Opening Date for Full Passenger Traffic*

23. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

On what date will the northern terminus of the northern suburbs railway, Currambine, be opened for full passenger traffic?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

1 August 1993.

BUS SERVICES - PRIVATISATION  
*Routes; Cost; Subsidy*

24. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Would the Minister indicate -

- (a) what bus services will be privatised;
- (b) what routes;
- (c) at what cost and will such a program of privatisation be put to tender; and
- (d) how much subsidy is expected to be paid from the State Government to each tenderer or to the tenderers collectively so that they could run the privatised bus service?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(a)-(d)

There are no plans to privatise Transperth bus services. However, to improve the cost effectiveness of the current system and to reduce the amount of money taxpayers have to pay for the system, the Government is

currently examining a proposal to involve private operators as co-providers of public transport.

**FREMANTLE BOAT LIFTERS - RENT, FREMANTLE FISHING BOAT HARBOUR**

28. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What commercial rent is proposed that Fremantle Ship Lifters will pay in 1993-94 and what commercial rent did it pay for its premises in Fremantle fishing harbour in 1992-93?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The previous operators of Fremantle Boat Lifters did not pay a commercial rent for their premises in 1992-93. Following their voluntary receivership, the head lessee was given a three year rental package which will retain boat lifting operations in Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour and return an acceptable rent to the Department of Marine and Harbours. The package will be reviewed at the end of the three year period, which commenced in May 1993.

**WESTRAIL - BUSINESS MANAGER CORPORATE JOB No P1583323**  
*Appointment Details*

30. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Who was appointed to the position of Business Manager Corporate Westrail job No P1583323?
- (2) Was this job advertised outside Westrail?
- (3) What is the salary range for a level 8 officer in Westrail?
- (4) With regard to this job what other components, besides the salary, were also negotiated into the successful applicant's salary package?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) Mr T.F. Ryan was appointed to Business Manager Corporate, position No P1583323.
- (2) No; however, the award provides for appointment of an external person where there is no internal applicant who can adequately carry out the duties of the vacant position.
- (3) Level 8 salary range \$61 619 - \$67 002.
- (4) No components outside the standard award applicable to level 8 positions within Westrail.

**RAILWAYS - COUNTRY RAIL LINES, LOSSES**

33. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What country rail lines are currently running at a loss and what is the extent of such losses?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Westrail assesses the profitability of each of its businesses separately and each is required to meet the costs of the track that is used by that business. It is not possible to identify lines that are running at a loss as the operation of a line, which may be assessed as running at a loss, confers benefits on another line which adds to the overall performance of the business. Therefore, a direct answer to the question is not possible.

**TRANSPERTH - YOUTH FARE, RAISING TO 18 YEARS OF AGE**

39. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Will the coalition Government be raising the youth fare on Transperth services to 18 years of age?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:  
No.

**RAILWAYS - FREMANTLE-MANDURAH RAIL LINK**  
*Implementation Timetable*

40. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What year is it likely that the Fremantle to Mandurah rail link will be completed and operational?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

An implementation timetable to provide a rapid transit link between Fremantle and Mandurah will be decided only after -

- (a) alternative routes for the light rail, metro rail and dedicated busway options have been investigated and compared in financial and socioeconomic terms as well as by their likely environmental, social and urban development impacts; and
- (b) competitive proposals from private sector consortia are received, reviewed and a selection made.

**MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT - RESTRUCTURE PROPOSAL**

42. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Government proposing to restructure the Main Roads Department?
- (2) If yes, when?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1)-(2) See answer given to question 86.

**WESTRAIL - FUEL TAX LEVY, REIMBURSEMENT**

44. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Government going to reimburse Westrail its State fuel tax levy?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

State fuel tax is not applicable to Westrail rail services.

**RAILWAYS - JOONDALUP PARK AND RIDE FACILITY**  
*Completion Date*

45. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

When will the Joondalup park and ride facility be completed?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

There is no park and ride facility provided at the Joondalup Interchange.

**ROADS - KWINANA FREEWAY, FOREST ROAD-MANDURAH**  
*Extension Date*

47. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

When will the Government be extending the Kwinana Freeway from Forest Road to Mandurah?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

There is no program at present for construction beyond Thomas Street.

**BUS SERVICES - MANDURAH-METROPOLITAN AREA**  
*Seven Days per Week Proposal*

48. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Government proposing to have a comprehensive bus service between Mandurah and the metropolitan area seven days per week?
- (2) If yes, when is this service likely to commence?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) Transperth already operates services to Mandurah from Sunday to Saturday.
- (2) Not applicable.

