

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 1 April 1981

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

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: EXAMINATION BY STANDING COMMITTEE

Report of Select Committee

THE HON. R. G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [4.33 p.m.]: I wish to present a report of the Select Committee established to inquire into and report upon the appointment of a Standing Committee to inquire into State Government agencies. I move—

That the report be received, tabled, and printed.

Question put and passed.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 130).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

JURIES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Attorney General) [5.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill which is now before the House, principally deals with the proposed operation of a jury pool system in Perth for Supreme and District Court criminal trials. At the same time, the opportunity has been taken to put forward amendments to allow the service of summonses by post and for the selection of jury panels as well as the preparation of summonses by computer. The Bill also includes provision to dispense with the draft jury roll as presently in use.

As mentioned, the principal purpose of this Bill is to provide for the operation of a jury pool system for Supreme and District Court criminal trials in Perth and to allow for the extension of such a system to other courts or localities as may appear necessary from time to time.

Under the present provisions of the Juries Act, it is necessary to summon up to 120 jurors per week during normal criminal sittings of the Supreme and District Courts in Perth. The number of jurors summoned depends on the number of courts in session and the number of trials in such courts.

To select three jury panels when three separate courts are sitting, it is at present necessary to move jurors from court to court until the selection has been completed, as the draw for jurors must be from the whole panel. The result is that trials in the last court in line can be considerably delayed until this procedure has been finalised.

In planning the new District Court building in Perth, provision has been made for a jury assembly area. It is proposed that when the new court building is in operation, sufficient numbers of jurors can be allocated to each court from the jury assembly area so that the selection process can take place simultaneously in all courts. The new selection process will be made possible by the introduction of a new type of jury precept.

Jury requirements are embodied in precepts which are directions issued by the Chief Justice or other judge to the summoning officer, who in Perth sittings of the courts is the sheriff.

To distinguish between the current system, which will still continue in circuit courts, and the new pool system, precepts issued in accordance with the current system will be known as general jury precepts and those issued in accordance with the new system, will be known as pool precepts.

Provision has been made in the Bill so that general jury precepts can still be issued in Perth according to particular requirements—clause 20 section 32A (5).

Jurors summoned under the new system will assemble in the jury assembly room and the jury pool supervisor will then allocate jurors by ballot to the various courts in accordance with the pool precepts he has received.

The number of jurors who will, under the pool system, proceed to the various courts, will be specified in the individual pool precepts. The number should be sufficient to provide for the jury, after allowing for challenges.

The Bill does not alter the existing system of challenges in any way.

Also included in the Bill are provisions to eliminate the present cumbersome procedure for the compilation of draft jury rolls for each jury district throughout the State and to eliminate the requirement for despatch of notices to every person included in such rolls. Under the present procedures an examination has to be made of all claims for exemption received following the despatch of the notices. Thereafter the draft jury roll has to be revised and becomes the jury book for the year. As members will appreciate, this practice places a very heavy work load on the sheriff and his officers in processing the claims and involves a considerable cost in relation to

printing and in the postage of notices and other correspondence.

The Bill eliminates the "draft jury roll" concept. Under the existing system all those persons whose names appear on the draft jury roll receive notices to that effect, even though they may never be summoned to attend as jurors. Under the new system set out in the Bill an explanatory notice will be despatched to those persons only who are actually summoned as jurors. The selection of persons to be summoned will be made at random by computer or manually by ballot.

The notice to be despatched to those who receive summonses will advise those persons that they may, if entitled, claim exemption or for sufficient reasons be excused from service. Under the present system all those persons who are on the draft jury roll when notified of that fact, have to consider whether to claim an exemption. Under the proposals embodied in the Bill only those persons actually summoned as jurors will now be affected.

I might add that the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia recently released its report on "exemption from jury service" and this is at present being considered by the Government. The Bill now before the House does not contain any reference to that subject which is being dealt with as a separate issue. In other words, the Bill does not vary the existing arrangements for exemption from jury service.

The principal reason for proceeding with the legislation relating to the jury pool system at this stage is so that the legislation can be brought into operation after 1 July and before 1 November this year which would be the critical day for the old draft jury roll procedures to commence for the ensuing year and it is therefore desirable that the legislation be in force so as to ensure that the new procedures can operate in 1982-83.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. M. Berinson.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 31 March.

THE HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [5.45 p.m.]: I support the motion and I wish to address my comments to the current interest rates prevailing in the Australian economy. However, in doing so I would like to draw to the attention of some members—who took no interest in a previous debate I spoke to in this Chamber last

session—the problems associated with welfare housing, not only in this State, but throughout Australia.

Following my contribution to that debate I was requested by members of both parties in this Chamber to elaborate on the subject matter. Those members sought further details of my proposal and it was apparent from the approaches made to me that there was a consensus on this matter.

Last night, we were subjected to and witnessed a highly politically motivated attack on both the Federal and State Governments for their handling of welfare housing. That attack had no logical sequence or substance; it was not even entertaining.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It was not intended to be.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Having further examined the *Hansard* report of my previous contributions on welfare housing, I was surprised—because I had not realised at the time—that the interjections were made by the person who made an attack on welfare housing last night. It appears to me that he has no real interest in the problems of welfare housing and in the welfare of people in Western Australia.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That is not correct, and you know it.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The member who has just interjected is aware of my sincerity in relation to welfare housing. However, if members of the Opposition wish to take another view then that is their prerogative. I did preface my remarks this evening by saying that I was dissatisfied with the current interest rate structure prevailing in the economy of this State.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I thought you were talking about what a member said last night.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I was directing my remarks to the area of housing and the criticism of a member who attacked the Federal and State Governments for their lack of provision for welfare housing.

When I spoke on this subject last session that member interjected, but I do appreciate the sincerity of the Hon. Fred McKenzie.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: My remarks were confined to defending the interests of the member who spoke yesterday.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I thank Mr McKenzie for his comments and I appreciate the manner in which he has made them. I also understand his sentiments in that regard.

I find it difficult to understand the reason for the attack last night because welfare housing has no bounds and no political party; it has no barriers. It is an area in which we all have some concern and it does not come under the province of the Liberal Party or the Labor Party.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It is a question of degree.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am most disturbed about the Australian economy today and the Federal Government debacle in misleading the public about the cost of money.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I agree.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I appreciate the interjection from Mr Dans because we have been in agreement on many occasions and we are in agreement again. I believe that we will be in agreement in the future also.

It has been stated repeatedly, by successive Federal Governments of either complexion, that they do not control interest rates. That is an absolute contradiction of the truth and has no basis whatsoever. I do not profess to be an economist, but they do control interest rates. These successive Governments have come up with the old hackneyed phrase of "supply and demand".

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not think there is a member in this House who will disagree with you. I will send a copy of your speech to Mr Fraser.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I would like to put a challenge to the Federal Treasurer—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It will be ignored.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am well aware of our fiscal policies within the Federal control of the central banking system. We do not have a complicated situation in Australia when we compare it with that of other countries. Our system is a fairly simple one which is controlled by the Federal Government and that is the reason for my speaking to seek the support of the House.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You will have my support if you are suggesting a motion to move that interest rates come down; that is, if you are planning to make a simple resolution.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am pleased I have that support and it is not necessary for the Leader of the Opposition to expound it because I knew I would have his support.

I would like to issue a challenge to the Federal Treasurer (Mr Howard) who says his Government does not set the interest rates in Australia, but it is all on a supply-and-demand basis. I would ask the Federal Treasurer to explain to me the reason that interest rates on

home ownership in Austria have remained at a steady 6 per cent for many years. I have chosen Austria as an example, but there are approximately 30 more countries from which I could have selected.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Austria is a socialist country.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I will tell you the reason for their interest rates being kept down. It is the only country which has had a successful wages and prices policy.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: What is their level of inflation?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I have not examined inflation.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: You do not think it is relevant to the question?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: However, I will do so because it is well below Australia's inflation rate. We in Australia are moving into the highest interest rate structure since 1974.

Fortunately my colleagues and I in the Liberal Party and the Country Party do not preside over that rampant rise in interest rates. We had a situation in 1974, particularly in April 1974, when the Labor Government presided over the highest interest rate that this country has ever witnessed.

The Hon. P. G. Pendal: Would Mr Dans support that?

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: What were they?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I do not know whether Mr McKenzie would like to block his ears because the leading private bank in Australia was borrowing funds at 21 per cent. I will not presuppose where current rates will go.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I thought we were talking about housing interest rates.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Members of Governments have poked their noses into the private affairs of individuals already and we have all seen the agonies of big Government and big bureaucracy. I find this totally unacceptable.

I find the manner in which the Federal Government has set about regulating our interest rates to be quite unacceptable. All I can presume is that it is contagious and is a flow-on from the previous Labor Government.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I knew something like that would have to happen there. It is one of the diseases which has spread around the world.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: When interest rates rise and then go off peak and into a lull, the next peak is higher so the next lull is higher also.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you see the report of the Bank of England?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I think we must isolate that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Isolate it? It is contagious.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Bank of England has its own problems and the Parliament of Westminster has its own problems and is not without political influence.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: You also find international interest rates relevant to Australian interest rates.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: No. One cannot isolate oneself from it and having read debates in this place and another place on the resources development in Western Australia and the main thrust of it, I find it difficult to reconcile the fact that a bank overdraft rate will mean that any amount over \$100 000 will prevent any person from being involved in development in Australia or Western Australia. Profit margins, after taking that fact into account, are more than equated to the borrowing and if one is aware of anyone who has gone into a venture after assessing the borrowing rate—I am describing this in very basic terms—

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It is much too basic for me.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I would like to make it terribly basic. Would the honourable member like to put in \$1 and get 94c back?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I don't know anyone who would.

The PRESIDENT: I would ask the honourable member to direct his comments to the Chair and cease carrying on a conversation with members.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: I cannot understand a word of it.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: My apologies, Sir. I was rather moved by the personal feeling of the Leader of the Opposition, and I thought other residents of Western Australia might like to follow a similar course.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Prior to the dinner suspension I was referring to the fact that Federal Governments do not control interest rates by—to use the old hackneyed phrase—"supply and demand". I find that to be totally incorrect.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: That disposes of it, then.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I also mention that perhaps the Federal Treasurer (Mr Howard)

might care to explain how home loan interest rates in Austria have remained at 6 per cent for over 20 years.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What is the inflation rate in Austria? That is a socialist country; it is landlocked, and has everything going for it.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Labor Party holds the record for presiding over the highest interest rate structure Australia has ever experienced. I do not believe we will have interest rates at that level in this quarter or, indeed, over the next 12 months.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Are you aware the inflation rate under the Whitlam Government was lower than during the Korean wool boom under a Liberal Government?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Yes, I am aware of that.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Then, it was not the highest rate.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I admit the honourable member is correct. The woolgrowers of Australia enjoyed a very buoyant period with extremely high wool prices on the international market. In fact, the international market went right through the roof.

I repeat, though, that the Liberal Party cannot compete with the performance of the Labor Party in 1974, when it presided over the highest interest rate structure ever imposed on this country. It was a time when our major national bank was buying in money at 21 per cent. I do not believe that situation will be repeated in this quarter; it is my personal view, and I hold to it, although one never knows how the supply of money will fluctuate from quarter to quarter.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do you think people with home loans will be paying another 1.5 per cent or 2 per cent before the end of the year?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: No, I believe that after the June quarter, interest rates will decline. I am only making a prediction, as many of Mr Dans' colleagues in another place have done. What disappoints me is that interest rates will not decline to the levels they were at some two months ago. We all know that when interest rates reach a peak they do not seem to decline to their former levels.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Was there ever a time under the Labor Government when the savings bond rate was as high as 12.25 per cent?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: No.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: That is its rate now under the present Liberal Government.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: That is right, but the Federal Government is not pushing interest rates to the level of those imposed in April 1974 by the Whitlam Government.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It is doing its best, wouldn't you say?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: No, it is working within the market strategy. However, I am not happy with its policies, although I do not expect to be expelled from the Liberal Party tomorrow for expressing my dissatisfaction.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They could not afford to do without you.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: This is less of a speech than a conversation.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I believe Governments of all political colours have poked their noses into so much business and have established so many regulations and so much bureaucracy that small businesses, lending institutions, and borrowers alike have had enough. The fact that interest rates will increase over the next two or three months and then start to decline from July onwards is directly attributable to the policies of the Federal Government and the Federal Treasury. It is created by the Treasury bond rate and the current movement in savings bonds. The deregulation of banking institutions, which was a recommendation of the interim report of the Campbell inquiry increased Government and semi-Government borrowings.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Are you opposed to that?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Yes, I am.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Do you believe there should be less borrowing?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Although I am not opposed to the principle involved, I do not agree with the policy because the June quarter, which is the normal period for a rundown in liquidity of all institutions and is the period during which commercial enterprises must meet their final tax payments, is not the appropriate quarter in which to implement such a policy.

I prefaced my remarks at the commencement of my speech by saying I did not believe it was an appropriate time for the Government to be taking such action; I went on to point out that in my opinion, this would be only a short-term measure. I am against it, and I am in total agreement with Mr Berinson on this matter.

Another point I wish to make is that no industry has been subjected to as many Government inquiries, investigations, task forces, and think tanks as has the housing industry. I

thought of bringing into the Chamber tonight details of the number of inquiries and investigations implemented by Federal and State Governments. I have in my hand the report of only one such inquiry: it is headed "Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1975. Parliamentary Paper No. 261. Priorities. The review staff report on housing" and is dated August 1975; it may interest members to know it runs to 487 pages.

The previous State Labor Government in Western Australia established an inquiry into the building industry; we also saw an inquiry into building societies.

I do not wish to absolve any political party from this next point: All these inquiries and investigations implemented by the various Governments around Australia are nothing more than cosmetic feather-gathering; they are never acted upon.

Mr Berinson looks across at me. I well recall his colleague, the Federal Minister for Housing (Mr Les Johnson) failing to come to grips with the real problem of home ownership about which Mr Berinson, Mr Olney, and Mr Dowding spoke. Quite frankly, with all the good intentions in the world, Mr Johnson did not do his portfolio justice.

To my knowledge, over the last 10 years no Government has bothered to come to grips with all these inquiries and investigations. No Government has said "That is an excellent recommendation; we will act upon it." All these reports and investigations simply sit on library shelves or in dungeons, gathering dust; they are all piled on an altar to bureaucracy.

