

# Legislative Council

Thursday, 20 September 1990

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon J.M. Brown) took the Chair at 2.30 pm, and read prayers.

## SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT BILL

*Assent*

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Bill.

## MOTION - ABC "COUNTRY HOUR"

*Metropolitan Market Trust Fruit and Vegetable Report - Withdrawal  
Opposition*

HON BOB THOMAS (South West) [2.38 pm]: I move -

That this House expresses opposition to the ABC's withdrawal of the Metropolitan Market Trust fruit and vegetable report on *Country Hour* and calls upon the corporation for urgent reinstatement of this valuable listener segment.

I was shocked yesterday when Hon Jim Brown told me that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation had decided to withdraw its Metropolitan Market Trust fruit and vegetable report from the "Country Hour" radio program. I spoke with some of my constituents and with members of the industry and can say that people have considerable concern about the program cuts. Given that every member here represents a region in which some form of horticultural enterprise and industry is carried out, I decided I should bring this important issue to the attention of the House so it could be debated.

Essentially, the ABC has decided to remove the fruit and vegetable report, a two and a half minute bulletin, broadcast on the "Country Hour" at 12.55 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In that bulletin, Tom Murrell gives producers an indication of the prices fetched for horticultural lines at the markets that day and an indication of the price trends during the last few sales. The ABC proposes to withdraw that bulletin from the "Country Hour" and broadcast it at 6.50 am on Thursdays on station 6WF. That bulletin will last four minutes and, according to Mr Murrell, will be more comprehensive, with more information on prices and price movements. He told me that the change was the result of other ABC program changes. It is proposed that the "World Today" program, currently broadcast on the metropolitan ABC at 12 noon, will be run at 1.00 pm, rather than broadcasting an afternoon program by the rural section of the ABC between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm.

It is intended by the ABC that the livestock report which appears in the "After One" program be transferred to the "Country Hour" program which is broadcast between 12 noon and 1.00 pm. Mr Murrell believes that it is not possible to also broadcast a fruit and vegetable report at 12.55 pm and lists a number of reasons that he believes justify changing it to another time slot. Essentially, he believes that growers have access to modern information technology such as faxes, viatels and 008 information services, and do not obtain the information from a two and a half minute ABC broadcast. He went to great pains to explain that, while horticulture was important to the State, it was not that important that it should limit the "Country Hour" program with the vegetable report. He said it would be better use of ABC time to broadcast other issues for a broader range of listeners, and that the livestock report should be transferred from the 1.00 pm bulletin to the "Country Hour". By having a four minute bulletin on Thursday morning, the ABC would be able to improve the service to horticulturists and to provide more information and detail about movements in market prices. Mr Murrell explained that good producers do not make decisions on the basis of the fruit and vegetable report in the "Country Hour" broadcast because they had access to much more sophisticated information, were in touch with their agents and used the information technology to which I referred earlier.

I have a different perception of the industry from that of Mr Murrell and I believe that it would be good for this House to debate this issue. Every member of the Chamber represents the industry as all electorates contain horticultural industries. Members from the mining and

pastoral regions would be aware that the Ord region produces bananas, melons and tropical fruits and the Carnarvon area produces bananas, cucumbers, melons and beans. Members who represent the Agricultural Region would be aware of the importance of the tomato and melon industries to the Geraldton region. Members who represent metropolitan regions would realise that significant horticultural industries are contained in these areas. The North Metropolitan Region contains the Wanneroo and Yanchep industries which produce significant amounts of carrots, turnips and most other vegetables. The East Metropolitan Region contains large citrus and stone fruit industries, and members representing the South Metropolitan Region would be aware of the vegetable industry in the Spearwood area. In my electorate the areas of Myalup and Bunbury have all varieties of vegetables grown there, and Donnybrook, Manjimup and Pemberton are known for the apple, pear, citrus fruit and grape industries.

A trend which has developed over the past few years is for new varieties of fruits to be introduced. In the Pemberton and West Manjimup areas Tim English and the Pridisis are developing a kiwifruit industry, and they are producing more than 60 per cent of the State's market at the moment. This used to be supplied from Queensland, so I do not need to labour the point of the importance of the horticultural industry to members.

Interestingly, referring to last year's *WA Year Book*, it indicates that six per cent of total agricultural production in Western Australia was derived from horticulture - this entailed \$230 million-worth of product, and the total agricultural production was \$3.7 billion. From my own calculations, that means that the horticultural industry represents half of one per cent of the gross domestic product of this State. So, this is not an insignificant industry.

This is a particularly important industry in my electorate because of the activities around Manjimup, Donnybrook and the Myalup area. For that reason I will examine some of the arguments proposed by Mr Murrell. He said that the majority of larger producers would not have a use for the information supplied in the fruit and vegetable report because they would use the sophisticated information technology to gather the information required to make decisions; this may involve decisions regarding harvesting or cropping or other such things. Some very large producers exist such as the Sumichs, the Newtons and the Fontaninis, but these are in the minority of producers. Around the Manjimup area the majority of producers are small producers.

The 1990 *WA Year Book*, in chapter 13 indicates that about 12 per cent of orchardists and other fruit producers had an estimated value of operation of less than \$20 000 turnover per year. In this industry, 43 per cent of growers earn less than \$49 000 per year, and that is opposed to the two and a half per cent of the producers who earn over \$500 000 a year. So, it is quite clear that the majority of producers in the horticultural industry are small producers and do not have the turnover to allow surplus funds to be invested in information technology of the kind referred to by Mr Murrell. With a turnover of \$20 000 a year, little would be left over after personal and running expenses to invest in fax and viatel machines through which the agents could be contacted. While I am not suggesting that producers would make a decision on the basis of the information from the ABC's fruit and vegetable report, that information is important to the producers as it gives them some idea of the trends in the movement of prices in particular lines as they are occurring at the markets.

Many orchardists are either Italian, Yugoslav or Macedonian and came to Australia as young people without the benefit of the education system we have today. Many of these people do not have the skills to use the computers from which to derive the information as suggested by Mr Murrell. Mr Murrell also mentioned that growers rely on their agents to keep in touch with the market situation. I do not know whether Mr Murrell realises it, but some agents act for 500 to 800 producers; therefore, it would be an enormous logistical exercise for those agents to keep in touch with each producer in the industry. Any grower who found out that his agent was constantly manning the telephone to keep the producers informed would soon leave that agent and move to another agent who spent more time on other relevant matters.

Mr Murrell may be acting on an assumption that listening to the "Country Hour" is somewhat of a tradition for farmers because farmers take their lunch hours at 12 o'clock to pick up information on what is happening in their industries. I do not think he is aware of the demographic differences between the larger cereal growers and the smaller horticulturists.

He should reconsider his actions and reinstate what is a most worthwhile bulletin on a three day basis so that growers can keep in touch with movements in their industries.

**HON P.H. LOCKYER** (Mining and Pastoral) [2.52 pm]: I have great pleasure in seconding this motion. I congratulate Hon Bob Thomas for bringing this matter to the attention of the Parliament. I also congratulate him for representing his constituents in this Parliament and indicating their opposition to the decision made by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to drop this important report that is provided three days a week.

Hon Bob Thomas was right when he said that my electorate, the Mining and Pastoral Region, covers the main horticultural areas of the Ord River at Kununurra and Carnarvon. There are a number of other horticultural areas including Broome and Nita Downs Station.

Mr Tom Murrell is a very good officer of the ABC and I respect him greatly. He has been forced to put in place a decision made by the ABC hierarchy; it is not his decision. These decisions result from horrendous cuts that are being forced on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation with the result that its operations will be networked. It is ludicrous to think that the "Country Hour" can be replaced with a program at 6.50 am on Thursdays.

I also congratulate Hon Bob Thomas for the amount of research he did on this matter. I agree thoroughly with the figures he presented. I did some research on the ABC to find out about its cuts. While I was not able to put my finger on it, an indication of the stringency of the cuts is a rumour that the very popular breakfast announcer, Ted Bull, has been placed on probation for the very serious charge of having a second biscuit with his morning coffee one day last week.