**BUS SERVICES - ROUTE No 254 CANCELLATION**

64. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is bus route service No 254 still cancelled?
- (2) If yes -
  - (a) is there any likelihood that this service will be rescheduled; and
  - (b) what provisions have been put in place to provide people effected by the cancellation of this service with adequate public transport?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) With the introduction of the northern suburbs transit system, route 254 was split and replaced by routes 414, 424 and 435.
- (2) There are no plans to amend the operations of these services. The orientation of all northern bus feeder services is to bus/train interchanges, whereas previously these operated to bus stations. The replacement routes provide a similar frequency of service to the former route.

**SCHOOL BUSES - Nos 962, 967, 968, 970, KARRINYUP, CANCELLATION**  
*Alternative Arrangements*

65. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

With the cancellation of school bus services Nos 962, 967, 968 and 970 from Karrinyup -

- (1) What alternative public transport arrangements are available for the students to get to school?
- (2) Does this increase the travelling time of students to and from school?
- (3) If yes, by how long?
- (4) Were schools affected by the cancellation officially advised of the proposed cancellation?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) There are two direct buses from Karrinyup to Claremont colleges each day, being the 971 and the 974 which depart from Karrinyup at 7.25 am. Normal timetabled service buses are also available for students who live in the northern suburbs. These buses connect with trains at Stirling, Glendalough and Warwick Interchanges. School specials also pick up students from the Claremont railway station.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The two services leaving Karrinyup depart at 7.25 am and travel as far south as Iona College, whereas previously the 962 only serviced Scotch College and departed at 8.15 am. The 967 and the 968 previously



departed at 7.45 am, while the 970 left at 7.37 am. The times have been extended due to the fact that some of the bus services were express and now are all-stops. Also, some students have to transfer to train for part of their journey. This has meant an increase in travel time. For example, a student travelling from Karrinyup to Iona College would have an increase of approximately 10 minutes in travel time.

- (4) Yes. Further changes to the service have been undertaken in conjunction with the schools.

**BUS SERVICES - ROUTE No 64, LATER THAN 6.30 PM SERVICE**

66. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Is there any likelihood that bus service No 64 will run later than 6.30 pm Monday to Friday?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Because of the relatively low level of demand there are no plans to provide additional trips on route 64 after 6.30 pm. Should there be a change in these circumstances whereby a significant demand becomes apparent, Transperth will consider later trips on this bus route.

**BUS SERVICES - TUART HILL OR OSBORNE PARK-KARRINYUP SHOPPING CENTRE, CUTS**

67. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What cuts in bus services has there been in taking people from Tuart Hill or Osborne Park to Karrinyup Shopping Centre?
- (2) If there were cuts why were they made?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) The Tuart Hill bus services, routes 276, 277 and 278 did not, and still do not, operate to Karrinyup shopping centre. Routes 250 and 254, which travelled from Karrinyup to the city via Main Street, Osborne Park, were replaced by routes 402 and 414. These services now terminate at the Stirling Interchange in lieu of Karrinyup Bus Station. However, both routes provide for a transfer with other services at Stirling Interchange to minimise the waiting time for passengers destined for Karrinyup shopping centre.
- (2) Bus services are timed to predominantly connect with the trains and were retimed to achieve this.

**BUS SERVICES - SCARBOROUGH BEACH ROAD, MT HAWTHORN AREA, CUTS**

68. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What cut in bus service has there been in the Scarborough Beach Road, Mt Hawthorn area?
- (2) If there were cuts why were they made?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) Prior to the introduction of the northern suburbs Fastrak service, on routes 15, 250, 254, 259, 260 and 269 a total of 304 buses passed through Scarborough Beach Road each weekday. Since the introduction of the northern suburbs Fastrak service, on bus routes 15, 400 and 402 a total of 227 buses pass through the same area each weekday.
- (2) The services were rationalised in order to take advantage of the Fastrak service. The level of bus service through Mt Hawthorn reflects the level of demand, and to date has provided to be adequate.

**ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT - INTERSTATE, SLUMP**

81. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is there a slump in Western Australia's interstate road freight transport?
- (2) If yes -
  - (a) what is the extent of that fall over the last three years; and
  - (b) what are the possible explanations for the fall?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

Truck counts at the Eyre Highway quarantine checkpoint for inbound traffic are -

Year	Trucks
1984-85	17 194
1985-86	19 349
1986-87	21 843
1987-88	25 069
1988-89	27 907
1989-90	26 958
1990-91	23 354
1991-92	24 415
1992-93 to date	26 823

The figures suggest strong growth in interstate road freight during the 1980s, a fall away over the period 1989-90 to 1991-92 - possibly reflecting a number of factors, including the recession - but with a strong resurgence in 1992-93.

**TRANSPORT - PUBLIC URBAN TRANSPORT***Usage Encouragement*

83. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What steps are being taken to increase the use of public urban transport?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of a review by Transperth and the Department of Transport to improve the responsiveness and cost effectiveness of public transport services. To encourage greater public transport usage, the application of public transport hardware, including off-vehicle facilities, software such as service strategies, reliability and information, and policies - for example, the use of bus priority measures and more appropriate central city parking facilities - are concurrently being examined. Transperth has also established a passenger development steering committee with the prime objectives of gaining new passengers and retaining existing customers. Strategies are currently being developed and implemented through small groups established at all Transperth depots.