All 30 major countries of the western world are providing incentives of one sort or another to improve the level of home ownership. Of the seven options available to those countries, most have adopted at least five; Australia has adopted only two. In other words, Australia ranks lowest in terms of performance.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Would you say that Australia's level of home ownership compares unfavourably with other western countries?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Australia enjoys a reasonable level of home ownership, but the only bouquets which can be offered are to the building and construction industry. The main reason for this is that the level of construction and the ability to meet the market within Australia is predominantly based on efficiency in operations. It has nothing to do with Government initiatives or incentives. The building and construction industry in Australia has a level of efficiency second to none throughout the world. Incredible

as it may seem, the efficiency in our housing construction industry is such that our record per man hour per square is better than that of any other country in the western world, and even exceeds the level of efficiency of systemised housing in the United States of America.

Members may be interested to know that in the United Kingdom and most European countries, the cost per man hour per square is double that of Australia. I accept that, in part, this is due to adverse climatic conditions, which prevent construction in an outside environment on a high number of days in the year.

I mentioned that Australia produces houses at a cheaper rate than the systemised houses of the USA. Systemised housing involves the construction of assemblies off-site.

What an incredible situation we have in Australia. If any bouquets are to be handed out in Australia in respect of the promotion of home ownership they must surely go to the construction industry, because it is efficient.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: Are you saying there has been no contribution by Governments to the State Housing Commission, the war veterans schemes, and permanent building societies? Are you saying their contributions are irrelevant to home ownership in Australia?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Hon. Les Johnson was very instrumental in what is called direct funds for housing. But I am disappointed the Hon. Joe Berinson should ask that question. Apparently he does not understand how captive capital in private enterprise can be utilised in the interlocking of funds to produce far more than the direct inflow of taxpayers' funds in the manner he has mentioned. I agree that the Federal Government has directed funds to Commonwealth-State housing agreements, defence service homes agreements, State employees' deployment funds, and Aboriginal housing funds.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: The State, of course, has contributed—not just the Commonwealth.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The State has been part of this. I thank the member for his interjection. The State has been instrumental in injecting funds because of their revolving nature and because the funds are lent over 45 years. The State has been able to utilise the funds as repayments come forward. They can be used again, if only for a short term of 15 years.

I am surprised the Hon. Joe Berinson made his interjection. It seems he cannot see past the narrow blinkered vision of utilising taxpayers' funds to stimulate home ownership in Australia. I

wish his vision could be widened to encompass exactly what I said in my welfare address to this House covering the marshalling of funds not only in areas open to the State Government with respect to taxpayers' funds, but also in regard to a mixture of funds to make them go further and to achieve more flexibility through common sense and imagination, which is what is required. I would have thought that the honourable member, as a private orientated individual, would understand just how much further a dollar-for-dollar usage of funds will go, just as a rolling stone gathers moss.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think you have it around the wrong way.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am disappointed that the Opposition can see no solution other than the utilisation of taxpayers' funds. That is exactly what Mr Dowding mentioned last night. Mr Dowding was saying what a disgraceful performance was being shown by the State Government under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement.

Mr President, could you believe that in 1971-72 the amount of funds from that agreement given to this State under a Labor Government was \$20.7 million, in 1972-73 the amount was \$15.4 million, and in 1973-74 it was \$13 million. I will not embarrass the Hon. Mr Dowding by mentioning what happened in other States, but I will draw a parallel with Tasmania which, according to the 1970 census, had a population of 390 413 whilst at the same time Western Australia had a population of 1 030 469. I would be very interested to hear Opposition members explaining why Tasmania should go from a grant in 1972-73 of \$8.8 million, whilst Western Australia received \$15.4 million, to a grant of \$16 million when it had a population just one-third the size of that of Western Australia. I hope these figures will be passed on to Mr Dowding.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I will get him to read your speech.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I read his speech and obviously he has not come across these figures.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: What is probably worse is that the money was directed to leasehold housing rather than home ownership.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: That fact is contained in the document.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I know about it.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Federal Labor Government of the time was led by Mr Gough Whitlam and it came forward with this

substantive document which did not promote home ownership at all. Its object was to promote rental accommodation and to make people dependent upon the State. The document also suggested that people should not bother to save money, but rather should use their money water skiing, or snow skiing and so forth.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They will have to save very hard now, with the interest rates you are talking about.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I am critical of all Governments in that they have failed to provide the incentive for and promotion of home ownership. They have not provided the housing finance necessary to compliment these actions. Apart from the direct grant of Government funds for taxpayers' funds referred to by the Hon. Joe Berinson and a small amount of cosmetic action, that is all Governments have done in relation to home ownership.

One of the most disappointing aspects of this matter is that successive Governments have failed to realise that assistance to housing has the additional benefit of promoting savings in general. They obviously do not understand that savings are essential to investment in the productive capital stock.

Saving is an encouragement to redirect income to financial intermediaries that can work hand in hand with other Government policies designed to increase industrial development. Naturally there would be strings attached. Those strings may be what percentage of the funds would be invested in local government loans or even in the State Treasury.

With the current interest rate hike it is obvious the Commonwealth Government is paying little attention to fostering community savings at large. This has a direct effect upon the lending institutions, be they building societies or banks, to maintain an adequate level of projects for existing dwellings or construction of new dwellings. The sooner the Treasurer (Mr John Howard) admits that Canberra can regulate interest rates successfully, as in some 30 other western countries, and recognises the simplicity involved in initiating these moves, the sooner we will see a stable lending pattern return to the housing industry with its inherent flow-on to building materials, and labour costs for shelter.

Variable interest rates were introduced for the first time in the history of Australia under the Whitlam Labor Government. Possibly that Government was subjected to pressures from overseas investment in the country; possibly it had not spoken to Mr Kehmlani in the right terms;

possibly it had not examined the details it should have. By 1974 we saw variable interest rates introduced into Australia's economy. Prior to that time, every mortgaged loan was taken out on a fixed interest rate basis, be it with a building society, an insurance company, or a trading or savings bank. We are still living with that mistake today and I doubt if we will ever get away from it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you suggesting we go back to fixed interest rates?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I will put forward a few proposals at a later time and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will be in agreement with me. I do not want to pre-empt his remarks when he speaks to the Address-in-Reply, but I would be surprised if he did not agree with me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I cannot follow what you are saying. Are you suggesting fixed interest rates? I am a bit confused. You are talking about interest rates, but not about inflation at the same time.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I can understand the Leader of the Opposition's confusion; his party has always been confused about this matter. Perhaps I can remove his barrier of confusion. I have always regarded him as a person who can understand economics. He is not an economist and neither am I. God help us both, but I would not like to be a member of this House if the Leader of the Opposition were an economist and nor would I like to be a member of the House if I were an economist.

I would like to come to the incentive to isolate the interest rate structure in the field of home ownership. I think that is what the Leader of the Opposition was alluding to.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you going towards fixed interest rates again?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the honourable member to ignore the interjections and direct his comments to the Chair.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Thank you, Mr President. I propose that the basic type of interest payments and the taxation concessions appropriate to them should be isolated or insulated from the general market conditions of interest rates prevailing within the community at large. This would not be unusual. It is quite acceptable within the wheat industry through bulk handling. It is a fairly normal operation adopted by the Australian Wool Corporation which holds itself outside the normal market movements. This practice is available through futures trading in wool, wheat, or gold. Any person who is an operator in those particular areas—that is, a true trader, not a

speculator—has the opportunity to set off the market, or whatever one would like to call it. He can hedge his bet as to when his crop will come in, when his sheep will be shorn, or when his bank balance will increase.

I propose deductions for taxation in regard to personal income expended on the expenses of owning a home such as rates and mortgage interest.

I had a most interesting experience after studying the situation in some 30 countries to note the position in Austria. I referred earlier to its constant interest rate of 6 per cent.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The inflation rate is not high in Austria—that is the reason.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I will come to that. That is the reason Austria does not have a high inflation rate. The Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity to say his piece at a later stage, and I am sure you, Mr President, will point that out to him.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am waiting for the crunch in regard to your proposals.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: In Austria, instead of the interest payments being a taxation deduction, the principal of the loan is a deduction. In the early stages of a housing loan the principal component of the repayments is extremely low. It is only at a later stage that the principal becomes a larger proportion and, therefore, in Austria a larger taxation deduction to the home owner. I do not propose that for this country, but it is quite interesting that is the way the situation operates in Austria.

I will now answer the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition. In Austria people tend to stay in their own homes and tend to improve them; therefore, they do not have the inflationary pressures of properties coming onto the market which is the prevalent situation in Australia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like to import that system from Austria?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I also support a tax-free system for certain lending institutions. I doubt whether a member in this Chamber does not have a savings bank account.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You would not like a drop at 6:4 about that?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I know the Leader of the Opposition is a very happy family man, and I know his family is a recipient of child endowment. I notice a smirk on his face. I hope he has discontinued the extension of his family.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Why should you hope that?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I have much respect for him. He is a very healthy man, and I would not like to see a man of his age shackled with young children.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I do not know about that.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I do not want to pre-empt his intentions. I hope he does not anticipate those developments because I do not believe they would be quite to his liking. They may well be his ambition at this time, but we all know that the first child born may not be as enjoyable as the one arriving later in life.

Quite an incredible situation prevails in this country. People who placed funds in savings accounts up to 12 months ago received an interest of 4½ per cent, and they were required to include that interest as income in their taxation returns. To me that is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard in my life. When people place their funds in a savings account at 4½ per cent they are required to include that sum in their taxation return, and that is just ridiculous. If there is any member in this Chamber who disagrees with that I would be delighted to hear from him, not by way of interjection, but by his coming to see me afterwards.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I will write you a letter.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: If a member disagrees with what I have said I ask him to make his presence known.

The other point I would like to make is that lending institutions should have available to them taxation concessions, possibly, in regard to their profits—in this case I refer to building societies because their profits are extremely low. In addition, the status of building societies should be uplifted. I put forward three proposals. The first is that interest payments on housing loans be made a taxation deduction. I do not mean that that should occur as it did under the Whitlam Government, but right across the board. The second is that interest payments on savings deposits should be tax exempt. The third is that taxation exemption status should be given to mortgage lending institutions such as building societies.

I put these proposals forward because my colleague, the Hon. H. W. Olney, referred to a member of his family who intends to purchase a home. I did not have a chance to read *Hansard* to determine his relationship to that person, but I believe that person is his son or daughter, or a son-in-law or daughter-in-law. In any case, he or she is married. They are middle-income people and have had problems in regard to deposits

associated with purchasing a house. Further in regard to his remarks he was concerned about the rental payments they make at this time. What I put forward is that many people are in the category of dependants or offspring such as those of the Hon. H. W. Olney who cannot afford to purchase a house. They are on the brink of home ownership in this State where rentals are low and mortgage repayments are high. They need an incentive to pull them over the brink into home ownership. They need only a small nudge to close the gap.

I will not propose any further incentives. The incentives I have outlined this evening are well and truly proven to be successful in 30 of the developed countries in the world. What I say is that we have gone through enough consideration of this matter. I have listened to and read various debates in this place and in another and have listened to the remarks made during the Address-in-Reply debate. It is time now for action. It is not a time for consideration—it is not a time for contemplation; it is not a time for think tanks; it is not a time for inquiry; and it is not a time for investigation. The time is now to act. We have been over the situation for many years and the time now is not to contemplate or consider, but to implement. That is what it is all about—implementation.

In regard to one of the proposals I put forward the Leader of the Opposition was concerned that the results may be inflationary. I put it to him that real savings accounts and mortgage loans act against the effects of inflation. All these policy incentives would be evidence of the Government's strong commitment to the promotion of home ownership.

In over 30 countries in the Western world, Australia runs a very poor race in real terms. We should use every available incentive such as those I have outlined to members tonight. I have put seven proposals forward, but there is not one Australian Government prepared to bite the bit and come to grips with the situation and say "Right, this is what we will do". All they have been prepared to come to grips with are reports such as the one I mentioned on housing which a horse could not even get into its mouth.

So, I say it is now about time that the Western Australian Government and the Commonwealth Government forgot about think tanks, inquiries, and all other extraneous matters, and made a decision. That is what the public are talking about, that is what the Hon. Howard Olney is talking about, and that is what the Hon. Peter Dowding is talking about. In fact, I think that was what the Leader of the Opposition was talking

about. We should come to grips with making this decision to go ahead with a proper management policy in regard to the way in which we should promote home ownership. I will not malign the Opposition with this document—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We can get that document ourselves. Please don't read it to us. It has about 500 pages in it.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The Opposition will not get hold of this document because all copies have been burnt or thrown into the dungeons. It is a policy to promote non-home ownership. It is a policy to promote rental accommodation and dependence upon the State. The Hon. Joe Berinson would be aware of it. It was presented to the Labor Party's Terrigal conference and it was thrown out. I notice a smile upon the face of the Leader of the Opposition, and I understand that.

The Hon. J. M. Berinson: It is a look of bemusement.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: He has a smile on his face. The document is so voluminous that if it were put under his nose nobody else would have a chance to read it. It was a document which went to the Labor Party at its Terrigal conference and was discarded.

I would like to put two minor matters to the House.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you say "terrible" or "Terrigal"?

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I said "Terrigal". A matter I would like to raise with the House concerns repatriation benefits. I am of the opinion, and I am sure other members are conscious of the situation, that people should be prepared voluntarily or otherwise to enter the defence forces of Australia, to serve in them overseas, and to put their lives on the line—as the Leader of the Opposition did—to fire a shot in anger and to receive a shot in anger. Such a person or his dependants should not be subjected to the red tape and bureaucracy of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I agree with that.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: I have had problems with my hearing, although I am told it is because I am getting old.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't worry, if you keep going so will I.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: If a person is prepared to lay down his life for his country, there must be certain circumstances pertaining before it can be justified that such a person or his dependants have to provide proof as to disability or death attributable to war service. I find it

disgraceful and distasteful to be associated with a Government that puts difficulties in the way of the widows or spouses of ex-servicemen.

There has been a great deal of coverage in the media about the Agent Orange situation in Vietnam. I was subjected to this herbicide, but obviously neither I nor my family has suffered any ill-effect from it. However, I will not be party to any sort of penny-pinching in regard to the payment of benefits to people who volunteered to lay down their lives in the defence of our country or its immediate neighbours. Therefore, I am very disappointed at the reaction of the Minister for Veterans Affairs to the Agent Orange situation and the way in which the Department of Veterans' Affairs is handling the appeal. I will not bore the House with all the details, but I have many reports of cases in my office, and I find the whole thing disquieting.