Hon Doug Wenn: Come on!

Hon Graham Edwards: You are stretching it.

**HON P.H. LOCKYER**: I am not stretching it; that is the rumour. I have been told also that Gerry Gannon, the Irish gentleman, who runs a night-time program -

Hon Graham Edwards: A good bloke.

**HON P.H. LOCKYER**: He is a good bloke. The Salvation Army goes to the ABC at night to give him a cup of coffee. I know members will not believe that. Worse than that, so that the staff will not go without at Christmas, they have asked Father Brian Morrison to make sure that they are not left off his list for a hamper at Christmas time.

Hon Doug Wenn: Be serious.

**HON P.H. LOCKYER**: I am being serious; I am indicating how bad things are.

The ABC has forgotten the reasons for its charter, which is to use taxpayers' money to broadcast to rural areas the same sorts of programs that are broadcast to the metropolitan area.

Apart from the excuses given by Mr Murrell on behalf of the ABC, many growers do not have Viatel and are too busy to ring the 008 numbers because they are trying to make a dollar. Many growers for many years have been listening on the dot to the "Country Hour" to make up their minds on what they will send to market the next day. Growers in Kununurra, Carnarvon, Broome and Pemberton use the program to make decisions about their industry. They decide on Tuesday what they will send to market on Thursday. It is essential that they listen to the program. Many of them are unable to go to their lounge rooms and bring up Viatel. They want to listen at 12.55 pm as they have for years to what is going on.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: In the packing sheds.

**HON P.H. LOCKYER**: That is right. Often their hands are too dirty because they have been picking their produce since five o'clock in the morning.

In this case the ABC has taken its cuts too far. This is a prime example of moving from a locally produced program to networking. It is happening across the board. It will not be too long before shows like the "7.30 Report" will be networked from Sydney. It has to stop. The ABC is the people's radio station and the people should have a say. The Federal Government funds the ABC and it says the cuts have to be made. Where will they stop? The radio station will end up having no staff because they are getting sick and tired of it.

While it may not be as serious as the couple of light-hearted comments that I made earlier that offended a couple of members opposite, it is pretty damned serious. Morale in the ABC

in this State is at an all time low because the staff do not like what is happening. They are decent men and women of Western Australia who want to provide a service but are not allowed to do so. It is becoming like an over the hill exhibitionist - there is nothing left to take out. These cuts will have to stop and the member was right to bring this matter to the Parliament in an attempt to influence the ABC to reverse its decision.

**HON SAM PIANTADOSI (North Metropolitan) [2.58 pm]:** I support the motion moved by Hon Bob Thomas. I am disturbed to see these cuts occurring in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It will mean a lack of information flowing to the growers. The ABC proposes to have a program one day a week. Anybody with any knowledge of the industry knows that sales previously took place on three days a week: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Sales now occur on five days a week. The growers need to be informed every day, and instead of the program being cut back to one day a week it should have been upgraded to five days a week. The auction system was the only system that ensured sales occurred on three days a week.

Under a private treaty selling system, selling takes place five days a week and in some instances traders could be trading seven days a week. It is most important that that information be available to fruit and vegetable growers daily, rather than once a week or three times a week. As Hon Phil Lockyer said, a grower in Carnarvon, the Ord River, Yanchep or Wanneroo, for example, needs that information daily. Also it is not good enough for the information to be provided by one trader. The report on the ABC is based on information provided by all traders and reflects the total market. Those who are close to growers will know that on occasions there is mistrust between growers and traders, depending on current events. In those circumstances growers tend to move from one trader to another, perhaps on a weekly or monthly basis. In the past growers have at times been taken for a ride by some traders; therefore, under the previous system marketing inspectors went to every firm in the market and collected information from each trader. Those inspectors would summarise the information received and pass it to the media. Most growers have obtained their information from that source.

The importance of growers receiving that information on price trends is particularly evident in isolated places such as Carnarvon and the Ord River, from where the produce must be transported to the metropolitan area. The cost of transport is not cheap and growers need to know exactly how much fruit to harvest and pack to send to market. The cost of transporting a one hundred case lot could be as much as \$50 or \$60, and if the bottom had fallen out of the market for a certain produce, the grower would not want to pick or sell that produce. Cartage, including the necessity to use refrigerated vehicles, is an important consideration to growers in isolated areas. The market reports provided some indication of the return growers could expect for their produce.

The whole market system for the sale of fruit and vegetables has a number of problems. Direct selling is increasing and the market system is somewhat fragmented. The industry is trying to entice more growers into the market system as opposed to direct selling, and growers probably do not receive the best price when selling their produce direct. All possible information and assistance that could lead to the re-establishment of a centralised system which would benefit growers should be supported. The information system that was formerly in place should have been expanded rather than reduced. The daily newspapers contain lists of prices paid for fruit and vegetable produce, and the daily summary represents information from all traders within the market system. That information was available on the radio in the past, but it is no longer available. The growers have been offered a changed system whereby the information will be available only one day a week. However, bearing in mind the speed at which market trends change, that information should be available five days a week. The auction system and the three day selling system are no longer in operation, and in their place is a five day selling system.

Approaches should be made to the ABC indicating that the one day a week service falls far short of growers' requirements. It is virtually asking farmers and growers to make an assessment on sending produce to the market one week in advance. They must try to anticipate the market for the following week on the basis of information provided each Thursday. They must also rely on information provided by only one trader, and that is wrong. Under that system growers are completely at the mercy of one trader. In the past they got feedback from all traders and a summary was made of that information. That

provided a much fairer summary and indicated to growers what produce they should pack and send to market. They also had some idea of the return they could expect, and were in a better position to make a good decision. Those who are involved in a market system, whether for fruit and vegetables or for livestock, will know what I am talking about. Hon John Caldwell referred to the sale of sheep at the moment and said that sometimes the traders do not want them. Therefore, a person could send produce from Camarvon, for example, only to find there was no market for it in the metropolitan area. On many occasions I have seen truckloads of fruit and vegetables thrown out at the market because they could not be sold. Growers have supplied, for example, 50 or 60 cases of lettuce and not one has been sold, even at a price of 50¢ for each crate of lettuce. They finish up on the floor of the market and are collected by the piggeries. Those are the difficulties being forced on the growers by the lack of market information.

The system should be improved and information should be provided five days a week to give growers a better indication of what produce they should harvest, prepare and send to market. The service certainly should not be reduced from three days a week to one day a week. I fully support the motion moved by Hon Bob Thomas and urge all members of the House to do the same.

**HON MURRAY MONTGOMERY (South West) [3.09 pm]:** I support the motion moved by Hon Bob Thomas. It is interesting to note that a few years ago the ABC started cutting back its services; it introduced networking from Sydney, and then decided to cut back the livestock reporting service. It is now attempting, against community wishes, to withdraw the service providing market information on fruit and vegetables. As Hon Phil Lockyer said, the ABC has a duty to the community to provide reports of the markets to producers to give them some indication of market trends. Market trends can change rapidly in the fruit and vegetable area; they may change from day to day.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: From hour to hour.

Hon MURRAY MONTGOMERY: Yes, very much so. I have had experience of delivering produce to the market and have seen the prices change not only from hour to hour but from minute to minute. I can understand why producers have requested that the ABC reinstate this service on a long term basis - not reinstate it and then gradually phase it out again so that producers are unable to follow the market trends.

Hon Bob Thomas indicated that information technology is expensive, and probably only those growers with large marketing operations are able to take advantage of the information technology facilities which are available. Were the ABC to think very hard about how it has taken away from producers a marketing tool, it would reconsider its decision in haste and reinstate this service. Agents are always out to make a quid for themselves, the same as everybody else, and I do not deny them that right because that is the name of the game, and that is their business; but if a service is available whereby information can be provided to producers rapidly, I believe that service should be provided.

The Metropolitan Market Trust has taken on a new role at Canning Vale, as Hon Sam Piantadosi said, in marketing on five and even up to seven days a week, and I am told that some agents are prepared to operate on that basis.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: And local traders.