**ROADS - STATE ROADS BOARD, ESTABLISHMENT**

85. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Has the Government established the State Roads Board?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Not at this stage. Under the Better Government Agreement the Western Australian Municipal Association and the Main Roads Department have established a formal process aimed at improving liaison and communications between Main Roads and local governments. Also, the

Commissioner of Main Roads has commenced a series of organisation development projects within the Main Roads Department to reshape the organisation and provide clearer lines of accountability, improve productivity and strengthen customer focus. I have decided to let these processes take effect and review the position of a board in the light of these changes.

#### MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT - RESTRUCTURING

86. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Government begun the restructuring of the Main Roads Department to make it more responsive to community and industry needs?
- (2) If yes, would the Minister give details of the proposal?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

The Commissioner of Main Roads reorganised the senior structure in March 1992. Since then a series of organisation development projects have commenced, with the objective of shaping the organisation to provide a clearer line of accountability, to improve productivity and to strengthen its customer focus. These measures have improved responsiveness and efficiencies but further improvements will be achieved.

#### TRANSPORT - CROSS-SUBURBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORKS DEVELOPMENT

##### *Government Progress*

88. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What progress has the Government made in developing cross-suburban public transport networks?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Government is currently examining mechanisms to improve the coordination of public transport services, including the use of community advisory groups, community transport and taxis. Currently Transperth operates a number of cross-suburban services throughout the metropolitan area. Additional services are added wherever it is practical and economical to operate them.

#### BIKEWEST - FUNDING INCREASE

90. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will Bikewest funding be increased?
- (2) If so, when and by how much?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

I have asked the Department of Transport to include in its budget estimates for 1993-94 a doubling of Bikewest's recurrent budget.

#### MARINE AND HARBOURS DEPARTMENT - WATERFRONT

##### *Charges, Review*

91. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has an independent audit and review of waterfront and Department of Marine and Harbours charges been commissioned?
- (2) If not, will it be commissioned and when?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1)-(2)

The Department of Marine and Harbours is carrying out a review of its activities, which will lead to further consideration by Government of waterfront and marine and harbours charges.

**RAIL TRANSPORT - FUEL, DANGEROUS GOODS**

*Government Initiatives*

93. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What is being done by the Government to encourage the use of rail transport for fuel and other dangerous loads?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Government is allowing Westrail to apply commercial principles to its operations and structure so that Westrail will be in a position to compete more vigorously in a deregulated environment, for haulage tasks such as fuel. This process of commercialisation is continuing and the Government expects Westrail to be even more competitive in the future for fuel haulage. In the case of dangerous goods, the volumes are very low and not suited to bulk rail operations and under an open competitive environment, rail is unable to compete economically for the traffic.

**RAIL TRANSPORT - BULK FREIGHT**

*Government Initiatives*

94. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What is being done by the Government to encourage the use of rail for bulk freight?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Initiatives are being taken to reduce the cost of rail transport to enable Westrail to provide competitively priced transport packages to existing and prospective clients. Consideration of the question of deregulation of major bulks has been deferred for 12 months to allow Westrail time to lower cost structures sufficiently to ensure that rail freight rates can be competitive prior to any deregulation of major bulks.

The recent decision to close the Midland workshops and to reduce overhead costs are clear examples of the Government's intention for Westrail to lower its costs and thus retain all existing business in the face of full competition. These initiatives will give Westrail the opportunity to win transport business from road and attract proposed minerals processing projects to rail.

**TRANSPERTH - COMMUNITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS**

*Community Advisory Groups Establishment*

97. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Has the Government established community groups to advise Transperth on community public transport needs?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Government, in its review of public transport, is currently examining the establishment of special community advisory groups to ensure that the transport system meets the needs of the community.

**TRANSPERTH - PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES**

*Development Program; Locations; Car Parking Capacity*

98. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is being done by the Government to further develop Park 'n' Ride transfer sections?

(2) What is the current location of Park 'n' Ride facilities?

(3) What is their car parking capacity?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1) Transperth has a program to expand park and ride facilities on its services. On the Fastrak rail network, 20 bays are currently being developed for Lathlain Station, in response to community demand and, in the first instance, the new Currambine Station will contain 437 parking bays. There is provision for 336 additional bays at Currambine to be developed in the future, according to demand. These park and ride facilities complement Tralink bus services which carry a substantial number of commuters to the Fastrak system. In regard to bus services, the provision of a park and ride facility in the vicinity of South Street-Kwinana Freeway is currently under consideration.