In conclusion I would like to refer briefly to the Firearms Act. The Hon. Mick Gayfer and the Hon. Norm Baxter spoke about courtesy and education. Recently, the Pony Club Association of Western Australia—the parent body with which all the pony clubs are affiliated—organised an event called a “tentathlon” which is similar to the Olympic pentathlon except for the fencing competition. This event involves the youth and children in all the other facets of a pentathlon such as cross-country riding, swimming, shooting, and cross-country running. This is an annual event, and my children have been involved in it on a few occasions. Unfortunately, due to my parliamentary commitments, I have not had an opportunity to attend the event before this year. One of the rules is that no competitor may be accepted without the guaranteed attendance of one parent. Some four years ago I nominated to attend with my son, but at the last minute I was asked to represent the Premier at a function in Perth. No matter what I said, the Pony Club Association of WA would not listen to my excuse. It was promoting the idea of family involvement, and members would be aware of the importance of this concept, especially in the underprivileged areas.

Part of the competition involves a 0.22 rifle shoot on a 25-metre range. Publicity was given to the fact that the event was to be held in Harvey during February. After the Press article appeared, the organiser of the event received a telephone call from the head of the firearms branch who proceeded to quote to him various sections of the Firearms Act applicable to people under the age of 16 years.

The organiser said to the police officer “Thank you very much, but what can I do about it?” He

was told to listen further, and he heard all about section 34, subsection (1), paragraphs (c) to (e). He replied that he was not interested in that, but he would like to be told what to do. The police officer told him that the time for an application for an overall exemption had expired. I would have thought that the situation called for the exercise of co-operation and education.

When I arrived at Harvey, I offered my assistance to the officials who were trying to organise 60 children to use the 25-metre range. I was sent off to the local police station and I asked the constable there what we had to do. The constable pulled out a typewritten memo which he had received from the head of the firearms branch. He was informed that there was to be a shoot at the Harvey rifle range and that every person firing on the range would have to fill in a form giving his name, address, postal address, post code, age, date of birth, the weapon being used, the serial number of the weapon, and the name of the owner of the weapon. What a ridiculous situation then arose—60 children were lined up outside the Harvey Police Station waiting to complete these forms.

I was able to co-operate with the constable on duty to help fill out the forms. I discovered that there was also a receipt to be filled out for the 50c to be charged to each competitor. The police constable's hand became so cramped that he could not continue to write, so I took his book and started to fill out forms. In the end we arranged for some of the children outside the police station to fill in all the details so that we could process the forms reasonably expeditiously. If only we could get the message across about co-operation and education.

I suppose I could have asked to see the senior constable at the station and said to him “Look, I am a member of Parliament, what is the problem?”

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You could have said that you can't tell the time either. You told me you intended to talk for 15 minutes—you are an hour overtime.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Had it not been for his inquiries and the interest of the Leader of the Opposition in my speech, it would have been a lot shorter. On that particular note, and I hope to the satisfaction of the Leader of the Opposition, I will close by saying I support the motion.

THE HON. W. M. PIESSE (Lower Central) [8.26 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion. Having listened to the address of His Excellency, the Governor, on opening night, once again I feel that we in Western Australia must be most thankful

for the degree of affluence in which we find ourselves, and for the resources that abound throughout this marvellous State. Also, we must hope that the intention of the legislation, as projected in His Excellency's Speech, will indeed be reflected in a better life for all the people in Western Australia. This better life is not always tied to our financial situation.

Recently I was fortunate enough to be in a country town when His Excellency visited the small school there. The senior female pupil at the school welcomed the Governor, and in her address she mentioned that young people finishing their schooling this year faced certain problems, some of which have been with us for many generations, but some of which are rather different from the usual run. She referred to unemployment, and some other things, and high on her list was the problem of uncertain moral standards faced by the young people today. It is a great responsibility of Government to aspire to make and amend the laws of a country which is as affluent as the one we live in today.

This matter brought to my mind three letters which have crossed my desk this week. One of them expressed concern about a matter raised by the Law Reform Commission, and I would like to quote from the letter as follows—

The enclosed notice very recently has come to my attention.

In reading the content I feel it should certainly receive your attention, with some pertinent questions asked in Parliament.

Just imagine the upheaval in the family—the basic unit of society—were children to receive such legal rights.

Parents having the responsibility of loving, caring for, and educating their children to be told by a 12 year old—You have no right to question me?

The document referred to is discussion paper No. 14 of the Law Reform Commission. The paper is entitled "Privacy and Personal Information." I will quote from the front cover so members might know what it is about, if they have not read the document. It is as follows—

THIS PAPER IS NOT A COMMISSION REPORT. It is one of two consultative papers issued together containing tentative proposals made by the Commission about the protection of privacy in Australia. **THIS PAPER IS INTENDED TO PROMOTE DISCUSSION AND ELICIT COMMENTS WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION**

IN REACHING ITS CONCLUSIONS AND DRAFTING ITS FINAL REPORT.

Inside the document, item 16 on page 3 is headed "Disclosure to Parents"; and it reads as follows—

To the age of 12 years, a parent (or other custodian) should be entitled to request disclosure of personal records about his or her child. Between 12 and 16 years, a child should be entitled to object to disclosure of information to a parent. The record-keeper should only override the child's objection where convincing reasons relating to the health, safety or well-being of the child justify that step.

So far so good; but if one looks a little further into this proposed legislation about which the Law Reform Commission has sought discussion—and let us hope many parents will apply themselves to the examination of these suggestions for future legislation—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Have you written a critique on this at all?

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: To date, I have not. Has Mr Withers?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I did one on discussion paper No. 17. I am just wondering whether you would do one on the paper you are referring to.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I will leave that to Mr Withers.

On page 64 the following appears—

For example, a child may reveal the existence of a personal problem to a teacher or counsellor but for fear of recrimination or otherwise may not inform his parents. The teacher or counsellor may decide that the problem is best solved by informing the parents and involving them in its resolution. A special difficulty occurs in connection with health insurance. Young women occasionally approach health insurance funds directly for payment of medical fees incurred in respect of a termination of pregnancy, the claim being based on a parent's family membership of the health fund. To preserve privacy, they seek to avoid the normal course of dealing with dependent claims, which is for the contributor/parent to lodge the claim. If the latter procedure were to be insisted upon, it would lead to a child being compelled to reveal intimate personal information about treatment to a parent. Allowing for debate about the relevant age in a particular case, an age is clearly reached where disclosure of such personal information, even to parents,

should not be required. Even within the family unit, there are legitimate claims to privacy.

As far as it goes, I suppose it is true. In most regulated families there is a respect for the privacy of other members of the family; but in many matters there can be no justification for a parent not being told, or for a parent not being permitted to inquire.

If there is no discussion, no submission, no rebellion on the part of society, it is possible that this very thing may become law, in the not-too-distant future. I hope I do not see that time.

We have many problems at the moment with sex education and forces within society which, under the guise of easing the burden of responsibility, aim at the very destruction of all that gives stability and security to society today. That applies especially to the security of the family unit, particularly with young people. This was brought to my mind by a young girl in a country school who said "We face the great problem of uncertain moral standards." If the young people cannot be encouraged to talk with their parents of this uncertainty, where do they go?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: That is one of the questions, isn't it? Some parents they could go to; and some parents truly beat their children.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: This is the very point. Some parents find it difficult; some parents do not accept responsibility. Rather than take the responsibility from the parents, it behoves the Government to ensure that it might be brought home to the parents that it is their responsibility.

It has been suggested that if a parent—a mother, in fact—does not instruct her daughter in sexual matters, perhaps it should be left to the Education Department to do so. There are arguments for and against that. Perhaps some education from the Education Department would be better than nothing; but rather than legislate along the lines of secrecy for children, we ought to be looking at ways of bringing home the responsibility to where it justly and rightfully belongs.

It seems that when we talk or read about sex education the whole accent, be it in education programmes, in magazines and other literature, or on the screen, centres around the kind of contraception that is available, and how to apply to these various methods. It would seem to be much better if we started by informing the youngsters of 12 years or less about how to extricate themselves from a problem or from a difficult situation before they reach the stage that

they needed any contraception. In the olden days, this was the job of mothers; and they did it well. They taught their daughters how to control a situation; but I defy anyone to pick up a magazine today and read how a youngster can extricate herself from such a position. One can pick up any number of magazines and find out how to "turn on your partner", as it is put these days; but there is no advice on how to control the situation. That is an area about which people in society ought to be making submissions.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are selling a few women's magazines short. You are referring to the *Cleo*-type magazine.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I am talking about *The Australian Women's Weekly* and *Woman's Day*. I am simply saying they are sometimes on the wrong track. They need to go back a little further in the area of this education. There is very little information available to youngsters to explain that sort of thing to them, and give them information to extricate themselves from these positions, certainly without earning themselves the epithet of "vamp", as it is defined in the dictionary.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You mean *coitus interruptus*, when you say "extricating themselves"?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I am referring to their extricating themselves from awkward situations. I am quite sure Mr Withers has lived long enough to know what I am talking about. I hope he realises the serious situation that exists, because the future of our society depends on this kind of extrication.

As I was saying, the youngsters are instructed in certain areas, but they do not achieve the elemental part—in other words, we tend towards the sort of situation in which a small child said to his mother "Where did I come from?" His mother went into great rigmaroles about the birds and the bees, and so forth; and when she had finished the small boy said "Oh, really. I sit next to a boy at school who came from Wagin." I think we tend to go right over the top. We need to give our young people the information that they need now. We are missing out; and that is a very serious matter.

I hope there will be many submissions on this matter which a parent has brought to my notice, and now I have brought it to the notice of members in this House.

It is a very foolish Parliament which legislates without tapping the feeling of society. Sometimes great mistakes are made; and one such mistake,

and perhaps one of the most cruel pieces of legislation in more recent times, was the legislation which provided for single mothers under 20 years of age to be supported financially and encouraged to keep their babies. It was done with the best intentions in the world, I am sure; but it misfired in many instances. In my experience with some of the people I have met, it has been the cause of a catastrophe.

Another piece of possible legislation that has been brought to my mind in recent weeks deals with voluntary euthanasia. That is another area in which some parts of society would like tremendous changes made. No doubt the members in this Chamber have received a circular from the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. The plea of the society, with some justification as they see it, is that people should be allowed to exit from this world without the stigma at law of having committed suicide, or they should be helped out by somebody, and it should not be called "murder" or "manslaughter". However, when one looks at this matter, one finds there is a problem.

I was a nurse many years ago, and I know that at times patients in very severe straits receive treatment that, perhaps, does not lengthen their life. This is desirable; but it is not in the nature of euthanasia. It may be that certain treatment with drugs is known to reduce the heart action, or to reduce kidney function; but because of the circumstances it is desirable that the patient be given that treatment which, indirectly, will shorten his life, but which will give great relief immediately.

I have made many inquiries in recent times; and I find that the situation still exists in which people are not left to suffer unduly, as the literature from the Voluntary Euthanasia Society would have us believe. There may be occasions when somebody has had a severe road accident resulting in brain damage, or a severe heart attack and has been left debilitated. Perhaps that person has been revived for a time. There is no person who could legislate to prevent this. We know also of cases in which the patients were virtually given up for dead, but they have recovered and are living quite normally. Who is to play God in this matter?

The Voluntary Euthanasia Society wants to have sections 261, 268, 270, 272, 273, 277, and 278 of the Criminal Code of 1913 amended. I will read section 288 as it sums up the case. It says—

288. Any person who—

- (1) Procures another to kill himself; or
- (2) Counsels another to kill himself and thereby induces him to do so; or

(3) Aids another in killing himself;

is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for life.

The note at the bottom of the society's pamphlet reads—

This is what we seek to modify, hopefully by legislation, 70 years later, with both wit and will.

It is my hope that the present legislators will have sufficient wit and will to look very carefully at any alteration to those laws.

I am not denigrating the good intentions of the people who send out these circulars, but I hope that society will take a very careful look at voluntary euthanasia. In my experience, it is all very well to offer a person a membership leaflet such as the one enclosed in the document to which I have referred. I assume it was enclosed in the document received by all members. If one signs the leaflet the intention is that if the person is at a very low ebb he consents to someone taking his life. That is all very well, but I would not want to do it and I am sure you, Sir, would not want to; therefore, why should we expect someone else to take this step? That matter should be looked at very carefully.

The letter from the WA Voluntary Euthanasia Society indicates the society is alarmed at the potential undesirable effects of improved medical and surgical techniques. Further on in the letter the point is made that no matter how justified the intention behind relieving people of their sufferings, it must be undertaken with some misgivings not because of any question of morality, but because of the present state of the law.

I debate that. I believe it is a question of morality. It is all very well to sign a paper such as this and to say "Yes, I wish to have my life terminated." It is nearly always the case that the person who says "I want to die", if it really came to the point would say "Yes, but not yet."

Therefore, the onus is placed on somebody else if a person takes a form along to the authorities and says "He has signed the form and he wants to die, so fix it for him."

The society is asking for the appropriate legislation to be changed so that voluntary euthanasia will not be a crime. That is a very dangerous step to take, but this attitude is gaining momentum throughout our society today.

Another fear has been expressed to me that people are kept alive unnecessarily because somebody needs an organ transplant. Perhaps someone needs an eye or a kidney. I assure you,

Sir, that I have it on rather good authority that no-one is kept alive unnecessarily for this reason.

In the event of a major accident in which a person is injured, he is kept alive for a time to see whether he is capable of surviving and in some cases he is. However, there is no danger of people being lined up waiting for various organs to be removed for people who need transplants.

The legislation concerning this matter in the United States is quite different from our legislation, but heaven forbid that we should ever embrace their laws.

The final point I should like to mention has something to do with responsibility both in society and in Government, but it is along different lines. Members may be aware that in one small area of my province a new police station has been constructed. I refer to Dumbleyung where, on 29 November last year a fire irreparably destroyed some of the school buildings. There was no doubt that the school suffered fire damage and replacement or repairs were required, and the insurance cover was valid. However, the insurance payment was not cleared until March of this year. I wonder why it took so long.

The information regarding replacement supplied to the headmaster and me—no doubt it was supplied to my colleague also—was incorrect. It was supplied by members of Government departments and it was most unfortunate that it was not accurate. We were told that, prior to the commencement of the school year, four transportables would arrive at the school and they would be ready for opening day.