Hon MURRAY MONTGOMERY: Therefore, it is important that deliveries be brought into that market. One must also look at the wider horticultural farming community and the communities where produce is grown, from Albany to Kununurra. Much of that produce does not end up in the Perth markets but is sold locally, and those producers need a guide today, not tomorrow or next week, or whenever they can get that information from other media outlets, so that they can sell their produce at today's prices. It is important to the growers who sell their produce locally that their prices are commensurate with those offered in the metropolitan area.

The ABC should do a turnaround and ensure that the service is not cut and that producers are able to obtain the information they so desperately need. The ABC should broadcast that information on a daily basis.

**HON MURIEL PATTERSON (South West) [3.14 pm]:** I support the motion, and I commend Hon Sam Piantadosi for his knowledge of the marketing system because it is quite

obvious that he has had a very close association with growers. Recently a large market complex was built at Canning Vale, which is indicative of the growing size of the fruit and vegetable industry, and the obvious expectation of further growth. Local and export sales of fruit and vegetables are of immense value to growers and, indeed, to the State, and every possible assistance should be given to this valuable industry. The combined gross value of fruit and vegetable sales in 1987-88 was \$162 979 million, which is not an insignificant amount. It is well documented that there are large areas of arid land in Western Australia, which makes it a necessity to increase productivity on agricultural land. It is not much good our increasing productivity if we are not able to sell our produce well. Most home gardeners would be aware of the sensitivity of growing produce, and farmers battle with soil balance, weather, diseases, and a multitude of creepy crawly insects bent on increasing their vitamin intake; and, of course, with Mr Keating. So surely growers are entitled to receive regular market reports for direction and wise marketing practices.

The Metropolitan Market Trust has been very explicit about the value of that market report, and has asked for help and support. The significant thing is that not only does the market report come through on the ABC but regional radio stations cover it as well. The Metropolitan Market Trust said in its letter -

Parts of the market report are also broadcast on two commercial regional radio stations which cover Carnarvon and pockets of the South West. The Country Hour is, however, widely recognised as being the State's "voice" for fruit and vegetable market information. As a result of these changes, the major growing regions of Geraldton and the Ord River/Kununurra as well as the South West will be without this service.

It is quite ridiculous to talk about using facsimile machines and modern technology for reports. Anyone who has had anything to do with producers and market growers would be well aware that the radio is invariably heard in the packing shed, on the tractor, and even out in the field. Therefore, I urge the Government to use its influence to have the fruit and vegetable market report reinstated on the ABC's "Country Hour". I support the motion.

**HON DOUG WENN (South West) [3.17 pm]:** I support the motion, and, like Hon Phil Lockyer, would like to thank Hon Bob Thomas for bringing this matter to our attention. Three years ago, a period of five minutes per day was given to this issue on the ABC. That was recently converted to two and a half minutes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So I am beginning to wonder whether the latest move has really come as the shock that we have taken it to be, because it seems to me this service has been cut back very slowly to the degree that it has now been removed completely, and the ABC was hoping that no one would notice. Thankfully it did not go unnoticed, and we have the opportunity today to voice our absolute protest to the ABC and to request that this program be retained for the benefit of the people of Western Australia.

Hon Phil Lockyer made the point that this program has been taken off the air because of funding cutbacks at the ABC. I believe it is actually due to program cuts. It has nothing to do with funding but with the way the ABC has been restructuring its programs for country and rural areas.

**Hon Barry House:** It is a matter of priorities, is it not?

**Hon DOUG WENN:** Yes; the ABC's priorities, not the priorities of people in the country. The ABC is giving more time to the cattle industry. It would probably say that is a larger industry than horticulture in Western Australia so it will look after the people in that industry more than people in the horticultural industry.

It has been made very clear by many, if not all, speakers today that growers cannot sit in their homes at 6.50 or 6.55 am to listen to a one or two minute program - and I do not know how much the Australian Broadcasting Corporation will fit into that short time anyway. It will have to say, "Here is the tomato report. We will tell you about apples and oranges tomorrow." It is not a great deal of time to allocate to the report, as Hon Sam Piantadosi and Hon Muriel Patterson said. At that time of the morning the growers are out on their tractors or working in their paddocks or sheds. It is important for the retailers, the wholesalers and the growers to know how the market stands, what the daily prices are and how they should be handling their product through their agents, without the agents having the sole right to know what is going on.

One group of people we have not mentioned is the consumers. The fruit and vegetable market report gives them some idea before they go to the store of what sort of prices they are covering by the time the produce leaves the grower and reaches the shelves. No-one else has mentioned the consumer, and I am happy that I have done so.

Most of the issues have been well covered by other speakers, but this is an important matter. It would be a disaster to broadcast the report only on the south west radio and in the few other areas mentioned by Hon Muriel Patterson. I do not know how far afield ABC radio can be received in the south west but I can assure members that in some parts one cannot receive it at all. It should be broadcast through many of the other ABC stations. In fact, I ask the ABC to retain its existing program and not reduce it any more for country listeners or for those people in the city who wish to listen to the report. It is all very well to say that those facilities are offered through a 008 number or fax service, or any other you-beaut electronic system, but I wonder whether once someone has made those calls and requested that information a charge would be imposed to cover the administration at the other end of the phone. That question has not been raised so far, but perhaps we should think about it. The ABC has all of the facilities available to broadcast exactly what we want to know and, if need be, to follow up phone calls by growers, wholesalers, retailers or whoever else is interested.

Again I thank Hon Bob Thomas for bringing this matter to our attention. I am aware of your concern too, Mr Deputy President (Hon J.M. Brown), as you also represent a country region, as do most of us in this House. I ask all members to take this matter very seriously, not only country members but those from the city as well. I support the motion.

**HON BARRY HOUSE** (South West) [3.23 pm]: I, too, support the motion and wish to reinforce the comments made by previous speakers from all sides of the House in stressing the importance of the Metropolitan Market Trust fruit and vegetable reports to Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio listeners in the south west.

The horticulture industry is a very rapidly growing industry and potentially a very valuable one. The two main centres in the south west at the moment are probably Manjimup and Donnybrook.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: And Margaret River.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The industry extends right through Margaret River, Busselton, Albany and Myalup, as has been mentioned. It is becoming a very extensive industry and the intensive land use which horticulture employs is certainly attracting many people and a great deal of industry to the south west.

I am not sure what is happening in the ABC these days, but it seems as though control of programming and operations has moved to city based decision makers who think the world starts and ends at Wanneroo and Armadale.

Hon Graham Edwards: You are not far wrong with the first one.

Hon Doug Wenn: Wanneroo, Armadale and Mandurah.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: That is true; there is a lot of horticulture everywhere so it is a very generalised problem. However, the ABC must understand that it is a taxpayer funded organisation and that country people pay taxes too and are entitled to these services. That is something which seems to have escaped some of the decision makers at the ABC in recent days.

By way of comparison, an answer was given yesterday to a question on notice I asked concerning education cutbacks. I asked this question of the Minister for Education -

- (1) Is the Minister aware of any educational programs on ABC radio and television which have been axed recently as a result of cuts in Federal Government expenditure?
- (2) If the answer is yes, how does the Western Australian Ministry of Education intend to cater for country students in particular, who rely heavily on those programs?

The answer was -

- (1) The Minister is aware that the ABC has announced cuts to educational broadcast programs in both radio and television.
- (2) This matter is of national concern and is currently under exploration by all State and Territory Ministers and Departments of Education in consultation with each other to identify what options are available.

I guess that is a satisfactory answer in general terms, and I certainly hope the Minister for Education in Western Australia is successful with his colleagues from around Australia in banging some sense into the decision makers at the ABC on that issue. Many primary school teachers rely very heavily on those programs in country regions to support their curricula and their teaching in the schools. That is just another instance where it appears as though expenditure cuts are headed in the wrong direction.