(2)-(3)

There are some 7 300 park and ride bays on the public transport system. The location and number are indicated in tables A and B. There are also a number of on-street facilities on various routes which are provided by local authorities.

[See paper No 443.]

#### RAILWAYS - FREMANTLE-SOUTHERN AND SOUTH WESTERN SUBURBS *Light Rail Transport System, Feasibility*

99. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Has the Government investigated the feasibility of a light rail transport system to link Fremantle and the southern and south western suburbs?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Yes.

#### RAILWAYS - FREMANTLE-SOUTHERN SUBURBS *Existing Rail Alignments, Use Consideration*

100. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Does the Government have any plans to use existing rail tracks, outside of the electrified rail network, to link Fremantle with the southern suburbs?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

There are no firm plans to do so. However, the possibility of using a portion of existing rail alignments is being considered.

#### WESTRAIL - MINERAL SANDS TRANSPORT, SOUTH WEST *Sites; Track Sections Upgrade*

106. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Does the Government intend to allow Westrail to transport mineral sands in the south west?

(2) If so, from which sites and to what destinations?

(3) What quantity of mineral sands will be transported by rail and road?

(4) Is Westrail planning to upgrade any sections of track to carry mineral sands?

(5) If yes, which lines and at what cost?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1) Westrail is already hauling mineral sands by road in the south west for RGC Mineral Sands Ltd, and by rail to the south west for RGC and Westralian Sands. Recent initiatives by the Government to make Westrail

more competitive will allow it to bid competitively with road transport for other mineral sands in the south west.

(2)-(3)

**RGC Mineral Sands -**

Capel to the Land Back Wharf at Bunbury by road 165 000 tpa - forecast

Capel to SCM Chemicals at Kemerton by road 50 000 tpa - forecast

Geraldton to Capel by rail 20 000 tpa - forecast

Namgulu to Capel by rail 30 000 tpa - forecast

**Westralian Sands**

TIWEST Muchea to Picton by rail 100 000 tpa - forecast

(4)-(5)

Westrail is re-evaluating a rail based transport proposal for the Beenup project which would involve the upgrading of the Capel-Wonnerup-Nannup railway. Costs are not available at this stage.

**BUS SERVICES - JAGGS WAY BUS LANE, CLOSURE**

*159-169 Route, Re-routing, Le Souef Drive, Kardinya - Somerville Action Group Request*

171. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will the Minister indicate whether he has been requested by the Somerville Action Group to -

(a) close the Jaggs Way bus lane; and

(b) re-route the 159/169 bus service around Le Souef Drive, Kardinya?

(2) If so, will the Minister indicate whether he intends to respond in the affirmative to either request?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I am currently considering the request by the Somerville Action Group. It is therefore not possible and, in any event, inappropriate, to indicate the nature of my response to the group.

**ROAD TRAINS - GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY; ALBANY HIGHWAY**

*Speed Limits, Ongoing Review*

187. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will the 90 kph and 95 kph speed limits currently applied to road trains on Great Eastern Highway and Albany Highway be the subject of ongoing review as to their suitability?

(2) Has the Minister received advice of problems caused by the speed limit differential between road trains and other trucks?

(3) Does the 500 meter "buffer zone" apply only to one road train following another, or does it also apply to a semitrailer following a road train or vice versa?

(4) Is it possible that, depending on satisfactory performance by road trains, the speed limit applying to these configurations could be lifted to 100 kph in those zones where a lower limit currently applies?

(5) Has the Minister considered the possibility of allowing other vehicles to exceed the existing absolute 110 kph speed limit while overtaking road trains in order to minimise exposure to oncoming traffic?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

(1) Yes. I expect to receive a progress report by the end of September.

(2)-(5)

All these issues will be covered in the progress report. I will ensure the member's concerns are taken into account and would encourage all interested parties to submit their comments to the Commissioner of Main Roads who is monitoring the situation.

**ABALONE FISHERY - ZONE 2, GREEN AND BROWN LIP**

*Licences; Catch; Albany Processing; Export Licences*

200. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) How many divers are licensed to take green lip and brown lip abalone in zone 2?

(2) What was the total catch of

(a) green lip;

(b) brown lip

for each of the past 10 years in zone 2?

(3) What was the total catch of

(a) green lip;

(b) brown lip

in blocks 34160, 35160, 35170 and 34180 for each of the past 10 years?

(4) How much of zone 2's abalone catch is processed in Albany?

(5) Are any Albany processors licensed to export abalone?

(6) Is the zone 2 abalone fishery underdeveloped?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Fisheries has provided the following response -

(1) Eight.

(2)-(3)

[See paper No 444.]

(4) None.

(5) This is a Commonwealth responsibility managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Energy. From information received from the Fisheries Department there are none.

(6) No.