The week the school opened, the headmaster and I were informed that two demountables would be there on opening day. In fact they arrived five weeks later, so there was a good deal of confusion and unnecessary bother. The demountables are being used at this school at the present time, but they have not been connected to the power supply. This may not sound a very serious matter, but I was at the school recently on a cloudy day and the light in those rooms was poor. The children have to study under these conditions as best they can without adequate light. I should point out we will have many more cloudy days as the year proceeds.

The teacher is unable to use the projector or any of the other electrical teaching aids, because the demountables are not connected to a power supply.

Nobody minds coping in an emergency and, indeed, the staff, pupils, and the P & C at Dumbleyung have coped magnificently. In fact they have a wonderful P & C down there and it

has done a great deal for the school. It has never refused a request which has been made by the staff and it has supported the department magnificently. However, somewhere along the line there has been a complete bungle on this matter. I do not know whether it occurred in the Education Department, the PWD, or somewhere else.

As a result, the local population has tended to blame the Government for the problem. They feel they have been let down badly. This is most unfortunate; I do not believe anybody will get the sack as a result of the situation, but surely some form of redress should be available and an investigation should be carried out to ascertain why such a long delay has occurred.

My most recent information is that tenders have been called for the work to be done some time in the near future, but the prognosis is that the work will certainly not be finished before 30 August this year, which is nine months after the fire took place. It seems this is a rather unnecessary delay and I hope the matter will be investigated and that in future we will have better communication between all concerned.

I support the motion.

THE HON. J. M. BERINSON (North-East Metropolitan) [8.52 p.m.]: I did not participate in last year's Address-in-Reply debate, nor for the same reason in last year's Budget debate. In fact, my only reason for speaking in the Address-in-Reply debate tonight is to explain why I abstained previously and why, in the absence of special circumstances, I will abstain from these particular debates in the future.

The concept of parliamentary debate, indeed the very word "debate" itself, connotes a certain convergence of minds on a common subject. That is precisely what the Address-in-Reply and the Budget debates do not do. Because, by tradition, we are individually allowed on these occasions to discuss anything in general we end up collectively discussing nothing in particular. Not only that, but we also discuss nothing in particular at inordinate length, that being the inevitable result of the quaint relic of a rule which permits us to speak in this Chamber without limitation of time.

Grant a politician the right to speak on anything indefinitely and one issues an invitation to tedium. That, with very few distinguished exceptions, is what we get and we get what we deserve.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Why do you feel the adjournment debate is any different?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: It is different because we do not spend a month or six weeks on

the adjournment debate. We spend up to half an hour on it. In fact, if the Standing Orders Committee was inclined to accept a proposal I put to it, we would limit speeches in the adjournment debate to no more than 10 minutes and the whole debate to no more than a maximum stated period of time.

Another difference between the adjournment debate and the Address-in-Reply is that it is added to the debate on a particular day and we do not put aside all other business for weeks and, in some cases, months on end.

In my opinion, the main advantage of the availability of the adjournment debate is that it allows members to speak on matters which arise during the immediate time before it. Such matters have an element of urgency and they cannot be left to an opportunity which may not occur until weeks later. That is why I believe a certain amount of self-discipline ought to be applied to the adjournment debate and you, Sir, will appreciate from your own experience in your high office that, that of course, is the attitude I, together with my colleague, the Hon. Bob Hetherington, and other members on this side who find the adjournment debate very useful always adopt on such occasions. I have said that, in the course of the Address-in-Reply and Budget debates, we get what we deserve. However, the more important question is this: Is that what the public deserves?

After all, the operations of this House must cost our taxpayers at least \$3 million a year and surely, at that price or for that matter at any price, they are entitled to better value than they are getting out of our performance. I certainly believe they are entitled to better value and that a bit less attention to form and a much greater effort at substance is the least we could offer.

To do that, for a start, we should not only reduce the time permitted for each Address-in-Reply, but we should also reduce the number of such debates by two-thirds. We would achieve the latter by simply adjourning from each December to March in the course of a parliamentary term, rather than proroguing each year with a formal reopening and Address-in-Reply immediately thereafter.

You, Sir, will recall that at our recent opening I asked the Leader of the House why the Government insisted on the pomp and cost of our annual prorogations and openings. His answer was that there were a number of good reasons, but he could not think of any.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I didn't say that.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I paraphrased what the leader said in suggesting that his reply was to the effect that there were a lot of good reasons, but he could not think of any. Certainly whether or not that is what he said, he did not produce any reasons.

In fairness to the broad-minded and reasonable nature of the leader in this place, I must say he did volunteer to ask others and to let us know when he found out. That put me immediately in mind of the insurance salesman's lament that when a customer says "I will let you know", one knows! In any event I have not heard from the Leader of the House.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You are too impatient.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I hasten to assure the Leader of the House that, in the event he feels I might be overcome with anxiety at the delay, I am not holding my breath.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You are straying off the subject.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I will return to it then.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You had better return to it quickly.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: I appreciate the invitation of the Leader of the House to return to the subject and to return to it quickly. I would appreciate it even more if he would similarly urge some of his own members who, unlike my intention to and practice of speaking for no more than 20 minutes on any occasion, tend to take much longer than that and wander through a much more rambling series of propositions than I intend to do.

To accept the leader's invitation and, indeed, to show respect to his requirement, given the authority of his office—

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I am anxious to hear your reasons.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON:—I ask this further question and that is: Assuming we free the substantial time wasted now in these so-called debates and other anachronistic forms, how can we put that freed time to good use?

One thing we should not do is to artificially extend our debates on legislation. That would be as pointless as the exercise I am proposing to avoid. Nor should we engage in activities which are more appropriate to the Legislative Assembly.

In most cases, urgency motions and the like should clearly be left to the Assembly because that is where most of the Ministers are. As to what that leaves for us, on the experience of other upper Houses with similar concerns, it leaves, in

particular, the more effective use of House committees.

The Senate for example, has been active and reasonably effective in this respect; though, I am again forced to explain myself in the negative by making it clear that nothing remotely as comprehensive as the Senate committees could reasonably be considered by us. Our small numbers mitigate against that, as does the gross imbalance between the parties in this Chamber, that being one further damaging result of the rotten electoral system in this State.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You are straying again.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Allowing that, and the limitations in the way of a comprehensive system of Standing Committees—I am pleased to know my comment on the electoral system was not regarded by the Leader of the House as straying from the subject.

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf: I did.

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON: Allowing for all the conditions and limitations in the way of the comprehensive system of Standing Committees here, it appears to me that there is still a very important potential for Select Committee references on specific topics, on a much more frequent and deliberate basis than at present apply.

There is no point in my suggesting a comprehensive list of subjects which would be amenable to organised inquiries in this Chamber. Our resources would be exhausted long before the list. However, to give just some examples of the sort of question which would justify our concentrated attention rather than the periodic spasms which we now apply may I suggest the following—

the proliferation of shopping centres and the novel burdens which lessors are now imposing on lessees—many of them inexperienced small businessmen;

Public Service superannuation and its interaction with other conditions applying to the Public Service;

education, with particular reference to aspects such as the conflicting claims on staff-student ratios in this State and the ramifications of the teachers' campaign for time off from classroom teaching;

preference to unionists provisions in industrial law; and

energy conservation programmes in Government departments and instrumentalities, and so on.

It will be immediately apparent that a number of the possibilities I have suggested are in areas which are often dealt with by way of inquiries conducted by persons who are outside the Parliament.

Many such topics, however, raise essentially political questions on which the members of the House would certainly be no less qualified than others to offer advice, and in important respects, better qualified.

In many cases the Select Committee process could assist in the development of consensus recommendations. Even where they do not do that, even where our party differences were reflected in recommendations, the different approach would still have served the invaluable purpose of equipping its members with a certain level of expertise. That would be in highly desirable contrast to the well-intentioned amateurism which we are so often forced to apply under present circumstances.

The effectiveness of the work engaged in by the members of this Chamber is essentially in the hands of the members on the other side. They are the majority. It must be they who are prepared to refer appropriate items for committee consideration and to provide such committees with their essential supporting facilities.

Only they can test whether the public interest would be better served in this way than by the ritual forms which now consume so much of our time and energy. Speaking for myself, I have no reason to doubt that it would.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. J. L. Williams.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.05 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 7 April at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: ORDINARY

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.06 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Community Welfare: Children's Institution at Forrestfield

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [9.07 p.m.]: I do not want to make

it a habit to speak on the adjournment motion, but—

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: Well, sit down then.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: —I will stay longer if members want to make the usual stupid remarks.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: You are insignificant enough without our making comments.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have spoken before about the replies we sometimes receive from Ministers and that there are times when we are sympathetic towards the Ministers with regard to the conditions in which they find themselves on certain matters. However, those feelings have turned sour because of their failure to supply any information about the subjects of concern to us and our constituents.

On Tuesday of last week I spoke at the adjournment stage about the problems which had arisen in Forrestfield because it had been decided to transfer land in order to build a primary school on the corner of Dawson and Bougainvillea Avenues, in Forrestfield, and to replace the school, which was to be built next to the high school, with a treatment facility for the Department of Community Welfare.

Of course, people are interested to know what has happened and what is being done. Yesterday, I asked my colleague, Mr McKenzie, to ask two questions without notice for me because I was to be absent from this Chamber. At 10 past nine yesterday I telephoned those questions through to the departments, but no adequate answer was supplied to one of my questions; it was placed on notice.

I was advised the Minister for Education had visited the sites, but I do not know when. I do not know whether the Minister for Community Welfare attended also, but I would normally have expected that to happen. I would presume that if they were doing as they ought to have been doing then they would have said so.

I was informed that the Minister for Community Welfare would make an announcement on the matter when consideration of the issue was completed. I am sure it will be the case; however, in my innocence, I had hoped that reasonable human beings in the Ministry, or those who were writing the stupid answers to my questions, would give some indication as to when they hoped this discussion might take place. Of course, it is a difficult problem which involves two departments and it has wide-ranging ramifications. It may take a week, but I would have thought it would take no longer than a month.

I would have thought the Minister could at least inform me, and through me my constituents, whether those discussions might take place in the next couple of weeks or so, so that they may have some idea as to when a decision would be made.

After having expressed some sympathy for the problems of Ministers, I now find that after this nonsense, I am feeling rather angered. The actions of the Minister are overbearing and arrogant and something this Ministry could well do without. It is high time members of the Ministry thought something about their public relations—maybe they just do not care.

Maybe they think that because there are only nine members of the Labor Party in this Chamber they can treat us with contempt. I wonder whether there is some basis for the rumour that local government politics have played a part in this matter. I am wondering whether the Government has something to hide.

I would be glad if this Government and its members would change their ways. I suppose they have been in power too long and they have become arrogant and drunk with power. I would not have thought this would be the case with the two Ministers concerned; I would certainly not have thought that a week ago. It appears they may intend to ride roughshod over the wishes of the community at Forrestfield. I would be glad if we were not treated in such an off-handed, contemptuous way.

THE HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [9.12 p.m.]: Since I am associated with the area, I understand the desires and aspirations of the residents of Forrestfield. It would appear that I have received more letters from constituents in that area which adjoins my electorate than have Mr Hetherington and Mr McKenzie.

I would imagine that the Government is sympathetic to the approaches which have been made by those people as the decision was made prior to the Kewdale industrial complex and prior to the decision to have the Westrail marshalling yards in Forrestfield. Therefore, I would expect the Government to be reasonable in its approach to the matter.

I cannot see what can be gained by Mr Hetherington's actions in using the adjournment debate to air his complaint. I cannot see the justification for his actions, apart from his desire to make political mileage. I detest and deplore such action and the manner in which it was brought forward tonight.

The member should make representations to the appropriate Ministers. If he were to approach

the Ministers in the normal manner, without political ramifications—

Several members interjected.

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: —he may well find that the matter would be dealt with to the satisfaction of his constituents. However, if he wishes to labour the matter, night after night—

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order!

The Hon. NEIL OLIVER: —he will find he will gain no satisfaction at all. I will take no part of and I am not interested in a "talkfest" for political advantage.

That is what it is all about. The people at Forrestfield are not interested in what Mr Hetherington might have to say, and when the decision is made it will be made to the satisfaction of the people there, to the satisfaction of the Government, and to the satisfaction of the Shire of Kalamunda. Mr Hetherington will receive the desserts he so justly deserves.

Parliament: Answers to Questions.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [9.16 p.m.]: I was fascinated listening to Mr Hetherington because he assumes two or three things. Firstly, he assumes the Minister should answer questions which are not even asked of him. It fascinates me that the Minister is expected to know what is in Mr Hetherington's mind.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: Not even Mr Hetherington knows that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Whether or not the Minister receives a full day's notice of the question does not matter. He can answer only the questions that are asked, and he cannot necessarily understand what is in Mr Hetherington's mind. It stuns me that a man with as much experience as Mr Hetherington has had should ask a question, receive an answer, and then complain that a question he did not ask was not answered. Surely a man as learned as he should know how to ask a question in order to elicit the reply he wishes to receive.

It is a fairly simple procedure. Some of us who have been here for a little time have learned how to ask a question. If we want to know the date we ask for it or ask the Minister to make an estimate of it. We do not ask a general question and expect the Minister to answer things we have not asked.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't put your hand in the air, you may be accused of something.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I know it hurts the Leader of the Opposition, and I know he is trying

to protect a member who does not know how to ask questions in this place.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I think you are the one who is hurt.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: When Mr Hetherington is finished I will continue. I did not interject during his speech. I listened to his histrionics, and I am now trying to proceed in a logical manner.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member will proceed.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Hetherington spoke in a loud voice during his histrionics, but he missed two points. Firstly, he did not ask a question and the Minister could not possibly know that he wanted an answer to it. Secondly, by some divine reasoning known only to himself, Mr Hetherington seems to think that every time he does a little foot stamping and throws a tantrum the Government will change its whole overview in respect of decision-making.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Obviously you don't understand what I said.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: It is political expediency.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is nonsense.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: To me the right to ask questions is a privilege. Members may have noticed that I have put some questions on notice myself, and this is a privilege members use when they have been to the Minister or to the department and have got absolutely nowhere. I have been in Government and in Opposition and I understand the political ploys some people use with questions. However, questions are not a right, they are a privilege, and that is something Mr Hetherington should remember. He should remember also that a Minister can refuse to answer. It may be—and I am not suggesting anything—that the time has come when some Ministers will refuse to answer questions.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That has already happened to me.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I think that is very good.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why do you think that?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I seem to recall the matters about which Mr Dans was asking questions, and probably they were not matters which should be elucidated in the House. I remind members, and Mr Hetherington in particular, that questions are a privilege and not a right and I do not believe we should have a tantrum every time Mr Hetherington does not get his way.