Like previous speakers I believe that the fruit and vegetable market report is a valuable and vitally important service and very worthwhile retaining. As the spokesman for regional development for the Liberal Party I consider that the ABC, as a taxpayer organisation, has an obligation to continue programs which cater for people across the length and breadth of Australia and not just for one sector of the community. I would certainly support the retention of a good rural service.

With so many speakers from all sides of politics supporting this motion, we cannot all be wrong. We are unanimous in our support, for once, so the ABC had better rethink. I oppose the intention of the ABC to cut these programs, and I support the motion.

**HON GARRY KELLY** (South Metropolitan) [3.28 pm]: I support the motion. I am no expert on the growing of fruit and vegetables, but I am a consumer and to that extent I am an expert.

I want to tackle this matter from the side of the provision of services to the community by the national broadcaster. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation comes in for a fair bit of criticism, but if we compare the sorts of programs being put out on commercial television with what has been broadcast on ABC television in the last two years, the commercials come a very poor second. I think that has something to do with the financial crises confronting the television networks.

However, this decision of the ABC to curtail its triweekly broadcasts of market information on ABC radio is a retrograde step. I do not think there is a mass audience for the report, and no-one in this Chamber or in the industry would pretend that there is; but this is not a ratings exercise. It is a matter of providing a service to a very important sector of the Western Australian economy, the horticulture industry, which employs a great many people.

Hon Sam Piantadosi interjected.

Hon GARRY KELLY: My colleague tells me it is the fastest growing sector of the economy. It provides a great deal of employment and performs a vital function in the State's economy, and those people are entitled to regular indications as to how the market is performing.

[Resolved, that motion be continued.]

Hon GARRY KELLY: It is very well to say to the industry that it can resort to information technology and obtain the information by punching a lap top computer or a personal computer at home -

Hon Barry House: It is a little difficult to carry a fax machine on a tractor.

Hon GARRY KELLY: It could be done. In remote parts of the State it would be unrealistic to expect growers to obtain fax machines and computers by which to obtain information. They should not have to make greater efforts to gain access to information.

The information was broadcast on a triweekly basis of three minutes a day; this was a total of nine minutes a week to provide a summary of the latest market information in the horticultural industry. That is not too onerous a task to expect the ABC to perform. The best thing about the service was that it was regular and those in the industry knew that three times a week they would receive a regular update as to how the market was performing. Hon Sam Piantadosi indicated that the industry is subjected to a fair amount of competition from interstate interests at the moment and it is important for growers to know how the market is performing. It behoves the ABC to reconsider its decision.



It was indicated by Hon Barry House that this is not an idea which is being considered because, as far as I am aware, the service was terminated on Monday. Therefore, we are confronted with a situation in which we cannot ask the ABC to further consider the decision; we can only ask it to reinstate the service. I became aware of this issue yesterday in discussions with Hon Jim Brown and Hon Bob Thomas, and at that time I scribbled down an alternative version of the motion that we are now considering. I offered this to Hon Bob Thomas and he rejected it on the ground that it was too brutal.

Hon George Cash: We would like to hear it; we might support yours!

Hon GARRY KELLY: I am not substituting the motion, but I believe that the House should disapprove of the decision made by the ABC. The decision was probably made on the ground of cost control, and this is an important factor in the management of any organisation. For the benefit of members I will read my alternative motion; it states -

That this House notes with concern the decision of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (effective from 17 September 1990) to discontinue the tri-weekly broadcasts of the fruit and vegetable reports from the Metropolitan Market Trust.

The House further notes that these broadcasts were an essential service to the horticultural industry particularly to those growers in remote parts of the State.

Accordingly, this House calls on the ABC to reverse this most unfortunate decision and restore this vital service to an important sector of the Western Australian economy.

Those words encapsulate my views. The ABC is a workhorse in the community which provides information to many sections of the community. I do not see that having to provide a service three times a week for three minutes each is too onerous a task. Hon Sam Piantadosi indicated that, when auctions were held three times a week the broadcast service was provided on the same basis. Now the market is operating on a daily basis, and for the report to be used at optimum value it should be provided at least five days a week. I am not suggesting that we ask the ABC to broadcast the report five days a week; however, it should at least retain what has operated for a long time. The ABC management should reconsider the criteria and basis on which it made its decision, and it should reverse that decision. It is unrealistic to expect growers and others in the industry to invest in sophisticated technology to obtain market information as the broadcasts provided a ready access to this information. I support the motion.

HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan) [3.36 pm]: I commend Hon Bob Thomas for moving this motion and I join with members from all over the State who have spoken to it. We have had a speaker from every region throughout the State, and that indicates the widespread concern for the extinction of this service; I hope that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation receives this message loud and clear. Those of us who live in the shadow of the ABC transmitting tower are equally concerned as those who live in the far north or the far south of the State. We have heard from Hon Sam Piantadosi speaking on behalf of the horticulturists in the North Metropolitan Region. We have heard from Hon Garry Kelly speaking from a different perspective, and I am sure that the market gardeners at Spearwood and Mandogalup will be grateful that he represents their interests through this motion. I rise as one of the members representing the East Metropolitan Region and I express the concerns of the orchardists in areas such as Roleystone, Karragullen, Carmel, Pickering Brook and Gidgegannup. I shall draw to the attention of the House the problems confronted by these fruit growers as a result of the ABC decision.

The areas of Karragullen, Pickering Brook and Carmel produce a very large proportion of the State's stone fruit, for both the domestic and overseas markets. Stone fruit production involves particular problems regarding marketing in that the fruit must be sold fresh. It cannot be refrigerated, as can some vegetables; it must be picked and marketed virtually on the same day as it tends to deteriorate rapidly. With some products it is possible to go to the market and, depending on the prevailing price, the producer can make a decision as to whether to take the produce back to the paddock; this is not possible with stone fruit. Therefore, stone fruit has a quick turnaround. There is a critical time in which the stone fruit must be picked; the fruit cannot be left on the tree for too long, and it cannot be picked too early and ripened artificially; there is only a short period in which the producer can capitalise on his produce.

A third problem the stone fruit grower faces is that at some crucial times of the year and from one season to another the difference between a profit and loss margin on his product is small. Therefore, given these problems, it is vital that the stone fruit grower, in particular, have access to information which is up to the minute and which allows him to make a decision from midday of one day to the next morning when he picks his fruit and delivers it to the market. Hence, the ABC's fruit and vegetable market report is crucial to stone fruit growers.

Hon Sam Piantadosi pointed out that those producers listen to the program in their packing sheds during the heat of the summer and then decide whether it will be profitable for them to pick their fruit or to leave it on the trees. The markets are important to both the producers in the hills area and the consumers throughout the metropolitan area who look forward to fresh fruit every day. The ABC fruit and vegetable market report is important not only because it provides a service to the producer and the consumer, but it also, as Hon Garry Kelly has said, provides an element of cost control in the industry.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: It is most important to housewives.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: It is important to every producer and consumer. Although I am representing the interests of the stone fruit growers of the East Metropolitan Region, this motion also illustrates the crucial importance of the program to the rest of the State. I support the motion.

HON TOM HELM (Mining and Pastoral) [3.42 pm]: I join with the rest of my colleagues in thanking Hon Bob Thomas for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I congratulate him for putting together a motion which has bipartisan support.

Hon Peter Foss: Hear, hear!

Hon TOM HELM: The greatest cause for concern in this motion outlines only one aspect of the duties of the ABC. The ABC exists to bring us together as a nation. A recent example of this occurred when the proposal to provide a national news program rather than have the ABC news broadcast from Perth was rejected. Until now the ABC has done a good job. Whether I am in my home in Hedland or whether I am in Perth carrying out my parliamentary duties, I always listen to the ABC.

I join with my colleague, Hon Phil Lockyer, in saying that Ted Bull does an excellent job in catering for city listeners. Our local announcers also do a good job in keeping us informed on the local scene as well as providing us with information detailing what is happening in the State. Gerry Gannon who runs the city based phone-in show on the ABC does a good job also. I do not know how he spends his time at home but wherever he goes in the Pilbara or the Kimberley - I know that he goes down to the south west because he mentions it - he always promotes the ABC.