**TROUT - PEMBERTON TROUT HATCHERY; TROUT STOCKING PROGRAM**

*Cost; Income; No Privatisation, Downgrading, Abolition*

211. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) What was the total cost of running the Pemberton Trout Hatchery and the trout stocking program for 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93?

(2) What was the total income generated by the hatchery in the above financial years?

(3) Will the Minister give an assurance that the Pemberton Trout Hatchery will not be -

(a) privatised;

- (b) downgraded; or
- (c) abolished in the life of the Government?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

The Minister for Fisheries has provided the following response -

- |     |  |           |
|-----|--|-----------|
| (1) | 1990-91  | \$116 676 |
|     | 1991-92  | \$114 385 |
|     | 1992-93  | \$124 354 |
| (2) | 1990-91  | \$25 102  |
|     | 1991-92  | \$27 641  |
|     | 1992-93  | \$35 574  |
| (3) | The Minister advises he has no intentions of privatising, downgrading or selling the Pemberton Trout Hatchery at the present time. |           |

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

*Positive Development Assistance - Sutherland, Mr Bruce, Statement*

138. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

I refer the Minister to the magazine *Australia's West* and in particular to a statement by the head of the Department of Commerce and Trade, Bruce Sutherland. Is Bruce Sutherland correct in making the following statement -

The Government offers positive development assistance to help establish and develop large, internationally competitive manufacturing and service industries.?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I ask the member to put that question on notice. I am not aware of the matters referred to in that statement and I do not want to give him incorrect information.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT - PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

*Positive Investment Assistance*

139. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Employment and Training:

I refer the Minister to his answer to question without notice 136 yesterday in which he said -

The bottom line is that if we are to do anything meaningful about the unemployment in this State, we have no choice but to encourage the private sector to spend its money.

In view of that statement and the statement by Bruce Sutherland, can the Minister tell me how that positive development assistance is provided since the capital establishment grants of up to 10 per cent - 15 per cent for regional projects - of the capital cost of the project, in addition to royalty rebate concessions on land provided by the former Government, have been discontinued by this Government?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

That is a fairly wandering-type question but I think I have a rough idea of the member's intent. I said yesterday that I believed the only way we could do anything about unemployment in any meaningful way was to



encourage the private sector to invest in Western Australia. That stands today, as it will stand every day in the history of this country. I also said yesterday that Western Australia's unemployment level is 9.5 per cent. I did not say yesterday that it was an absolute disgrace, but any suggestion that we should tolerate that level is unacceptable to me. It is extraordinary that the Labor Prime Minister is prepared to accept an unemployment level around 10 per cent.

*Point of Order*

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: Does the Minister's answer fall within the requirements of our standing orders?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): I do not believe there is a point of order.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am simply making the point that anybody who believes that level of unemployment is acceptable does not recognise the ability of this country, governed properly, to create real employment. This country has enormous resources, a well educated and highly skilled work force and the capacity to do great things. For some strange reason, after 10 years of government by people of the member's ilk, we have 10 per cent unemployment across this nation. That is an absolute disgrace.

Hon Graham Edwards: You were boasting about that figure yesterday.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I was boasting yesterday about the fact that the trend is on the way down. The Leader of the Opposition told me that he could take credit for the unemployment figure decreasing. If he considers that anything more than 10 per cent is good and he claims to represent the interests of unemployed people, all I can say is that he is seeking to have a lot more people in whom to be interested. Any Government that allows 10 per cent unemployment in a country with the wealth of Australia is an absolute disgrace. I said yesterday it is encouraging that the level is coming down. It will come down only with proper policies which attract private investment, and which will create real jobs that will last. I do not suggest the creation of the sort of programs Hon Bob Thomas suggested yesterday whereby people are kept off the unemployment queues for a little longer to keep the figures down. I am not interested in that proposal. There has been too much of that already. In this country we must say to investing companies and countries that Western Australia is a place in which they are welcome to put their money. For example, they can start a mining operation without fear of losing tenure over their land and they can invest with the expectation of taking their profits home. Those sorts of requirements for overseas investment must be made very clear to the investing public outside Australia. When we do that sort of thing and convince people this is a place in which they can invest with confidence, we shall do something meaningful about unemployment. Until we do that, we have no hope at all.

**DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE**

*Grants, Discontinuation Reason*

140. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Employment and Training:

Given the Minister's admission that there is a need to encourage business activity in this State, why has this Government discontinued the development assistance grants provided by the previous Government?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I presume that relates to the first question which I asked the member to put on notice. I am not aware of that detail and I would not like to give an

answer that is not strictly correct. I am happy to take the question on notice and then debate the issue.

Hon Graham Edwards: You should get on top of your portfolio.

Hon N.F. MOORE: What a dope.

Hon Graham Edwards: You are the Minister for Employment and Training.

Hon N.F. MOORE: We have been told on countless occasions that it is important to give proper answers in this House. I do not know the answer to that question.