The PRESIDENT: He is the Hon. Mr Hetherington.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That may well mean they are honourable tantrums. However, it does not mean that the Hon. Mr Hetherington can put on a tantrum every time he does not get the reply he wishes to get. I realise some people in certain professions can instruct others and push people around, while others are pushed around and become accustomed to it. This place comprises a mix of both types. I suggest that instead of wasting the time of the House with tantrums, the Hon. Mr Hetherington probably could have seen the Minister and discussed the matter with him.

Community Welfare: Children's Institution at Forrestfield

THE HON. F. E. McKENZIE (East Metropolitan) [9.23 p.m.]: I rise to defend my colleague, the Hon. Mr Hetherington. I do not want to canvass the issue again because it was canvassed earlier this evening. However, I think members should realise the urgency of the situation at Forrestfield and the pressure being applied to the members who represent the area. I am particularly surprised at the remarks of the Hon. Mr Lewis, because he ought to know better. If he does not wish to represent his constituents in the manner that Mr Hetherington wishes to represent his, that is a pity.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Have you been to see the Minister since the answer was given?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I can recall about a month ago while I was on tour with Mr Lewis that he took us to the Dumbleyung School which had been burned out and told us what was going to be done there because he had contacted the Minister. I have now read in the Press that Dumbleyung will have to wait a further period before the school is rebuilt.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is that right?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: That is the Press report.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You would know more than I do. I happen to know it will be opened.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: If the Hon. Mr Lewis is prepared to put up with that sort of thing, certainly we are not.

On behalf of the Hon. Mr Hetherington I asked a question of the Minister representing the Minister for Education, and I did not even receive an answer. I had to ask a supplementary question, notwithstanding the fact that my colleague had advised the Minister's office earlier in the day that the question would be asked. The whole

matter is being treated as a joke, and we will not accept that.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: That is not true.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We will continue to push this matter on every occasion. Next Tuesday evening a meeting of residents will be held, and 90 per cent of the people have already signed a petition under the Local Government Act asking the council to call a ratepayers' meeting. Mr Masters knows very well the meeting at Hartfield Park in Forrestfield will be a fiery one and we need to have the answers before then. We are the ones who will be facing the people there. Maybe the Minister will not have the courage to attend to give the Government's view. We will have the courage to attend, and we want some answers. That is why we are pressing the matter and that is why the Hon. Mr Hetherington has every right to get up in this place and raise the matter having asked questions on two days in succession without receiving satisfactory answers, and in the face of the attitude of Ministers that it does not matter.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: No-one has said it does not matter.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: If Mr Oliver has received more letters than we have received, maybe his people expect more from him, but it is clear they will not get it. The people will receive action from their local representatives and we will press their point of view notwithstanding the decisions of this Government. If the Government has any sense it will heed the warning of the people.

Parliament: Answers to Questions

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.26 p.m.]: It was not my intention to speak on the adjournment debate, and I will not speak about the matter at Forrestfield; instead I will refer to the lack of information given in answer to questions. I address my remarks to Mr Lewis through you, Sir. I am one member who uses all the legitimate channels—by phone in the main—in an endeavour to obtain an answer to a matter rather than raise it in the Parliament. I do not ask many questions, and that is my prerogative. Other members exercise their privilege and ask questions in this place and I do not think they should be criticised for doing that when it is their right to do so, any more than they should be criticised for speaking in the adjournment debate.

Members know my views on the adjournment debate. It is something we should use, but something which should not be extended to the stage of being a debate. However it has reached that stage tonight.

I want to say a few words about an answer I received to a question. When I take the answer to the people who asked me to raise the matter they will laugh their heads off. It is similar to the answer I received to a question asked of the Minister for Transport last year. I asked him whether he had any knowledge that the Australian National Line would put a ship—either the *Townsville Trader* or the *Brisbane Trader*—on the Eastern States-Fremantle run to take up cargo from which the State Shipping Service had withdrawn. The answer given by the Minister was that he had no knowledge of that.

Lo and behold, less than 14 days later the *Townsville Trader* arrived in Fremantle fully laden with cargo; and at the time the Minister gave his answer the ship must have been loading in Melbourne. Either there is a blockage in the pipeline or the Minister is not asking the right people. The answer to that question became a standing joke in the Port of Fremantle. In fact, the *Townsville Trader* is still engaged very profitably on that run.

Today I asked the following question of the Minister for Transport—

- (1) Is the Fremantle Port Authority about to hand over all shoreside stevedoring operations to a private stevedoring company or companies?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) when is the transfer going to take place; and
 - (b) what private stevedoring company or companies are going to do the shoreside stevedoring previously performed by the Fremantle Port Authority?

That is a simple, straightforward question. I did not say anything about its being another example of this Government giving away a profitable enterprise which perhaps would considerably lessen the revenue collected by the Fremantle Port Authority.

I might remind the Chamber that the Fremantle Port Authority is the only port authority in Australia I know of that has handled cargo on the shoreside ever since the port was established. In all other capital cities cargo has been handled by private stevedores, and the unions have certainly had no arguments with that.

It says a lot for the Port of Fremantle that the operations on the shoreside have been far superior to those of any docks in the Commonwealth; and while we are always knocking Government instrumentalities and commissions it is well to remember that situation. You, Mr President, would be well aware of that, having once earned your daily bread in that area.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: How do you measure that?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: If Mr Oliver meets me outside later I will explain transport economics to him. It is a very simple operation; one simply picks up the glass in front of one and carries it to another place, and one gets paid for it. That is transport in its simplest form, and I have not time to go into it more fully at the moment.

The answer to my question reads as follows—

- (1) and (2) No formal proposal has been received, although it is understood some preliminary discussions have taken place.

I do not know who gave the Minister for Transport that information. All we were seeking was information on what was going to happen. A whole range of people in Fremantle—shipping clerks, port clerks, stevedores, and others employed by the Fremantle Port Authority—are interested in what is to happen. None has suggested to me he is opposed to private stevedores taking over operations; they simply want to know what is going on. They have been told by a highly placed person within the FPA that a public announcement could be expected within the next 10 or 12 days. I get around the port quite a bit, and keep my car close to the ground. I know there are to be some changes.

While I am not saying the answer is dishonest, I do say that the answer supplied by the people who advise the Minister for Transport, and read in this House on that Minister's behalf by the Minister for Lands, has been treated very frivolously. Is it any wonder Governments begin to come down in the estimation of people?

We have asked a simple question and the obvious answer should have been "Yes, negotiations are taking place. An announcement is expected within a number of days and we are fairly sure none of the labour force on the waterfront will be displaced." I would have accepted that answer and I am sure workers at the port, and the unions concerned, would have accepted it. The unions could have started making the necessary arrangements regarding the transfer of long service leave entitlements, etc. This approach would avoid dislocation of the port operations.

I recall that when the State Shipping Service handed over its stevedoring operations, there was a frankness and an open exchange of opinion about what was going to happen. At no time was there a strike, or even a threat of a strike; the whole operation went very smoothly.

That is what we are talking about when we refer to inadequate answers to legitimate questions. The answer should have been more explicit. After all, if explicit answers are received by members, there will be less necessity for them to ask further questions.

I realise members do things differently. If I could have obtained the information I sought from somewhere else I would not have asked my question. To say the least, I am very disappointed in the answer I received.

The reason I quoted the other example—I am sure the Minister for Transport gave the answer in all honesty—is that when I took the answer to the people working on the waterfront and to the ships' captains and so on, they laughed their heads off, because the ship under question was already loading in Melbourne. That made me look a fool, and it brought the whole parliamentary process into disrepute.

I am reminded of an article Mr Santamaria wrote in the *Sunday Independent*—heaven help me if I start to quote his views—when he maintained that the State runs nothing, but that people make their own arrangements, whether they are involved in corporations, banks, or unions, or are individuals.

I have referred to what Mr Berinson spoke about during the Address-in-Reply earlier this evening; I am coming around to that viewpoint. I repeat that if all members—not only members of the Opposition—received more explicit, rather than smart-aleck answers, to their questions, the number of questions inevitably would be reduced.

Community Welfare: Children's Institution at Forrestfield

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.34 p.m.]: I had no intention of speaking again tonight; however, it is necessary in all fairness to make a few comments in relation to the Minister for Community Welfare. I happen to know a little about the subject raised by Mr Hetherington and Mr McKenzie. I have discussed the matter with the Minister and from that vantage point I know how unfair were the imputations made by those two members tonight against the Minister for Community Welfare.

This Minister has been placed in a most difficult and unenviable situation, through no fault of his own.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I said that before, and tonight.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Mr Hetherington said it before, but I did not hear it said tonight. Through no fault of his own, the Minister for Community Welfare was landed in a situation in which, with the concurrence of the local people, and the local shire, an exchange of land was made between the Department for Community Welfare and the Education Department simply to oblige the Education Department. The local people—such as they were at the time—had no objection, and the shire positively agreed with the arrangement and said it would stand by it; indeed, the shire still stands by the arrangement.

The result of this arrangement was that instead of Department for Community Welfare land, which was to be used for a corrective institution, being situated in one part of Forrestfield it ended up in another part, alongside the high school. The Minister for Community Welfare found himself landed in a situation which had already occurred. His attention was drawn to this matter only recently. Indeed, it cannot be much more than a week ago that Mr Hetherington raised this matter in the House.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It was a week ago yesterday.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Yet the honourable member described his "rage" tonight. I ask Mr Hetherington whether it is proper that he should be suffering from this degree of rage without having made an approach to the Minister to find out what he has done. I can tell the honourable member that the Minister has been working very hard on this problem. In fact, he has discussed this matter with me already, because there are all sorts of ramifications other than those which may appear on the surface in relation to what should be done about this matter.

I am sure those members who are so interested in the area would achieve much more for the people they represent by a little bit of honest talk to the Minister for Community Welfare, instead of coming out and politicking publicly on the eve of a general meeting of the group of residents concerned. Of course that group will support the kind of inflammatory remarks members opposite made tonight. That is not the way to resolve the problem, and to be fair to the Minister. I assure members opposite that the Minister for Community Welfare is doing all he can, and is working very hard to try to resolve this issue.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.37 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

PORT

Fremantle

36. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Fremantle Port Authority about to hand over all shore-side stevedoring operations to a private stevedoring company or companies?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) when is the transfer going to take place; and
 - (b) what private stevedoring company or companies are going to do the shore-side stevedoring previously performed by the Fremantle Port Authority?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) No formal proposal has been received although it is understood that some preliminary discussions have taken place.

SHOPPING CENTRE

Utakarra, Geraldton

37. The Hon. TOM McNEIL, to the Minister representing the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

A zoning amendment to the Town of Geraldton town planning scheme to permit the establishment of a large shopping complex at Utakarra was advertised prior to September 1980, after being granted MRPA preliminary approval. Would the Minister now advise—

- (1) What reasons council gave for refusing that development rezoning proposal on 17 December 1980?
- (2) Which councillors were denied a vote through—
 - (a) lack of ministerial dispensation; and
 - (b) declaring a vested interest?
- (3) What reasons council gave for reversing their development rezoning decision on 25 March 1981?

(4) Which councillors were denied a vote on this occasion through—

- (a) lack of ministerial dispensation; and
 - (b) declaring a vested interest?
- (5) Since the revamped proposal to develop the Utakarra site has now received council approval, will the council be obliged to—
- (a) reapply to the MRPA for preliminary approval to rezone the developmental area; and
 - (b) readvertise the period for submission of objections to the development?
- (6) Would the Minister define a vested interest?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (6) The basis of this question is factually incorrect.

The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has planning responsibilities exclusively limited to the metropolitan region. The member is invited to discuss with the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning those matters relating to her ministerial responsibilities in the field of town planning as distinct from local government.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

Inquiries for Information

38. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Premier:

- (1) Have instructions been issued to public servants that any inquiries for information must be directed to the Minister of the department concerned?
- (2) Are the instructions related to inquiries from—
 - (a) the public;
 - (b) members of Parliament; or
 - (c) both?
- (3) Which departments are involved?
- (4) Do they relate to specific matters or general information?
- (5) Will the Minister table a copy of the instruction/s?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) to (5) No instruction of this nature has been issued by either the Premier or the Public Service Board. It is at the discretion of each Minister to fix with the permanent head arrangements most appropriate in each portfolio.

BOATS

Launching Ramps

39. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many public launching ramps are situated on the Swan and Canning Rivers?
- (2) What are their locations?
- (3) How many public launching ramps are situated on Cockburn Sound?
- (4) What is the estimated number of craft using these ramps in any one week?
- (5) How many power boats are at present registered in Western Australia?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Nine.
- (2) East Fremantle
Point Walter
Deep Water Point
Pelican Point
Crawley Bay
Peppermint Grove
Rivervale
Bayswater
Maylands.
There are also several areas where launching is accepted over hard standing ground.
- (3) Five.
- (4) Not known.
- (5) Approximately 40 000 vessels hold current registrations.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Board: TLC Nominee

40. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is the TLC nominee on the Workers' Compensation Board at present absent from duty on leave?
- (2) If so, when did he go on leave?
- (3) Have any steps been taken to appoint a deputy for the absent member?
- (4) If not, why not?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 13 February 1981.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not considered appropriate at this stage.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Proliferation

41. The Hon. TOM McNEIL to the Minister representing the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Will the Minister advise what action the Government has taken to curtail the proliferation of shopping complexes?
- (2) Has the Liberal Party back-bench committee formed to inquire into shopping complexes reported to the Minister?
- (3) If "Yes"—
 - (a) is the report available to the public;
 - (b) has the Minister acted upon any of the recommendations; and
 - (c) would the proposed development of two shopping complexes in the Geraldton area be contrary to any of the recommendations of the committee report, or of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) The Government has—
 - (a) supported the retail shopping policy of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority;
 - (b) appointed a joint Government-parties committee on shopping centre development in Western Australia;
 - (c) requested the MRPA to investigate the value of reducing the size limit of shopping centres over which it has development control;
 - (d) suggested that the Small Business Advisory Corporation assist by advising small retail businesses.
- (2) A joint Government-parties committee has reported its findings to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning.
- (3) (a) Not yet available;
(b) yes;
(c) it is requested that details of the two shopping developments referred to be supplied.