The ABC is governed by bean counters and paper shufflers. The people in the bush - and this has been alluded to in another debate - are not only expected to produce many of the goods which are used elsewhere but they also have to put up with these bean counters and paper shufflers who do nothing to add to what is produced and done in the bush on behalf of the nation. They actually work in the negative.

Hon Kay Hallahan announced last week the proposal to establish a city in the north west to take the pressure off the metropolitan area. Both the Federal and State Governments are working towards relieving the pressure placed on the metropolitan area. We are aware of the difficulties being experienced in the metropolitan area, the way that the metropolitan area is turning in on itself and the way it is running short of water. Ernie Bridge has been tireless in promoting the proposal for the pipeline from the Ord River.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm*

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon TOM HELM: I mentioned earlier the work done by ABC radio announcer Gerry Gannon in the bush. I do not know what sort of wages he gets but I bump into him everywhere I go. He is always promoting the ABC, he shows his regard for people in the bush and is a very good public relations agent for the ABC. The ABC has regional stations in various areas. It has George Manning in Broome, and Peter Riley and Jenny Bassett in

Karratha. All those people are held in high regard. They really care about what is going on, and they tie the people in the bush to what is going on in the rest of the State.

Then we have what I describe as bean counters and paper shufflers, who look at balance sheets and say the need for services to be broadcast in the State is not as important as dollars and cents. I believe that is flying in the face of the evidence. A realisation by the population that the metropolitan area is feeding upon itself and is having all sorts of problems in expanding and taking care of the population growth is occurring here. Examples of that include building on water mounds, a shortage of water, sewerage problems and the plans which have been put forward in that regard, and the thrust of this Government, contained in the announcement by Hon Kay Hallahan last week about the proposed city in the north west to take some of the pressure off the metropolitan area. People in the north, who are the people I can speak about, do not ask those people who highlight the negative aspects for any help, necessarily, but we strongly object to their listing the negatives and withdrawing services, and perhaps underlining our isolation by refusing to provide a service such as the market information for fruit and vegetable growers.

Hon Ernie Bridge's proposal for the Ord River pipeline recognises the fact that we can populate the north, reduce our isolation and do something about the tyranny of distance so long as these people take their eyes away from the dollar signs. These people do not do anything positive. They should be encouraged to do something in a positive way and service the isolated areas; otherwise we as a nation, never mind a State, will feed upon ourselves. In my view that would lead to disaster. In the north the produce of the market gardens on the Ord River is flourishing. Those growers need that market report and an update of what is going on; in fact, it should be more comprehensive rather than being reduced. Despite the fact that much of their produce goes to overseas markets they still need to feed the people in the metropolitan area, and they must know what prices their produce will fetch when it comes down south.

The radio announcers who work for the ABC are dedicated to the task at hand, in spite of having to take all sorts of actions, such as that which Hon Philip Lockyer pointed out; that is, receiving clothes and food from Father Brian's appeal rather than giving to it. That is a facetious argument to some extent, but it demonstrates the reduced morale of those people, which is the important thing. The ABC is not a disembodied voice. It belongs to the people of the north, who have an understanding of the things those in isolated areas must put up with. That is an example of the dedication of those people; yet the consideration of dollars and cents overrides all and, like everything else in our society, we are being dictated to by people whose influence and thrust does not add anything to our community or our society.

I will give an example of the sorts of things which can be and are being done on the part of the ABC and the public relations work being done by its announcers, and particularly Gerry Gannon. I do not know if members have ever listened to Macca on a Sunday morning on the ABC. He broadcasts from 7.00 am to 10.00 am.

Hon George Cash: Barry MacKinnon?

Hon TOM HELM: It does not sound like Barry MacKinnon. It is broadcast from Sydney, and that program ties the people in Western Australia to the rest of the country. Even though people in the metropolitan area must be pitied for living in such conditions - because the city is overpopulated and beginning to feed on itself - they are still isolated from the major population centres in the east, and Macca on a Sunday morning ties together all those threads so that we understand we are part of a nation. The ABC regional network and the ABC based in Perth broadcast in a manner which ties us together as a State, and Macca on a Sunday morning ties us together as a nation so that we overcome the isolation. Australia is connected from the west coast to the east coast and from the north to the south by those broadcasts.

Hon Reg Davies: Does he broadcast the prices of vegetables and fruit?

Hon TOM HELM: He broadcasts anything - he will talk to anyone about anything. He reads poetry and sings Australian songs.

Hon B.L. Jones: Doesn't Hon Reg Davies listen to him? His education is incomplete!

Hon TOM HELM: I do not know if it is broadcast in the metropolitan area.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Garry Kelly): Order! This cross-Chamber chat is all very interesting, and I know members were going to comply with what I am about to say, but we are listening to Hon Tom Helm, who is speaking very informatively to the Chamber.

Hon TOM HELM: Thank you for your advice, Mr Deputy President. The bipartisan support for the motion moved by Hon Bob Thomas is a very nice change. The ABC will not be encouraged to change its attitude on this matter unless we are all of one mind about it. I am pointing out to non-country members the sorts of things we appreciate and which they miss out on. The whole point of trying to diversify our population and of getting the best out of this State is to encourage people to have a look at the isolated areas to see the things we are blessed with. I do not know how city people can stand the kind of weather we have had in Perth in the last week. The weather in the Pilbara is like an advertisement for Queensland. It is consistent. One always knows what tomorrow's weather will be like. The environment is safe and pollution free. People in the metropolitan area have many things to worry about. This sort of thing will be encouraged only if we continue to receive this service which the ABC has threatened to withdraw.

Previously I used the term "bean counters and paper shufflers" because that is an example of the sort of negative attitude we face. I will read a letter to the House to illustrate the kind of regard some people in the ABC have. I have never heard of this person before, but it is he who has determined whether or not we will get this program, not the people who actually go out and do what the ABC has a responsibility to do. Perhaps he is someone behind the scenes who has been instructed to write the letter, but I have never heard of him. The letter from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to the Metropolitan Market Trust reads -

Due to program cuts we are no longer able to broadcast the regular Fruit and Vegetable report.

A new program format for the Country Hour will begin on Monday 17th September, therefore the last Fruit and Vegetable report will be scheduled for Friday 14th September.

The letter was dated 10 September and was received on 11 September giving notice of action to be taken less than seven days away. The letter concludes -

May I take this opportunity to thank you and your organisation for your support over the past years.

That is great thanks! The report could not be broadcast without the help of the Metropolitan Market Trust and yet the Australian Broadcasting Corporation gave the trust only five days' notice of the cessation of that service. I wonder whether these people know what they are doing. I wonder what weight they place on the work of the announcers in isolated areas in ensuring the Australian Broadcasting Corporation fulfils its charter and responsibility.

The cessation of the program represents only one part of a major threat; that is, unless we continue our bipartisan support, unless we are able to demonstrate as a Parliament that these are the sorts of services we hold necessary and dear, the erosion of services will continue. I remind members that an effort was made to deregionalise the ABC news service; the intention was to broadcast the news from Sydney. Apart from the distance and the time frame involved, what relevance would Sydney news have to Perth? As a result of pressure by members of all political parties that change did not eventuate.

The general view is that we need to populate this country, and we should know how to exploit sustainable development; that is the catchcry these days. Mr Ernie Bridge supports the construction of a pipeline from the Ord River to the metropolitan area to alleviate the water shortage; however my argument is that we are only short on the distribution of water in the north. We have plenty of underground water. Hon Kay Hallahan, on behalf of the Government, has emphasised the need for a city in the north west to take the pressure off the metropolitan area. This is part and parcel of the problem, except no-one has told the people at the ABC how important it is for this nation, never mind the State, that all people be treated equally.

It is vitally important that the "Country Hour" program continue to be broadcast in all areas of this State. We should inform the ABC how strongly we feel about this. I support the motion and congratulate Mr Bob Thomas for bringing it forward.