Hon Graham Edwards: You don't care about unemployed people.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE: Anybody who can sit on that side of the House, having presided over 10 per cent unemployment in this State, and say that this Government does not care about unemployment, demonstrates his bona fides. The Government in this State for the past 10 years was an absolute disgrace. With the enormous resources in this country we had 10 or 12 per cent unemployment levels, and 30 per cent of our youth were unemployed under the Labor Government's stewardship.

Hon Graham Edwards: You were boasting about it yesterday.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I was not boasting about anything. The trouble is that the Leader of the Opposition cannot read either.

*Point of Order*

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Quite clearly the Minister is not answering the question and I ask you, Mr Deputy President, to draw his attention to that matter.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question and answer session is becoming more like a debate and I ask the Minister to complete his answer as quickly as possible.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

Hon N.F. MOORE: I ask the member to put the question on notice so that I can provide a proper answer.

**EXMOUTH - HOUSES, TENDER OUTCOME**

141. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Lands:

Will the Minister advise the House of the outcome of the recent tender process for 23 houses at Exmouth?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I am pleased to advise that all houses were sold, returning some \$1.95m. As Hon Phil Lockyer said, 23 houses were put up for tender. The tender was successful, with all houses being sold at prices above the minimum tender prices. The result augers well for the Exmouth community and shows a strong demand for houses. It also indicates that the early fears that the real estate market would be ruined by the sale of the United States Navy houses has not eventuated.

It is my hope that with the increased confidence in Exmouth, the Department of Land Administration will be able to achieve sales of its vacant lots now that real estate prices are firming. I also hope that as a Government we will be able to get the private sector to once again express some interest in the marina development. I trust there will be bipartisan support on this matter.

**MINISTER ASSISTING MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND TRADE - ROLE**

142. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

Will the Minister tell the House precisely what he does in his role as the Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce and Trade?

Hon Mark Nevill: He sorts out the mess the National Party makes!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order!

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

As the honourable gentleman would know, having been a Minister for about three minutes, there are certain roles Ministers have, and Ministers who are assisting other Ministers do so at the request of the substantive Minister when the need arises. The Minister for Commerce and Trade will, I suspect, be travelling quite frequently to other parts of the world to encourage people to come here and invest and to do what he can to improve trade between this country and the rest of the world. While he is away it is appropriate to have someone to keep an eye on the shop, so to speak. That is the role of the Minister assisting the Minister for Commerce and Trade in the context of this Government.

**WESTRAIL - CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM***Carpet Replacement Program \$2m*

143. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

Given the extent of Westrail's debt and the Minister's continued reference to that debt and how Westrail must become a lean and mean machine, will the Minister explain why, as late as 28 May, the capital works program for Westrail contained an expenditure item of nearly \$2m for a carpet replacement program for the Westrail Centre?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

Perhaps the member should have asked this question last year, because I understand from the answers to a question he asked me previously that that is when this program began.

As to the work being done by Westrail, apart from the refurbishment being done for its own requirements as an administrative centre, it is obviously a public responsibility to have the floor covering of that premises in a condition that does not result in people taking action as a consequence of the state of disrepair of that floor covering. As to the opinion asked for by the member, I will not give an opinion.

**EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING****DEPARTMENT OF - TRADE UNIONS, PAYMENTS**

144. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister for Employment and Training:

I refer to the Minister's answer to question without notice 127 asked by Hon Barbara Scott about payments to trade unions by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training between December 1985 and January 1993, and to the Metal Trades Federation of Unions between February 1989 and November 1992. Will the Minister now advise -

- (1) For what purpose was each payment made?
- (2) What accountability requirements were attached to each payment?
- (3) Were payments also made to -
  - (a) the Housing Industry Association;
  - (b) the Master Builders Association; and

- (c) the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia;

and if so, will such payments to those employer bodies continue?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for his question and advise as follows -

- (1) I cannot give the details of all the grants off the top of my head because there was a significant list of them and I do not have it with me, but I will provide those details to the member in due course. It tallies about \$1.05m.
- (2) Advice given to me is that the accountability mechanisms were not up to the standard I would have expected for the allocation of the funds in the first place, and I am investigating the matter.
- (3) I am not aware of any money being provided by DEVET to the Housing Industry Association and the Master Builders Association, but I am aware that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry received about \$200 000 from the previous Government over the last five years.