TRANSPORT: TAXIS

Air-conditioners

42. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is there any Taxi Control Board regulation appertaining to the installation and positioning of air-conditioners in taxi-cabs?
- (2) If so, would the Minister please quote the regulation or regulations?
- (3) In view of the controversy which occurred over seating arrangements in taxi-cabs, will the Minister give an assurance that before any new regulation or any change to existing regulations is made in relation to air-conditioners in taxi-cabs, all sections of the industry will be consulted?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The positioning of air-conditioners in taxis is governed by the need to ensure the safety of passengers travelling in the taxi. In this respect the Road Traffic Authority, in consultation with the Taxi Control Board, has agreed that the requirements of Vehicle Standards Regulation No. 1204 (b) and (c), must be met.
This regulation states—

A Motor Vehicle shall not be equipped with—

- (b) an object or fitting technically essential to the vehicle unless its design, construction and condition and the manner in which it is fitted to the vehicle are such as to reduce to a minimum the risk of bodily injury to a person;
- (c) an object or fitting which because of its pointed nature or sharp edge is likely to increase the risk of bodily injury to a person.

The regulations affecting the attachment of air-conditioners in motor vehicles are covered by the Road Traffic Authority, but I am not aware that any changes are contemplated.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Floor Space per Head of Population

43. The Hon. TOM McNEIL, to the Minister representing the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

As the policy summary of the retail shopping policy states the basic measure for the control of retail development will be gross leasable floor space, will the Minister advise—

- (1) The shopping floor space per head of population for—
 - (a) Perth;
 - (b) Bunbury; and
 - (c) Geraldton?
- (2) Can the amount of retail floor space in the Bunbury area be used as a yardstick for the justification of further shopping developments in Geraldton?
- (3) Does the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority's statement that 1.11 sm is the desirable amount of shopping floor space per head of population, still apply?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) (a) 1.41sm;
(b) not available;
(c) not available.
- (2) Information on retail floor space per head of population if available from a country centre such as Bunbury could assist in planning retail facilities in Geraldton.
- (3) No. A figure of 1.30sm per head of population is currently used by the MRPA for planning purposes.

DROUGHT

Pastoralists

44. The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many pastoralists have applied for drought restocking loans?
- (2) How many have been approved?
- (3) How many have been refused?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) 34.
- (2) 21.
- (3) 4.

Of the nine applications unaccounted for in answers (1) and (2), one has been withdrawn and eight are being processed.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS AND DISPUTES

Statistics

45. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) How many man days were lost in Western Australia through—
 - (a) industrial accidents; and
 - (b) industrial disputes;

in each of the last five years for which statistics are available?

- (2) What was the total amount of wages lost through each of those causes during the same period?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) and (2) The information requested in question 45 is published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in catalogues Numbers 6322.0, 6301.5, and 6302.5. Wages lost due to accidents are included in the cost of claims figures. Copies of the tables are available free of charge from the Australian Bureau of Statistics or any major library.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Bread

46. The Hon. H. W. Gayfer (for the Hon. TOM McNEIL), to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

As bread manufacturers claim they no longer provide discounts of 40 to 45 per cent to major stores, would the Minister advise why there has been no reduction in the price of bread to the consumer?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I have been informed that the manufacturer's price to retailers is the lowest which will return a reasonable profit. Prices are not controlled in this State.

TRANSPORT: TAXIS

Air-conditioners

47. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would the Minister confirm that taxi-car 336, owned by W. Hedges, satisfactorily passed both the annual Taxi Control Board inspection and the annual Road Traffic Authority inspection on 6 March 1981?

- (2) If this cab satisfactorily passed both inspections, why was a work order served on the owner on 11 March 1981 stating that the air-conditioner was not central in the cab when it was in exactly the same position at the time of inspection by the board and the RTA five days earlier?

- (3) Could the Minister explain what point there is in submitting taxi-cars to the Taxi Control Board and the Road Traffic Authority for annual inspection if the owners are within a few days of the inspection being served with a work order by another inspector of the Taxi Control Board who is not mechanically qualified?

- (4) Why is owner Mr Hedges being singled out and hassled by the board on this issue because after all these inspections he is now being required to present his cab to the board members for a further inspection?

- (5) Will he be compensated for loss of earnings suffered as a result of being required to submit his cab to the board for inspection?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) The fitment of air-conditioners in taxi-cars as it affects the safety of passengers is the responsibility of the Road Traffic Authority. However, at the time of the annual inspection of Mr Hedges' taxi-car by the Taxi Control Board, the matter of centrally fitted air-conditioners in taxi-cars was under consideration by the Road Traffic Authority.

As the Taxi Control Board was aware of these deliberations, the practice was adopted whereby owners of taxis fitted with units mounted in a central positions were to be advised, at the time of examination, of these deliberations and that their particular unit may be unsatisfactorily located. However, they would be advised further in due course. As this operator advised the inspector he was unaware that the fitment of his air-conditioner was unsatisfactory, he was required to present the vehicle at the board's offices for a decision.

- (3) Unfortunately, due to an oversight by the examining inspector, Mr Hedges was not advised that his unit may not have been satisfactorily mounted. In the course of routine inspectorial duties at a suburban taxi stand, Mr Hedges was issued with a work order to attend the board's office for the secretary to inspect the vehicle as it was felt that the air-conditioner's placement had been overlooked.

Following Mr Hedges' attendance at the board's office, the secretary advised him that no further action would be taken until such time as the positioning of centrally mounted air-conditioning units had been clarified by the Road Traffic Authority.

In view of the clarified instructions issued to the Road Traffic Authority vehicle examiners, the Secretary of the Taxi Control Board requested Mr Hedges' attendance at the board's office on 2 April 1981, so that members and an officer of the Road Traffic Authority could inspect the fitment.

- (4) Mr Hedges has not been singled out or hassled.
(5) No. Compensation is not considered to be warranted.

COMPETITIONS FOR CONSUMER GOODS

WA Law

48. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Does any law exist in this State which precludes Western Australians from being eligible to enter competitions for consumer goods published in Australian magazines?

- (2) If so—

- (a) which law is it; and
(b) what is the reason behind it?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) (a) The Trading Stamp Act, 1948 as amended.
(b) To prevent large businesses operating systems of gift coupons, whereby they could gain unfair trading advantages over small businesses.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Premiums and Payments

49. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) What is the total of all premiums paid for workers' compensation insurance during each of the last five years for which figures are available?
(2) How much of this figure was paid to the State Government Insurance Office?
(3) What is the total of all payments made for workers' compensation during each of the last five years?
(4) How much of this amount was paid by the SGIO?
(5) Of the total sum paid for compensation, how much was paid in respect of—
(a) weekly payments including lump-sum payments in redemption of weekly payments;
(b) payment for second-schedule injuries;
(c) hospital, medical, and other like expenses; and
(d) legal costs?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Premiums received to 30 June—

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
(1)	51 733 019	67 413 392	78 749 645	78 829 348	75 269 694
(2)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
	25 993 481	33 467 678	41 857 322	38 817 830	38 081 163

- (3) Payments made to 30 June—

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
(4)	20 396 943	26 168 933	35 068 902	48 410 498	65 123 519
(5)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
(a)	16 289 423	20 941 186	29 306 993	28 141 180	29 110 667
(b)	13 982 345	17 340 745	22 237 004	29 223 811	42 036 466
(c)	1 111 959	1 567 903	1 814 878	3 716 719	2 428 829
(d)	3 651 102	5 399 131	8 041 387	10 964 751	16 082 194

- (d) Not known.

HEALTH AND HOSPITAL

Mt. Magnet

50. The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that there has been a considerable increase in the population of Mt. Magnet?
- (2) Does the Minister intend to inspect the facilities for doctors' visits to the town in the near future?
- (3) Will the Minister give an undertaking to keep under constant consideration the hospital facilities in Mt. Magnet?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. The Minister for Health plans to visit Mt. Magnet on 27 May 1981.
- (3) The matter is under consideration. The department will be represented at a meeting that has been convened by the Regional Administrator for 22 April 1981, to discuss the recent developments in the Mt. Magnet area.

RECREATION: FOOTBALL

Finals: Telecasts

51. The Hon. H. W. Gayfer (for the Hon. TOM McNEIL), to the Minister representing the Minister for Recreation:

An article appearing in *The West Australian* on 26 March 1981 under the heading "Move fails for Sunday Final" stated that as the WAFL directors had voted against playing the 1981 preliminary final on a Sunday there will be no direct telecast to Perth of the VFL grand final. Would the Minister advise—

- (a) Under what authority the WAFL directors were able to make that statement?
- (b) If they possess the authority to make such statements concerning Victorian football, do they also control the football telecasts that may come from other States?
- (c) Whether the WAFL and the VFL could be in breach of the Trade Practices Act?

(d) Whether we can expect a repeat of last year's arrangements where football patrons wishing to see a direct telecast of the VFL Grand Final had no option but to attend the Entertainment Centre where for \$11.50 per head—no half prices for pensioners and children—beer at 70 cents per 7 oz. glass, the WAFL exploited football followers?

(e) If the WAFL has no authority to make such statements, what action does the Minister contemplate taking?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) The VFL has taken a decision not to permit transmission of football into South Australia or Western Australia while normal fixtures are in progress.
- (b) No.
- (c) No comment is appropriate as the matter is not finally resolved.
- (d) The direct telecast of last year's VFL grand final at the Perth Entertainment Centre was not under the jurisdiction of the WAFL, but was organised and controlled by the Entertainment Centre and TVW Channel 7.
- (e) No action is required by me, as the member may still be able to see his old team playing if they are good enough to make the finals.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Exempt Employers

52. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) For each of the last five years, what is the total number of
 - (a) approved insurers under s.13(1) of the Workers' Compensation Act; and
 - (b) exempt employers under s.13(1) of the Act?
- (2) What is the total amount at present deposited in the Treasury by exempt employers under s.13(1) of the Workers' Compensation Act?
- (3) What criteria are used to determine the amount deposited by each exempt employer?

- (4) Is the amount of security deposited reviewed from time to time, and if so, when and under what circumstances are such reviews carried out?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
(1) (a)	74	73	63	62	59
(b)	23	19	20	28	31.

- (2) No moneys are deposited at the Treasury by employers exempted from section 13 (1) of the Act. Securities in the nature of a bond—either bank or insurance company guarantee—are lodged with the Treasury.
- (3) Financial stability of the applicant company and, in two cases, ancillary cover.
- (4) Yes; on application by employer for extension of exemption.

ABORIGINES

Land Rights

53. The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that at a recent bush meeting of Aborigines in the Pilbara they were told that the State Government will not give land rights to Aborigines?
- (2) If this statement was made, would the Minister correct it?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) The Minister for Community Welfare understands that an attempt was made at a recent bush meeting of Aborigines in the Pilbara to misrepresent the Government's position and policy in a number of areas, including the matter of transferring pastoral leases to Aborigines.

- (2) Subject to a number of conditions being met through satisfactory negotiations, the Government is prepared to consider applications for the transfer of pastoral leases to Aborigines. The Minister for Lands has set out some of the conditions which will apply in future and others may be involved so that the Government can be assured that pastoral leases—which are dealt with differently from Aboriginal reserves—are used for pastoral purposes and that attempts to characterise the land as other than a pastoral lease cannot in future be made.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Premiums and Payments

54. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

In respect of employers obliged to insure with the SGIO pursuant to s.13(5) of the Workers' Compensation Act—

- (1) How many such employers have insured with the SGIO in each of the last five years?
- (2) What is the total of premiums paid by such employers for each of the last five years?
- (3) What is the total of all compensation and other benefits paid in respect of claims made by employees of such employers for each of the last five years?
- (4) What proportion of the amounts paid for such claims represents compensation for—
- silicosis;
 - asbestosis; and
 - mesothelioma?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Policies current at 30 June were—

1975-76	154
1976-77	150
1977-78	118
1978-79	81
1979-80	108.

- (2) Accrued premiums for the last five years were—

1975-76	\$2 392 444
1976-77	\$2 033 151
1977-78	\$3 255 716
1978-79	\$3 455 753
1979-80	\$4 178 972.

- (3) Total compensation and other benefits were—

1975-76	\$1 946 874
1976-77	\$2 626 448
1977-78	\$2 953 540
1978-79	\$3 085 626
1979-80	\$3 152 674.

- (4) The State Government Insurance Office does not keep separate records for the payment of compensation for each of the diseases specified.

HEALTH

The Royal Flying Doctor Service

55. The Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

- (1) How much money is given by way of Government grants, both State and Federal, to the WA section of The Royal Flying Doctor Service?
- (2) Is a member of Treasury, or the Government, represented on this section's board to look after the Government's contribution?
- (3) Does the WA section of The Royal Flying Doctor Service present an audited statement to the WA Government?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

(1)	1979-80	1980-81
	\$	Estimate
	\$	\$
State	1 066 112	1 295 000
Common-wealth	1 323 993	1 431 732

The State Government assistance paid to the WA section of The Royal Flying Doctor Service is on the basis of an annual operating grant and a mileage rate for distance flown.

- (2) The Department of Health and Medical Services has two members on the WA section council. One of these is a member of the management committee.
- (3) Yes.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Standard Policy

56. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Has a standard form of insurance policy ever been prescribed under section 13(7) of the Workers' Compensation Act?
- (2) If not, why not?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not considered necessary.

RAILWAYS

Wagons: Centrecon Pty. Ltd.

57. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is there any escalation clause in the Westrail-Centrecon Pty. Ltd. contract price of \$716 485 for the construction of 35 flat-top wagons?
- (2) If so, will the Minister supply details?
- (3) With reference to question 16 (7) of Wednesday, 25 March 1981, will the Minister advise the details of delivery dates in respect of the wagons and how the penalty is to be applied if delivery is not in accordance with the contracted dates?
- (4) With reference to part (14) of question 16 of Wednesday, 25 March 1981, will the Minister give details of the leasing arrangement and the names of the parties involved?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The escalation clause is in accordance with clause 49, and the schedule applicable thereto of Westrail's general conditions of contract for the acquisition of rolling stock. In view of its length a copy will be supplied to the member.
- (3) 16 wagons by 10 July 1981.
16 wagons by 10 August 1981.
3 wagons by 24 August 1981.