**HON MARGARET McALEER** (Agricultural) [4.33 pm]: I support the motion, partly to make sure that the claim by Hon Derrick Tomlinson that every region should be represented is met. Although it may seem to members that the agricultural regions are more concerned with sheep, wool, pigs and cattle than with fruit and vegetables, that is not entirely true. It is important to remember that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has already tampered with one set of reports - on fruit and vegetables - and that other important reports on such matters as the sheep, wool or cattle market may follow.

Agricultural regions contain growing pockets of land worked by the fruit and vegetable industry; as the metropolitan area grows, fruit and vegetables are being pushed further north from Wanneroo to Gingin. It is envisaged the industry will gradually move up the coast even further. Of special interest in the context of the Metropolitan Market Trust letter to members is the fact that the letter specifies that the Geraldton region will be the one without a fruit and vegetable market report radio service of any kind now that the ABC program has ceased.

Geraldton has first and foremost a very important tomato industry; it is an old established industry and one which is continually going through ups and downs and renewing itself. These days that industry is largely carried on by Vietnamese people who have settled in the region; they are going through a pioneering stage all over again. The Vietnamese people are just as hard working as their forerunners who in the old days were Greek, Macedonian, or Italian and then joined by Australians. These days tomato growers are generally Vietnamese who have had to start all over again. They are finding the going difficult. They do not have a great deal of capital; they work very hard and for very long hours. Those people would be greatly deprived by the loss of this service.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has been tampering with the "Country Hour" for many months. One can only wonder in whose interests it is tampering; country people have been satisfied with the service provided by that program in the past. Those services may not have great appeal to people in the metropolitan area; however, as those programs targeted country people, the ABC has shown a great lack of consideration for country people in its general approach to that program and specifically in depriving us of the fruit and vegetable market reports. I support the motion.

**HON PETER FOSS** (East Metropolitan) [4.37 pm]: I support the motion. As Hon Derrick Tomlinson has said, the universal support for the motion by all regions of the State shows how seriously it is regarded by members and how widespread is the problem.

I refer to a district within my electorate that was not alluded to earlier - Pickering Brook - which is an important part of the stone fruit producing areas of the State. That area has another problem: The radio reception is not as good as one would like but at least it can be heard and one is able to get the market report.

It is not until we go through an exercise such as the House has done today that we appreciate to what degree the production of fruit and vegetables penetrates our whole social fabric within Western Australia. It is important to encourage this industry at this time of our financial straits in Australia because the growers involved are among the small businessmen who are very much affected by the serious financial situation we have at the moment. The last thing they need added to the other financial burdens placed on them is to have an invaluable market service withdrawn. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

**HON FRED McKENZIE** (East Metropolitan) [4.38 pm]: Mr Deputy President -

Hon Max Evans: You are going to move to adjourn!

Hon FRED McKENZIE: I am not. I wish to participate. I will not be outdone by members opposite. Two members from the East Metropolitan Region have spoken and I feel I should contribute to show the bipartisanship that exists in our region, certainly today and obviously every other week.

I pay tribute to you, Mr Deputy President (Hon J.M. Brown). It would be unusual for a President or Deputy President to vacate his seat to speak on an issue. I know that you were actively involved in framing the motion moved by Hon Bob Thomas. That is appropriate because you represent an agricultural region and I know that you are very proud of that region. The cessation of the ABC program the "Country Hour" will have a dramatic effect on the people you represent. It will have the same effect on all agricultural regions because even if commercial radio stations were to broadcast such a report it would not necessarily penetrate areas where the ABC programs can be heard.

I would not want the ABC to feel it is under attack in general terms because we all appreciate the services it provides for the community. We are all proud of the ABC, although I do not listen to the "Country Hour" because at the same time on another channel is "The World Today" a news segment which carries a lot of issues of a political nature. We are all avid ABC listeners in this place and I also belong to an organisation called "Friends of the ABC", which was formed a few years ago when the ABC was under attack. In this instance the ABC has its priorities wrong. However, we must acknowledge that it has suffered expenditure cuts and it must look at its programs. It would be a great pity to axe this particular segment.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: The problem relates to networking. Western Australia cops programs from the Eastern States. For instance, I cannot listen to even one race at Belmont, but I can get Flemington.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: I take the member's point about networking and the centralisation of services. That applies to television as well and is a retrograde step. It is a sign of the times and something we must suffer. It is most unfortunate that we lose local content in the process. The fruit and vegetable market report is a very important part of the day for the farming community. I welcome the bipartisan attitude of members and it is a great pity that we do not have anyone in the Public Gallery.

Hon Barry House: There was a bloke there a while ago but he was asleep.

Hon T.G. Butler: He did not know that Hon Fred McKenzie was going to speak.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: If there were people in the Public Gallery they would observe that we do not always squabble. It is heartening that we are all united on this issue. I support my two colleagues from the East Metropolitan Region who have spoken on the matter and I am sure I speak on behalf of Hon Tom Butler.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: He is concerned about the price of carrots.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: There is not much more I can say, but I do not want to be outdone - I heard what Hon Derrick Tomlinson and Hon Peter Foss had to say. Bipartisanship has extended to such a degree that Hon Robert Pike came across to me and suggested that I speak in order not to be outdone.

Hon R.G. Pike: You can never accuse me of not being bipartisan again.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: It is not often that Hon Robert Pike comes over from the other side of the House, but that demonstrates the concern that we all have for this problem. I can recall when the ABC television program "Countrywide" was under threat.

Hon N.F. Moore: It is still under threat.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: It is a great program and it is educational for people living in the metropolitan region as it gives them an appreciation of the difficulties faced by country people. If that program is to disappear that is further cause for concern. It is an excellent program and is put together well.

Hon Tom Helm: Some communities in the north do not get the ABC.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: That is another point which shows the importance of this Government enterprise because in reality it is funded by the Government.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Eight cents a person daily.

Hon FRED McKENZIE: It serves a useful purpose. I support the motion. I will convey to members the concern which has been expressed by the Deputy President (Hon J.M. Brown). It is most unusual for him to leave the Chair to speak, but if it had not been for his few words of wisdom the motion would not have been debated today. That has not gone unrecognised.

HON BOB THOMAS (South West) [4.45 pm]: I thank all members who have spoken to the motion today. I am sure the growers in my area will take some heart from that. I was concerned when I first heard about the ABC's decision to cut the fruit and vegetable market report. I was aware that the apple growers in the Manjimup area where I come from already suffer with apple scab and that the cannery was closing down its fruit processing side. This is just one more straw to break the camel's back. I thank those members who spoke for their spirit of bipartisanship. All the growers in Western Australia will take some comfort from

that fact. The ABC should note that at least one member from each region and a representative from each party has spoken on this issue. It is an important issue to most communities in this State. I was happy that Hon Phil Lockyer seconded this motion, because for my part I believe him to be one of the politicians from the other side who is more in touch with the electorate.

Hon Tom Helm: Hear, hear!

Hon BOB THOMAS: I may have put my foot in it, but I believe he is as close to a grass roots politician as anybody can be in this House. I was particularly pleased that he supported me. Perhaps it is significant that Hon Phil Lockyer and I spent some of our childhood in Mt Magnet. Hon Phil Lockyer is correct when he says that the growers are too busy in their packing sheds or out picking fruit to have recourse to those other forms of information technology proposed by the ABC. It was my experience in the Commonwealth Employment Service, where I spent some time helping to recruit labour for people in the horticultural industry, that I could contact anyone in that industry at lunchtime because they would be listening to the "Country Hour". Farmers are hands-on people not office people and I do not think the majority of them would utilise that more sophisticated information gathering process that the ABC has suggested.

I also acknowledge the contribution of Hon Sam Piantadosi, who gave us a technical overview of the marketing arrangements in this State. He has a depth of knowledge which complemented the arguments of other speakers. He also showed a good knowledge of the on-farm process between picking, packing and eventual delivery to the markets. One particularly pertinent point he made was that the information available from the fruit and vegetable report is also available in *The West Australian*. However, most producers in the country do not have access to *The West Australian* as it is delivered on the school bus either every couple of days or in some places once a week. In any event it would be delivered well and truly after the farmers had gone to work and after the process of making those decisions for the efficient functioning of their enterprises.