#### BREATHALYSERS - CHECKS

##### *Marble Bar; Nullagine; Alternative Tests*

145. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) How often are breathalyser units checked?
- (2) On what occasions in the last year has the breathalyser unit at Marble Bar been reported as malfunctioning?
- (3) (a) Is there a breath test unit at Nullagine; and  
(b) has that unit been reported as not working properly this year?
- (4) Are there other sobriety tests that can be carried out by police officers in the event of equipment failure?
- (5) Have drink driving suspects been driven from Marble Bar to Port Hedland for breathalyser tests?
- (6) Can officers give breath tests to superior officers?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Minister for Police has provided the following reply -

- (1) At least once every 12 months.
- (2) Once, on 24 June 1993.
- (3) (a) Yes;  
(b) no.
- (4) Yes. Other tests that may be given are -
  - (a) A preliminary breath test, if not already administered, for which there is statutory provision in the Traffic Act;
  - (b) a blood test - statutory provision in the Traffic Act; and
  - (c) a sobriety test - no statutory provision.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Yes, if the officer is a qualified breath equipment operator.

**EXMOUTH - MEETING, MINISTER AND FISHING INDUSTRY  
REPRESENTATIVES**

*Friday, 9 July*

146. Hon P.H. LOCKYER to the Minister for Mines:

Will he meet representatives of the fishing industry when he visits Exmouth on Friday, 9 July?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

Yes.

Hon Graham Edwards: How many representatives ?

Hon GEORGE CASH: I am not sure how many will be available to come to the meeting. However, I believe they are senior representatives of the fishing industry in Exmouth and they have been specially invited because there had been some suggestion that a late afternoon meeting was not convenient for some members of the fishing fleet in that area. I am looking forward to being in Exmouth on Friday, and I am pleased about some of the calls I have received from the Exmouth area from people offering their support for my proposed visit. I believe I will be able to allay the fears of the majority of the Exmouth community when I am in that town on Friday and explain to them exactly what the Government has in mind.

**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO STRUCTURE**  
*Vickery Review - Final Draft Report*

147. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister received the final draft report of the Vickery review, and when will it be released for public comment?
- (2) Will there be the usual minimum period for public comment of six weeks?
- (3) What was Dr Vickery paid for his services in carrying out the review of the education and training system?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1) I have received the final draft report of the Vickery review. It was provided to me last weekend, and I am in the process of reading it. There are a couple of areas where the committee itself has decided to rewrite certain parts to make their position clearer from the point of view of people seeking to understand what the report recommends. When they have completed that task they will provide me with the final version of their report, which I will make available to interested people for consideration.
- (2) I do not know whether there will be a period of six weeks for public comment because the issues that are addressed by the Vickery review relate to the structure of the portfolio of Education, Employment and Training rather than to policy issues which might require a wider public comment. Dr Vickery's review team has consulted widely across the community, as indicated in a list of those consulted which is contained in the report. Therefore, anyone who has a vague interest in this matter has already been consulted. Nevertheless, an opportunity is available for the main players in the game - the unions, the employers and associations representing various employer groups - to make views known. Following that, I hope to consider implementing the recommendations, although, of course, that must be considered by Cabinet. Once the process is complete, I hope to quickly implement the recommendations, which, on the surface of the draft report, seem sensible. Members must bear in mind the messy situation I inherited, which has been acknowledged by most people.

- (2) Regarding Dr Vickery's remuneration, the approximate figure is \$30 000 or \$40 000, which is most appropriate for a person of his capabilities. He worked on the review for three or four months and as Dr Vickery has an earning capacity of \$100 000 a year, it represents very good value.

**HARRISON, KEVIN - ROTTNEST ISLAND AUTHORITY, CHAIRMAN  
APPOINTMENT**

148. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Tourism:

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that Mr Kevin Harrison has been or will be appointed as Chairman of the Rottnest Island Authority?
- (2) Will Mr Harrison remain as Chairman of the WA Tourism Commission, and, if so, will this create a conflict of interest?
- (3) Will the appointment of Mr Harrison to undertake this statutory review of the Rottnest Island Authority Act as well as chairing the authority compromise the independence and therefore the effectiveness of the review?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1) On 3 May 1993 Cabinet approved Mr Harrison's appointment to the Rottnest Island Authority Board for a period of three years commencing 1 June 1993. Also, it approved his appointment as chairman of that board for a period of 12 months from 1 June 1993.
- (2) Mr Harrison is Acting Chairman of the WA Tourism Commission, which is presently under review. No decision has yet been made regarding the future structure of the commission. There is no conflict of interest. Mr Harrison is fully aware of his obligations regarding Rottnest Island.
- (3) No. The appointment of Mr Harrison to conduct the review was supported by the island's chief executive officer.

**EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING,  
DEPARTMENT OF - TRADE UNIONS, PAYMENTS**

149. Hon T.G. BUTLER to the Minister for Education:

Unfortunately the Minister did not answer the fourth part of my earlier question. It referred to the payments by the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training to the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and I asked whether such payments to these employer bodies would continue.

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

The same rules which applied to the union movement also apply to other organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. No funds will be provided for the things to which it was allocated in the past. In other words, the gravy train has been derailed. A situation was put in place at large expense to taxpayers, and it is time it was brought to an end.