If the contractor fails to deliver a wagon by the contract delivery date, or any extension thereof, to which the contractor has become entitled under the contract, the price for that wagon shall be reduced by \$500 for each and every complete week between the contract delivery date and the date when the wagon is actually delivered.

- (4) The wagons are comprehended in a leveraged leasing agreement between the Western Australian Government Railways Commission and Bain Leasing Pty. Ltd. The agreement provides for a 20-year lease term with option for renewal at nominal cost.

58. *This question was postponed.*

ABORIGINES

Contraceptive Depo-provera

59. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

With reference to a recent article in *The National Times* of 15 March 1981 entitled "Aborigines Given Birth Control Drug Banned in U.S.", I ask—

- (1) Is it a fact that at the State's maximum security unit for teenage girls "Nyandi", the drug Depo-provera—Depot Medroxyprogesterone—has been given to young girls who were wards of the State?
- (2) If "Yes", how many injections of this drug were given in the years 1979, 1980, and 1981?
- (3) What were the ages of the girls?
- (4) Were the girls of Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal descent?
- (5) Were the girls' parents consulted in each case?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) What information is given to—

- (a) the girls; and
- (b) the girls' parents;

about the side effects of the drug?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes, it is a fact that Depo-provera has been given to girls who were wards or under the control of the department at Nyandi. This has been done at the discretion of a qualified medical practitioner, subject to such consent from girls and parents as was considered appropriate in each case.
- (2) 1979—10
1980—7
1981—1.
- (3) At the time when the first injection was administered at Nyandi, the ages of the girls were as follows—
14 years—1
15 years—2
16 years—5
17 years—4
18 years—1.
- (4) Of the 14 girls involved, four were of Aboriginal descent.
- (5) The medical practitioner will not prescribe contraception for girls under the age of 16 years without parental consent. Such consent is normally required for girls aged 16 and 17 years, although some discretion may be exercised in this regard. As far as the 14 girls referred to are concerned it has been established that parents were consulted in at least seven cases.
- (6) In regard to the seven cases where there is no record of consultation, three were continuing contraception commenced before the girls were admitted to Nyandi and one girl was aged 18 years. There is no record to indicate why consultation did not take place in the other three cases, if it did not.
The whereabouts of some parents is not always known.
- (7) (a) Girls were told of possible adverse side effects by the doctor or nursing sister;
(b) it is not clear how much information has been given to parents in the past; however, in the light of what has been revealed about the possible side effects of the drug, the department is in the process of assessing what information should be given so that they may be fully informed in any future cases.

HEALTH: NURSING HOMES

Permanent Care Units

60. The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many Government-controlled permanent care units are established in country districts of Western Australia?
- (2) Where are they situated, and what is the patient capacity of each unit?
- (3) What has been the occupancy rate of each unit over—
 - (a) the last 12 months;
 - (b) the last six months; and
 - (c) the last three months?
- (4) What is the criteria for patients being admitted to permanent care units?
- (5) With whom, or what body, does the authority reside to admit patients to permanent care units?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Six. In addition, all country hospitals accept some patients needing long term care.
- (2) Numbala-Nunga Nursing Home, Derby—54 beds.
Albany Permanent Care Unit—48 beds.
Bunbury Permanent Care Unit—48 beds.
Northam Permanent Care Unit—15 beds.
Port Hedland Nursing Home—30 beds.
Coolgardie Nursing Home—19 beds.

(3) (a) to (c)

	12 months— March 1980 to Feb. 1981		6 months— Sept 1980 to Feb. 1981		3 months— Dec. 1980 to Feb. 1981	
	Bed Av.	% Occup- ancy	Bed Av.	% Occup- ancy	Bed Av.	% Occup- ancy
Numbala-Nunga	52.1	96.5	51.8	95.8	51.3	95.0
Albany	36.9	76.9	35.5	71.0	36.4	73.8
Bunbury	45.3	94.4	45.9	95.6	47.3	98.5
Northam	14.6	97.3	14.4	96.0	14.5	96.7
Port Hedland	29.7	99.1	30.3	101.1	30.8	102.8
Coolgardie	15.6	82.1	15.0	78.7	15.2	80.0

- (4) Patients must be in need of permanent nursing care.
- (5) Admissions to Albany, Bunbury, and Northam permanent care units are arranged by the extended care service of the department. At other centres patients are admitted by their local practitioners. It is important that patients be assessed medically before admission for permanent care.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Board Members: Other Occupations

61. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Does any member of the Workers' Compensation Board, or the Supplementary Workers' Compensation Board, have the Minister's consent under s.25(15) of the Workers' Compensation Act to engage in any business or other occupation?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) which member or members have such consent;
 - (b) when was consent given; and
 - (c) what business or other occupation is or are the member or members concerned permitted to engage in?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) (i) Mr De Burgh;
(ii) Mr Dubberlin;
(iii) Mr Summers;
(iv) the chairman;
(b) (i) 8 August 1978;
(ii) 26 July 1980;
(iii) and (iv) 16 October 1980;
(c) no other consents given.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Depo-provera

62. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Health and Medical Services Department approve of the use of Depo-provera—Depot-Medroxyprogesterone—for contraception?
- (2) Is it a fact that manufacturers' specifications state "the use of Depo-provera for contraception is not an improved indication and such use is investigational since there are unresolved questions relating to its safety for this indication"?
- (3) Why does the Health and Medical Services Department approve of the use of this drug?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, in special circumstances.

- (2) Yes, but the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee recognise that it may be used as a contraceptive where the doctor considers it the most appropriate treatment, and informed consent is obtained. This appears to have been accepted as a valid source of reference by the Family Planning Association and the Aboriginal Medical Service which I understand has said it has used the drug on many occasions over a number of years.

(3) Answered by (2).

63. *This question was postponed.*

HEALTH: DRUG

Depo-provera

64. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Department of Health and Medical Services make available for the use of its doctors the drug Depo-provera?
- (2) If so, for what indications?
- (3) How many doses of this drug were made available in the year of 1980?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Where, in the opinion of the attending doctor, other contraceptive methods are inappropriate.
- (3) 78 ampoules.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Fees

65. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) By what authority are Government schools permitted to levy fees?
- (2) To what extent does the Minister or his department supervise—
 - (a) the fixing of the amount of the fees charged by schools; and
 - (b) the expenditure of the funds collected?
- (3) What public or other funds are available to assist parents who are unable to pay fees levied?

- (4) What is the total amount of fees—
 - (a) actually collected by Government schools during the year 1980; and
 - (b) levied by Government schools for the year 1981?
- (5) Has there been any case in which the Minister or his department has found that—
 - (a) fees have been set at an unreasonably high figure;
 - (b) funds collected from fees have been spent on unnecessary or unauthorised purposes; and
 - (c) school fees have been misappropriated?
- (6) Is it Government policy to encourage schools to collect their own funds by the levying of fees?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Although the term "fee" may be used in some cases, no fees are payable in Government schools. To provide a richer learning environment, schools seek voluntary contributions and make charges under regulation 56(1)(b) and administrative instruction 6.05.
- (2) (a) The voluntary contribution is set by the Minister for education and charges are determined by the principal of a school;
- (b) each school is required to submit to the department a statement of receipts and payments; a copy is required to be sent to the parents and citizens' association.
All large schools and the majority of small schools are inspected by the internal audit section of the department.
- (3) Education endowment grant; textbook subsidy for secondary students; school book assistance; Commonwealth secondary student allowances; a variety of scholarships.
- (4) (a) and (b) Not known.
- (5) (a) The charges determined reflect the services provided;
- (b) no;
- (c) one or two minor instances have come to the attention of the internal audit and been referred to the police.
- (6) No, the Government allows schools to seek voluntary contributions and make charges to provide richer learning environments.

HEALTH: DRUG

Depo-provera

66. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are health sisters employed by the Health and Medical Services Department permitted to give injections of the drug Depo-provera for contraceptive purposes?
- (2) If so, in what centres, and how many doses of the drug, have been used during the year ended 31 December 1980?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Unknown.

EDUCATION: SPECIAL SCHOOL

White Gum Valley

67. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the present state of progress with respect to the proposed playing field at the White Gum Valley Special School?
- (2) Has the Minister yet visited the school?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

I am advised—

- (1) Funds have been allocated for the required earthworks.
- (2) No.

HEALTH: DRUG

Depo-provera

68. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are doctors employed by the community health service permitted to prescribe Depo-provera for contraception?
- (2) How many doses were prescribed during the year ended 31 December 1980?
- (3) In which towns was the drug prescribed, and how many doses in each town or centre?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) In so far as is known, 19 ampules only.
- (3) Unknown.

POLICE

Drug Squad

69. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Since the Minister supplied the answer to question 302 on 21 October 1980—

- (1) Has the establishment of the Drug Squad been changed in any way, and if so, what changes have been made?
- (2) Has any change been made in the personnel of the squad, and if so, what changes have been made, and for what reasons?
- (3) Has any officer been transferred out of the squad or relieved of his duties for disciplinary reasons, and if so, what officers have been so affected, and what conduct gave rise to the disciplinary action?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am advised by the Minister for Police and Traffic that—

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes. One sergeant and three detective constables. Changes effected were normal rotation and interchange of staff.
- (3) No.

HEALTH: DRUG

Depo-provera

70. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is Depo-provera available, or used, in any of the Government's hospitals?
- (2) If so, which hospitals, and for what indications?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Only in hospitals which order in response to prescriptions from medical practitioners.

SETTLEMENT AGENCIES

Number and Owners

71. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) How many settlement agencies are at present carrying on business in WA?
- (2) How many of such agencies are—
 - (a) owned or operated by the spouse or a near relative of a solicitor or a company owned or controlled by any such person; and
 - (b) owned or operated by the spouse or a near relative of an estate agent or a company owned or controlled by any such person?
- (3) How many settlement agents also hold licences under the Real Estate and Business Agents Act, and what type of licences are held?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

The Chief Secretary advises that—

- (1) The number of real estate settlement agents and business settlement agents is not known.
130 real estate settlement agents are members of the Settlement Agents Association (Inc.)
- (2) (a) and (b) Not known.
- (3) Not known.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Tenants: Evictions

72. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) In 1980 how many notices to quit were issued against State Housing Commission tenants in Western Australia?
- (2) How many of these notices were issued to Aboriginal tenants?
- (3) How many families left the premises as a result of notices to quit without further action?
- (4) How many of those families were Aboriginal tenants?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) 2 874—includes Commonwealth-State and Aboriginal housing schemes.
- (2) 1 003.

- (3) 529 tenants vacated whilst under legal action including from notice to quit to court order stage. This excludes 34 evicted by warrant or by writ.
- (4) 153 plus 24 evicted.

PASTORAL LEASES

Aborigines

73. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Have any applications for the granting or transferring of pastoral leases to—
 - (a) the Aboriginal Lands Trust;
 - (b) any Aboriginal community association; and
 - (c) any Aboriginal community based company;
 been refused since 1 January 1977?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) what applications have been refused;
 - (b) when were the applications made; and
 - (c) in each case, when was the refusal notified?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) This information is not readily available in the form requested.

The Land Act requires that the owner of a pastoral lease obtain the permission of the Minister for Lands to offer his lease for sale.

Having obtained permission to sell and found a purchaser, then the lessee has to apply for the lease to be transferred to that person or organisation to which he wishes to sell.

Often the Aboriginal Lands Trust, or the Aboriginal Legal Service, write to the Minister or Under Secretary for Lands on behalf of Aboriginal interests, community associations, or Aboriginal community-based companies; but these can only be treated as inquiries because they have not negotiated a sale with the lessees and the lessees have not requested transfer.

LAND

Ord River Farm Block

74. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister for Lands:

With reference to the report that an Ord River farming block of nearly 1 000 hectares bought by the Government in 1980 has been subdivided and sold by tender as three farms and a feed lot. I ask—

- (1) How much did the Government pay the Docker Corporation for the land?
- (2) How much money, if any, was spent on the land between the purchase and the re-sale?
- (3) How much did—
 - (a) R. O. Smith;
 - (b) F. G. Bolton;
 - (c) R. P. & C. J. Titmarsh;
 - (d) L. S. & M. K. Davenport; and
 - (e) D. C. Oliver—Kimberley Stock-Oliver;
 pay for each lot?
- (4) From whom was the land purchased by the Government in the first place?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Land and improvements \$499 500.
- (2) Other than necessary subdivisional and release costs no money was spent on the land between purchase and resale.
- (3) (a) \$128 000;
(b) \$199 000;
(c) and (d) \$120 000;
(e) \$100 000.

Conditions of release required that 10 per cent of the price tendered was payable at the time of tendering with the balance payable over a period of 10 years by equal annual instalments including interest.

- (4) The only purchase by the Government related to the transaction described in (1) was to the Hooker Corporation.

PASTORAL LEASES

Aborigines

75. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Are there any pending applications for the granting or transfer of pastoral leases to—

- (a) the Aboriginal Lands Trust;
- (b) any Aboriginal community association; and
- (c) any Aboriginal community based company?

- (2) If so—

- (a) what applications are pending;
- (b) when was each made; and
- (c) when is it expected a decision will be made on the various applications?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) See reply to question 73.

FUEL AND ENERGY

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

76. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that polychlorinated biphenyls have been used by the SEC and by private companies generating power, such as Cliffs Robe River, Hamersley Iron, Mt. Newman, and others?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that this product is extremely dangerous, and it has resulted, *inter alia*, in the poisoning overseas of hundreds of people and possible damage to unborn children?
- (3) Will the Minister say whether there is a register of the whereabouts of this product, or whether he will take any steps to regulate its use?
- (4) If not, why not?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I am aware of the overseas reports, but I would question the term "extremely dangerous". The product is certainly toxic, but its use in Western Australia does not pose a health problem.
- (3) A record is kept by the occupational health branch of the department.
- (4) Not applicable.

PASTORAL LEASES

Aborigines

77. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) How many pastoral leases are held by Aboriginal community associations or similarly based companies?
- (2) How many of such leases were acquired—
 - (a) before 1973;
 - (b) between 1973 and 1979—both inclusive; and
 - (c) since 1 January 1980?
- (3) How many pastoral leases are held by the Aboriginal Lands Trust?
- (4) How many such leases were acquired—
 - (a) before 1973;
 - (b) between 1973 and 1979—both inclusive; and
 - (c) since 1 January 1980?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) Information is not correlated in regard to ownership by Aboriginal community associations or similar based companies. However, it is understood that at least 18 pastoral leases are operated for the benefit of Aborigines and include those held by various church organisations.
- (3) Six.
- (4) (a) None;
(b) six;
(c) none.