Hon Murray Montgomery expressed the support of the National Party for this motion and I appreciate that. It is important that the ABC is aware of that support. Hon Muriel Patterson showed a commonsense approach to this issue which is important. Hon Doug Wenn properly mentioned that consumers were disadvantaged by the withdrawal of this service because more people than we realise utilise this service in their daily shopping activities. I hope the ABC decision makers take note of that important point. Lamentably, Hon Barry House was too close to the truth when he mentioned that Perth based decision makers think that Western Australia starts and finishes at Armadale, Wanneroo and Midland. Fortunately our Government has a good balance of Ministers who come from the country in the form of Ernie Bridge, Jeff Carr, Pam Buchanan and David Smith to give Cabinet decisions some balance.

Hon N.F. Moore: Try to stick with the bipartisanship.

Hon BOB THOMAS: The issue raised by Hon Barry House strikes a chord with me. I happen to agree with him on part of that issue.

Hon Garry Kelly raised an important issue relating to the Western Australian market place and competition from interstate horticultural products. It was an issue that I had not thought about and I appreciate his contribution. Hon Derrick Tomlinson perceptively noted that the motion has the support of all parties and speakers from all regions. The ABC should take note of that. He also showed a good knowledge of the fruit and orchard industries in his electorate and the vagaries of selling in the marketplace. Stone fruits in particular are the most perishable of all fruit and vegetables, and their producers need as much information as possible to make decisions. They stand to lose a lot more than other growers in this industry if they do not have the right information. The ABC fruit and vegetable report is an important part of that decision making process.

Hon Tom Helm referred to Perth-based decision makers not being aware of the needs of country residents. Although I would probably use a lot less colourful language than the member -

Hon Tom Helm: Colourful?

Hon BOB THOMAS: I would certainly not refer to people as bean counters or paper shufflers. However, he made a very important and valid point.

I accept Hon Margaret McAleer's point about the cutting of the fruit and vegetable report. What will the ABC decide to cut next? What other important information service will it take from the agricultural industry?

Hon Graham Edwards: While cutting out an important service like this on the one hand, it is going to extremes of broadcasting some sections of the Federal Parliament. I am sure if you ask the people of Australia which service they wanted they would give a very clear cut answer.

Hon BOB THOMAS: I also acknowledge the contribution by Hon Peter Foss. Although he is only a new member of the East Metropolitan Region -

Hon Reg Davies: He is an old hand.

Hon BOB THOMAS: Perhaps I phrased that badly. Although he has only recently been elected to represent that region, he has quickly come to grips with it.

Hon Peter Foss: You are going too far, now.

Hon BOB THOMAS: I know he is doing a lot of work in Gidgegannup.

Hon Fred McKenzie showed he has a perception for this issue and provided some balance in his remarks. However, I was disappointed that Hon Fred McKenzie did not give us a dissertation on the parallels between the diminution of services provided by Westrail and the diminution of services provided by the ABC through these cuts.

Hon Fred McKenzie: Give me another go.

Hon BOB THOMAS: I reiterate that the operations of most growers in the horticultural industry are reasonably small. I gave figures to the Chamber earlier which indicate that 12 per cent of growers have a turnover of less than \$20 000 per annum and 43 per cent have a turnover of less than \$50 000 per annum. With that sort of turnover, they are not able to purchase the sort of information technology that the ABC believes they would use in their decision making process. If that is the basis for the decision to make these cuts, the ABC should think again. Growers are already lodging complaints with Donna Patterson from the Metropolitan Market Trust. She has had a number of complaints from growers who initially thought they had missed the report on Monday. She has also had feedback from growers' agents who have revealed that producers have contacted them and complained about the withdrawal of the service.

These cuts have been on the books for about six years. I think the ABC made the wrong decision and I urge it to review that decision and reinstate this very valuable service provided by the fruit and vegetable report on the "Country Hour".

Question put and passed.

## TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION AMENDMENT BILL

### *Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by Hon Graham Edwards (Minister for Police), read a first time.

### *Second Reading*

HON GRAHAM EDWARDS (North Metropolitan - Minister for Police) [4.58 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As honourable members will have noticed, this is a short and simple Bill and its sole intent is to clarify the power of the Minister for Transport to pay transport subsidies and to meet certain transport operation shortfalls.

Back in 1988, when the Crown Law Department was undertaking some work on the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act, the Crown Solicitor's office made the following observation -

It would in fact appear to be of doubt that for the purposes of Section 62(3)(a) of the Transport Co-ordination Act, the Eastern Goldfields service is a service for which the



Minister for Transport has a responsibility under the Transport Co-ordination Act 1966.

For a number of years, the Minister - through the Department of Transport - has met part of the operating shortfall of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board operations, together with a variety of other transport subsidies including:

- Regular road service subsidies in country regions;
- pensioner travel subsidy schemes in country towns;
- students travel subsidies from remote country locations;
- provision of multi purpose taxis to cater for disabled passengers, and so forth.

In view of the 1988 Crown Law observation, it was determined that the Transport Co-ordination Act should be amended to clarify the position, and to remove any doubts that might have existed relative to the various subsidy payments.

This Bill serves that purpose, and I commend it to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon George Cash (Leader of the Opposition).

## HERITAGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 19 September.

HON GARRY KELLY (South Metropolitan) [5.00 pm]: I have been following the debate on the heritage legislation for some time and I spoke to Hon Phillip Pandal's Bill last year when it was before this House. This issue has been around for some time and the number of Bills which have been introduced into the Parliament in relation to it have given rise to some confusion. Unfortunately, some misinformation has been circulating around the community about the heritage legislation. All members in this House would agree that there is a need for legislation to protect buildings of significant heritage value.

Legislation is really a little late in coming because buildings of significant heritage value have long since been demolished. Last year when I spoke to Hon Phillip Pandal's Bill I said that one of the greatest tragedies, with the possible exception of the Barracks, was the demolition of the old Esplanade Hotel. For some reason there was a rush to knock down that building and the developers succeeded in doing that. They sold the old wrought iron off the building and all that was left was a great hole in the ground. The site remained in that condition for two or three years.

Hon Peter Foss: It was far longer than that.

Hon GARRY KELLY: Time blurs the memory a little, but I know it was for a long time and that the Griffin building or Allendale Square now stands in its place.

Hon Peter Foss: It is the Griffin building.

Hon GARRY KELLY: Neither the Griffin building nor Allendale Square is an improvement. In the last 30 years of this century there has been a great deal of destruction of our built environment. The modern buildings look as though they came out of the same factory.

Hon Peter Foss: Not all of them. Allendale Square has some merit.

Hon GARRY KELLY: Mr Foss must concede that the modern buildings do not have any character. The activities of groups within the City of Perth, such as City Vision, is recognition that the city, although it is a beautiful city, has developed into a sterile place. Once the city workers go home at night there is not much life in the city. The city parents of Perth have a lot to answer for in the way in which they have allowed this city to be developed. Although they are striving to make the city viable, both environmentally and socially, they have certainly failed socially.

Fremantle was lucky because the development boom of the 1950s and 1960s passed it by. By the time developers saw Fremantle as ready for the picking, there was a move to retain Fremantle as a nineteenth century port city and groups like the Fremantle Society ensured

that Fremantle retained its character. It is now reaping the benefit of what occurred at that time. It is rather ironic that the west end of Fremantle has benefited because of the public policy of the day to extend the freeway system in the metropolitan area. A large area was set aside as reserves and, therefore, could not be touched because the land was required for the extension of the freeway system. It had the effect of preserving the buildings and I am sure they will remain for a long time to come if they are looked after properly.

Most of the members in this Parliament are aware of the need for heritage legislation. We may have missed the last tram in our attempts to preserve some buildings, but we can only deal now with the buildings that remain and this legislation, when it is on the Statute book, will help in that process.