**EXMOUTH - MEETING, MINISTER AND FISHING INDUSTRY  
REPRESENTATIVES**

*Minister for Fisheries, Attendance*

150. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Will the Minister for Fisheries attend the meeting with fishing representatives in Exmouth on Friday?
- (2) If not, will the Minister for Mines advise the fishing representatives that

the Minister for Fisheries has initiated an investigation into Hon Phil Lockyer's claims in this House that the industry is significantly damaging the ocean bed?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Regarding whether Hon Phil Lockyer criticised the fishing industry for the manner in which it operates, I will need to check *Hansard*. The Leader of the Opposition's view is not my understanding of Hon Phil Lockyer's comments to this House. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition either fails to realise or is not aware that Hon Phil Lockyer is highly regarded in the Exmouth area for the support he gives to the fishing industry. When Hon Phil Lockyer believes that the fishing industry's attention must be drawn to a matter, he is a big enough person to say so. I am sure that if the Leader of the Opposition cares to discuss the matter with Mr Lockyer, he may discover the situation. I am surprised that the question was asked of me on behalf of Hon Phil Lockyer. Mr Lockyer has already had discussion with the fishing industry following comments in this House.

Hon Graham Edwards: I bet he has!

Hon GEORGE CASH: During those discussions he indicated that what was published in the newspaper was not necessarily all that was said in the House.

Hon Graham Edwards: Another scapegoat - a journalist!

Several members interjected.

Hon GEORGE CASH: The comments may have been taken out of context.

Hon Tom Stephens: Rubbish! She got it right in context.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

#### *Withdrawal of Remark*

Hon JOHN HALDEN: Hon Phil Lockyer referred to Hon Tom Stephens' lying. I understand that to be unparliamentary, and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): I did not hear any such comment so I cannot accept it as a point of order. As members would be aware this is the first occasion that I have been in the Chair during questions without notice due to the President's absence. As I am here, and not the President, it does not mean the rules change, and the President has made very clear the rules under which this Chamber operates.

#### *Questions without Notice Resumed*

Hon GEORGE CASH: The Leader of the Opposition, rather than hiding behind me, should speak to Hon Phil Lockyer to discover exactly what the member said to the fishing industry and its response. I believe the fishing industry in Exmouth fully understands Hon Phil Lockyer's comments and, more than that, it accepts them.

### **EXMOUTH - MEETING, MINISTER AND FISHING INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES**

#### *Ocean Bed Floor Damage Claims*

151. Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS to the Minister for Mines:

I again refer to the meeting which will take place between the Minister and representatives of the fishing industry in Exmouth. In view of the Minister's previous answer, will he inform that meeting that Hon Phil Lockyer is right and that the Minister for Fisheries is wrong and that it is

unnecessary for an investigation to be made into the claims made in this House?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is not aware that Hon Phil Lockyer will attend the meeting with me and the fishermen. Anything which Hon Phil Lockyer wants to say to the fishermen, he will say; anything the fishermen want to say to Hon Phil Lockyer or me, I am sure they will say also. I do not need the Leader of the Opposition's help either in organising the Exmouth meeting or advising fishermen regarding my position on various matters.

**DANGEROUS GOODS REGULATIONS - 4.31(6) DEFERRAL**

152. Hon W.N. STRETCH to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has the Minister approved a 12 month deferral on the application of regulation 4.31(6) of the Dangerous Goods Regulations 1992?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is yes, why was deferral granted?
- (3) What was the intent of regulation 4.31(6)?
- (4) Will public safety be compromised by the deferral of this regulation?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I thank Hon Bill Stretch for some notice of the question.

Hon John Halden: And for reading it so well after you wrote it.

Hon N.F. Moore: You taught us all we know about dorothy dixers.

Hon Tom Stephens: Did you give him the question?

Hon GEORGE CASH: Hon Bill Stretch has approached me on a number of occasions to obtain advice on certain regulations affecting the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Act. I referred one matter which he raised to the dangerous goods liaison committee for some further advice. The answer to Hon Bill Stretch's question is -

- (1) Yes.
  - (2) Deferral was granted on the basis of substantiated claims from industry that the current wording of the regulation placed impractical obligations on consignors of dangerous goods - well beyond the original intent of the regulations. Unfortunately, the problems encountered by industry were not anticipated at drafting nor during the public review period. The 12 month deferral will allow a detailed review and appropriate amendment of the regulation.
  - (3) The intent of the regulation was to prevent irresponsible operators from delivering dangerous goods into unregulated and unsafe tanks. The initial proposal for such a regulation was put forward by industry when the regulations were being developed.
  - (4) Given that no similar regulation has operated in Western Australia previously, a 12 month deferral is not considered to present significant risks to public safety. All drivers of bulk dangerous goods vehicles are specifically licensed and trained to ensure safe delivery of product. Also, approximately 80 per cent of all premises requiring licences are licensed.
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