PASTORAL LEASES

Noonkanbah Station

78. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has the department received a report on pastoral regeneration along the Fitzroy River?
- (2) What comments, if any, were made concerning the pastoral regeneration along that river in the pastoral lease of Noonkanbah?
- (3) Were the department officers satisfied with the pastoral management on Noonkanbah Station and, if so, what were the terms of their report?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes, in August 1980.
- (2) and (3) No specific mention was made of pastoral regeneration or management on Noonkanbah Station. Subsequently the Adviser—Aboriginal projects at Derby has commented on the improving range condition following the construction of new fencing and water supplies allowing better control of cattle on the river frontage.

ABORIGINES

Conditional Purchase Leasehold Land

79. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Does the Aboriginal Lands Trust hold any conditional purchase leasehold land; and if so—
 - (a) in what area or areas is the land held;
 - (b) is all the land currently used for farming operations; and
 - (c) what other use is being made of conditional purchase land?
- (2) Do any Aboriginal community associations or similarly based companies, hold any conditional purchase leasehold land, and if so—
 - (a) in what area or areas is the land held;
 - (b) is all the land currently used for farming operations; and
 - (c) what other use is being made of conditional purchase land?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am advised by the Minister for Community Welfare that—

- (1) (a) to (c) No.
- (2) (a) to (c) He is unaware of any Aboriginal community associations or similarly based companies that have conditional pastoral leases. However, he has been informed that the Uniting Church holds one such lease in the Derby area on behalf of the Mowanjum Aboriginal community.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

Dr Peter Reid

80. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

With reference to the terms of employment of Dr Peter Reid of Broome—

- (1) Will the Minister say whether other public servants who have the use of Government motor cars may use them for political work in support of any political party during election time?
- (2) If not, why is it that Dr Peter Reid of Broome is supplied with a Government car, and is permitted to use it for support of the Liberal Party during election time and the doctor's business enterprises?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Dr Reid is supplied with a Government vehicle for official business and reasonable private use.

ABORIGINES

Land Councils

81. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

In *The West Australian* of Saturday, 21 March, the Minister for Community Welfare was reported as saying "There are many such Aborigines in WA (i.e. those who wish to work with the Government) as distinct from people who want to create things such as land councils for the purpose of confronting the Government." I ask—

- (1) Is the report accurate?
- (2) Who are the Aboriginal people who "want to create things such as land councils for the purpose of confronting the Government"?
- (3) What land councils, if any, were formed for the purpose of confronting the Government?

- (4) On what basis does the Minister charge that the land councils were formed for the purpose of confronting the Government?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

The Minister for Community Welfare has advised that—

- (1) The report is accurate.
- (2) to (4) Some Aboriginal people have made public their intention to confront the State Government over theoretical issues such as land rights. That is what occurred at Noonkanbah, where some Aboriginal people, supported by politically motivated white advisers and the Kimberley Land Council, set out on a deliberate course of confrontation with the State Government in an attempt to destroy the involvement of Aborigines in the pastoral lease system, and to seize rights in relation to land not available to other Australians.

In this endeavour, the Kimberley Land Council was, in the understanding of the Minister, funded by the World Council of Churches.

The record of the State Government in the provision of land for Aboriginal people is a commendable one. It has never been the wish of the Government to deny Aborigines access to land, and it is not the wish of the Government to do so now.

Although the Minister realises that with a party political motivation, the member and others will do everything in their power to undermine his endeavours, it is his belief that there are many Aborigines in Western Australia who will be pleased to work through the Government's consultative process and through the Aboriginal Lands Trust to advance in a practical way the welfare of Aboriginal people as part of the Australian community and to get away from sophistic arguments about theoretical, philosophical concepts, best summarised as "sloganism."

HOUSING

Fremantle

82. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many State Housing Commission tenants coming within the jurisdiction of the Fremantle regional office of the SHC, were approached in 1980 to move out of family accommodation in favour of pensioner accommodation?
- (2) How many tenants—
 - (a) agreed to move as requested; and
 - (b) declined to move as requested?
- (3) Of those who agreed to move—
 - (a) how many have been relocated in pensioner accommodation;
 - (b) how many have been offered alternative family accommodation;
 - (c) how many have agreed to accept alternative family accommodation; and
 - (d) how many still await relocation?
- (4) When is it expected that all those who have agreed to move will be relocated?
- (5) Of those tenants who declined to move to pensioner accommodation—
 - (a) how many are still paying rent at the previous rate; and
 - (b) how many are paying higher rent by reason of their refusal to move?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) to (5) Because of the detailed research involved in this question it is intended to reply to the member by letter.

POLICE

Snowy Gudami: Arrest and Trial

83. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

With reference to the arrest and trial of Snowy Gudami and others at Port Hedland in 1980—

- (1) Will the Minister say—
 - (a) whether it is a fact that the Aboriginal people involved were elders from the Strelley community;

- (b) they apprehended a man who they allege had threatened them with a gun;
 - (c) that the police were notified by radio that these men were bringing in the alleged offender to the Port Hedland police station;
 - (d) that the men concerned in fact took the alleged offender direct to the Port Hedland police station; and
 - (e) that upon their arrival at the Port Hedland police station they were arrested and charged with deprivation of liberty?
- (2) Is it a fact that the men were acquitted after a jury trial?
 - (3) Was the man alleged to have committed an offence charged with any offence, and if so—
 - (a) what offence; and
 - (b) what was the result of the charge?
 - (4) If the man alleged to have offended was not charged, why was he not charged?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am advised by the Minister for Police and Traffic that—

- (1) (a) Yes;
- (b) no;
- (c) no;
- (d) no;
- (e) no.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.

- (a) Being in possession of a firearm without being the holder of a licence, and not being exempted under section 8 of the Firearms Act;
- (b) charge withdrawn.

(4) Answered by (3).

HOUSING

Fremantle

84. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many units designated as pensioner accommodation does the SHC have in the area within the jurisdiction of the Fremantle regional office of the SHC?

- (2) How many of such units are vacant?
- (3) How many units designated as family accommodation does the SHC have in the same area?
- (4) How many of such units are vacant?
- (5) Is there a waiting list of eligible applicants seeking—
 - (a) pensioner; and
 - (b) family;
 accommodation in the same area?
- (6) If so—
 - (a) how many names are on each list; and
 - (b) what is the estimated waiting period in respect of each list?
- (7) Does the SHC have any further—
 - (a) pensioner; and
 - (b) family;
 accommodation under construction or projected in the same area?
- (8) If so, what number of units in each class are—
 - (a) under construction; and
 - (b) proposed but not commenced?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) to (8) Because of the detailed research involved in this question it is intended to reply to the member by letter.

HOUSING

Reserve: Ann Street, Broome

- 85. The Hon. F. E. McKenzie (for the Hon. PETER DOWDING), to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the Minister proposing to dispossess the department of the "Ann Street Reserve" in Broome, a reserve for Aboriginal people, and give it to State Housing for State Housing homes in the area?
- (2) If so, how does the Minister justify giving away land reserved for the use and benefit of Aborigines?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am advised by the Minister for Community Welfare that—

- (1) Following an investigation by an inter departmental committee comprising Aboriginal Lands Trust,

Department for Community Welfare, State Housing Commission, and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in consultation with the Broome Shire Council and the local Aboriginal community, consideration is being given to a rationalisation of the various pieces of land held by these agencies. The principal aim is to provide building lots to meet the urgent accommodation needs of the Broome Aborigines and others.

- (2) The land will be used, or we will make available other land, for the use and benefit of Aborigines.

HOUSING

Coolbellup

- 86. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Does the State Housing Commission own housing complexes in Coolbellup known as "Gunya" and "Goonedah"?
- (2) In respect of each of these complexes—
 - (a) how many units do they comprise;
 - (b) what number of bedrooms are contained in each unit;
 - (c) what features, if any, do the units have which make them suited to pensioner accommodation; and
 - (d) how many units are at present vacant?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Gunya 30 units; Goonedah 18 units;
- (b) all three bedrooms;
- (c) Gunya and Goonedah.

The commission, has, for some time now had family apartments surplus to application lists and rather than keep these vacant waiting for this trend to change has been giving pensioner applicants the opportunity to occupy. Both these complexes have modern self-contained apartments with all facilities and are close to all services.

- (d) Gunya—1.
- Goonedah—12.

HOUSING

Pensioners

87. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it still Government policy to encourage pensioner tenants occupying family accommodation to move into smaller accommodation?
- (2) Has the State Housing Commission been actively engaged in encouraging persons who have agreed to move out of family accommodation to take alternative family accommodation in lieu of pensioner accommodation?
- (3) If so, what does it thereby hope to achieve?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) There may be some cases where a pensioner tenant under-occupying family-sized single detached housing in an area where there are waiting lists of family applicants who have been given the opportunity to transfer into alternate accommodation in an area of little or no demand.
- (3) Release of family-sized accommodation for which there are applicants on the waiting lists.

STAMP DUTY

Amounts Collected

88. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

How much stamp duty was collected in the first six months of each of the last five financial years?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

July-Dec. 1975	\$20 793 345
July-Dec. 1976	\$26 917 087
July-Dec. 1977	\$30 841 619
July-Dec. 1978	\$31 761 989
July-Dec. 1979	\$36 343 232.

FIRE BRIGADES

Funding

89. The Hon. J. M. BERINSON, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (1) In each of the past three years—
 - (a) what contribution to the funding of Fire Brigades Board service was made by local government authorities; and

(b) what proportion of Fire Brigades Board income did this represent?

- (2) On what basis are Fire Brigades Board services differentiated from other essential services so as to justify a compulsory contribution by local government?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am advised by the Chief Secretary that—

- (1) (a) The local authorities contributed \$2 608 651 in 1979-80, \$2 300 171 in 1978-79, and \$2 028 857 in 1977-78;
- (b) these sums represent 12½ per cent of the costs of the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board levied on the contributors under the Fire Brigades Act, 1942-1979 section 37(2).

- (2) Throughout Australia, as in many other countries fire brigades began at local authority level.

Subsequently operational control was centralised for better efficiency, but legislators at the time presumably considered financing of brigades should reasonably be attached—at least in part—to property owners through the local authority. Successive Governments reduced local authority contribution ratio from 33-1/3 per cent to the present level of 12½ per cent.

In August 1979 the Government legislated to fund from Consolidated Revenue the full cost of fire services in areas not covered by permanent brigades, effective from 1 July 1980, and at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million.

At that time the then Minister said—

The Government has for some time been examining alternative ways of financing the board's operations.

I must emphasise that there are no obvious practical alternatives which do not involve more inequities than the present system.

Let me say unequivocally that the Government is not able to meet the whole cost of the service from Consolidated Revenue as has been proposed in some quarters.

A practical alternative to the existing funding method is not available, but the matter remains under consideration.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Institution: Bridgewater

90. The Hon. W. H. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) What is the status of the Department for Community Welfare institution known as Bridgewater?
- (2) What is the establishment of the staff at the institution?
- (3) What is—
 - (a) the maximum; and
 - (b) the average;
 number of inmates?
- (4) What are the criteria applied for admission to the institution?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (1) Bridgewater is a non-secure centre for the short-term care and assessment of legally innocent children.
- (2) 91 including all child care, administrative, professional, and ancillary positions.
- (3) (a) With the present staff establishment 88 with a further eight beds normally reserved for sick children;
- (b) in 1980, the average daily population was 81.
- (4) The admission criteria are for children—
 - (a) in need of short-term care or assessment;
 - (b) aged between three and 18 years; and
 - (c) who are not delinquent.

STOCK

Blue Tongue and Foot and Mouth Disease

91. The Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Why is it that there is no laboratory available within Australia, and more particularly Western Australia, for the proving of the existence of "blue tongue" and/or "foot and mouth" disease?

- (2) Is it possible that consideration could be given to the setting up of such a facility?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The Commonwealth Government is constructing a high security laboratory at Geelong which will be capable of carrying out work on behalf of all States.
It is anticipated that the laboratory will be ready to commence work in 1983.
- (2) Answered by (1).

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Children's Institution at Forrestfield

92. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister for Education yet visited the alternative sites for the community welfare treatment facility proposed for Forrestfield?
- (2) When can an announcement be expected on the matter?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Minister for Community Welfare will make an announcement on the matter when consideration of the issues has been completed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Members: Other Occupations

36. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- I refer the Minister to the answer he gave to question 61 relating to the permission given to certain members of the Workers' Compensation Board to engage in other occupations or businesses. Would the Minister direct the attention of the Minister for Labour and Industry to the answer to question (2)(c) which asks—

what business or other occupation is or are the member or members concerned permitted to engage in?

The answer to that question was—
no other consents given.

The question asked relates to what the members are permitted to do apart from sitting on the Workers' Compensation Board.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I agree that the answer does not seem to accord with the question asked and it appears the question was misread, and perhaps it was read as "what members are engaged in other occupations?" I shall certainly obtain the answer.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION SUPPLEMENTATION FUND ACT

Proclamation

37. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

The Minister may recall steering the Workers' Compensation Supplementation Fund Bill through this House last year. I should like to know when the Act is likely to be proclaimed?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

I am afraid I do not know.

HEALTH: NURSING HOMES

Permanent Care Units

38. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer the Minister to the answer he gave to question 60 asked by the Hon. V. J. Ferry and ask the following: How

is it possible for a permanent care unit to achieve a 102 per cent occupancy rate? Do they share beds in such cases?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

As I am not the Minister for Health, I am not in a position to answer the question, but such occupancy rates are frequently obtained in hotels and similar places. However, if the member wants a detailed answer, I suggest he put the question on notice.

ABORIGINES

Land Rights

39. The Hon. H. W. OLNEY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

I refer to the answers given by the Minister to questions 53 and 81 both of which touched on Aboriginal land rights. Are we to take it from the answers given that the Government has no policy of granting land rights to Aborigines other than allowing them to acquire pastoral leases on the same terms as other non-indigenous people?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

Such questions have to be considered very carefully and I am sure the question posed by the member will be answered immediately by the Minister responsible. We have very good policies, but I will make absolutely sure the question is answered in the correct manner, especially bearing in mind that I answered a question last year and was accused later of misleading the House. I have no intention of being accused of that again.