The Opposition in another place indicated that there was a need for a compensation provision to enhance the legislation. My concern about this subject led me to approach the Minister's office to obtain the background and it is important that the House be made aware of that information. In April this year an argument was put to the Minister by various industry groups that the listing of heritage buildings would limit development and for that reason compensation provisions should be included in the Bill. The Minister, being the reasonable person she is, agreed to examine the question of compensation and those buildings which it was thought should be subject to compensation. The Building Owners and Managers Association of Australia Ltd, together with other interested groups, provided seven examples of buildings which, if listed on a register of heritage buildings, might cause economic loss to the owners of those buildings. These examples were buildings at 65 Rupert Street, Subiaco; 35 Rosebery Street, Jolimont; Dolfie House in Rokeby Road, Subiaco; the Nurses Memorial Centre, 34 Kings Park Road, West Perth; and Strathmore, 18 Chester Street, Subiaco. It seems that most of the buildings are in the western suburbs. Does the metropolitan area have other buildings of significance?

Hon Max Evans: The buildings in your area have been destroyed. Ours are still being preserved.

Hon GARRY KELLY: In the case of Fremantle, the buildings are being preserved. The other buildings listed were Tom Collins House, 9 Servetus Street, Swanbourne; and the MLC building, 171 St George's Terrace, Perth. The MLC building was the first skyscraper built in Perth.

Hon Max Evans: They want to preserve that?

Hon GARRY KELLY: Yes, they do. Recently I was speaking to an officer from the Minister's department and he told me that a debate ensued a few years ago in South Australia about when a structure becomes a building which requires heritage listing. Apparently in the early days of the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets the buildings were quite interesting edifices of octagonal design. The latest buildings have a type of bell tower at the front of them. However, Kentucky Fried Chicken was about to redevelop some of its original outlets in South Australia and a debate arose about whether they should be allowed to demolish one of the early vintage chook meat outlets.

Hon T.G. Butler: It was an original building.

Hon GARRY KELLY: Yes, it was and I do not know for how long the debate continued, but it was decided that it did not qualify for heritage listing and I presume it was demolished or redesigned.

The MLC Building was the first curtain wall construction in Western Australia.

Hon Max Evans: It was also the first fully air-conditioned building.

Hon GARRY KELLY: I accept Hon Max Evans' word for that. As it was the first curtain wall construction I suppose for that reason alone it should be preserved. Out of the seven examples of buildings which should be preserved, it was alleged that the owners of six of the buildings would suffer a financial loss and in the case of the MLC it was alleged the loss would be in the order of \$10.4 million. An analysis was done on the buildings and it revealed that in all of the case studies submitted by BOMA development consistent with conservation was possible without any financial disadvantage to the owners. In fact, even taking conservative scenarios, there was invariably a financial benefit to owners because of the incentive provisions of the heritage legislation. For example, with the MLC building,

demolition and redevelopment was costed at \$32 million, while refurbishment of the old building and construction of a new building at the rear of the site was costed at \$29 million, and that provided 1 700 square metres more of floor space.

The Opposition is apparently suggesting that the listing of a property is an economic disbenefit for the owner, who should be compensated for that. The effect of that would be to quarantine the building because if the community paid compensation for the building it would be buying back the development rights for the site. I assume that in the case referred to, compensation for the building would be assessed at \$10.4 million. By paying that compensation the Government would be buying the development rights from the owner, and development of the site would then be frozen. The building would be in a time warp. Presumably if it were necessary to spend money on the building, that too would be the State's responsibility. That is not a desirable situation.

My comments on Hon Phillip Penda's Bill indicated that the idea of preserving heritage buildings is not that they become museums, but that they should continue as living buildings and be part of the social and economic fabric of the city. It is all very well to have museums in our cities, and there is no doubt they have a place, but it would not be desirable to consign large parts of our cities to museum status. The payment of compensation in those circumstances is inappropriate.

In the case of the MLC building the compensation effect would allow the criteria relating to that development to be amended; that is, it would allow a second building to be constructed at the rear of the site and allow the old building to be refurbished and to continue to be used. The owner would have an asset in both buildings; the new building could be used, and the old building could be preserved and redesigned sympathetically so that its essential features were maintained, at the same time that it was being used. It would not become a sterile building.

I do not want to go through the details of the analysis carried out on the MLC building, but for the interest of members who may wish to read these figures and to learn how they were generated, I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* this two page document outlining the cost of the alternative development options of the MLC building.

[The material in appendix A was incorporated by leave of the House.]

[See page No 5483.]

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I ask the member to indicate what those costs were, to inform the debate. Also, I may wish to reply to some of them.

Hon GARRY KELLY: I will provide some information about the summary of the cost. The first option for this building was demolition and redevelopment: The demolition cost was \$1 million, redevelopment cost \$14 million, land component \$17 million - giving an all up cost of \$32 million. The second option was to develop at the rear of the site and refurbish the existing building: Refurbishing the old building was estimated to cost \$2 million, cost of construction of the new building \$10 million, land component \$17 million - making an overall cost of \$29 million. I have already stated that the retention and refurbishment option is preferable from a cost point of view, and in addition it will yield a further 1 700 square metres of lettable floor space. Although members may quibble about the method used in this analysis, certainly there is no doubt about the additional floor space from which income would be earned. By listing the MLC building under this option the owner of the building would be considerably advantaged.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Does the Bill provide special incentives?

Hon GARRY KELLY: Yes, it allows for the transfer of development rights and variation of plot ratios. For example, if a business had a listed building in one part of the city, it could transfer the development rights on that site to another site. The owner could keep the original building and transfer the rights; that would generate more revenue and enable the owner to refurbish the old building in a sympathetic way while at the same time to use the building. It would remain a living building.

I have analyses for the other six buildings but I do not think *Hansard* would appreciate my incorporating all these documents.

[See paper No 559.]

Hon GARRY KELLY: It is important for members to realise that the payment of compensation outright is not the best way to proceed. Of course, there is more than one way to skin a cat, but in this case I do not think it is desirable to skin the cat in the way suggested by the Opposition.

Development of the seven properties was presented to the Minister for her consideration because BOMA maintained that listing would result in economic loss for the owners of these buildings. That is why the analyses were carried out. The industry groups supplied the examples and set the rules. The results were not as BOMA wanted or expected, and it has now said it does not accept those results and has gone back to its original position. Apparently BOMA anticipated that the results of these analyses would vindicate its position. When the results did not do so, BOMA sought to back away from the view it held and said the examples it gave the Minister's office were not appropriate. It has tried to distance itself from those examples. In that way perhaps it is conceding the validity of the analyses carried out.

I am not saying it is easy to strike a balance between the needs of developers and the protection of heritage when drawing up this type of legislation; however, a reasonable balance has been struck in this Bill. Effective legislation is needed to conserve what is left of our built environment. As I said earlier, the desire of this heritage legislation is to preserve buildings of significance or, I guess to a certain extent, the sacred sites of the white community. Perhaps the white community in general does not respect the sacred sites of the Aborigines because looking around the city one sees that it does not really guard its own sacred sites particularly well in view of the transgressions and vandalism that have taken place in the past 30 years or so. The face of Perth and in particular St George's Terrace has changed markedly in that comparatively short time.

If buildings are to be preserved they must be used. It is no good sterilising parts of the city. In the heritage buildings that comprise the City of Fremantle I do not include Johnston Court, the tower block of flats which rises above my office and which is perhaps the exception that proves the rule.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: And the Fremantle Hospital.

Hon GARRY KELLY: The Fremantle Hospital is not as visible as Johnston Court.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I suggest the member stand in Solomon Street and look out towards Garden Island. It is an absolute blot on the cityscape.

Hon GARRY KELLY: I am not denying that, but Johnston Court is no adornment.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I do not argue with that.

Hon GARRY KELLY: Johnston Court is no adornment to the landscape or to the cityscape. A vigorous community debate ensued 10 years ago about whether Fremantle Hospital should be extended.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: They decided at about that time not to put Alcoa in Fremantle.

Hon GARRY KELLY: We are on a different tack - I am talking about a new building. It is fair to say in design terms that the style of building may have caused some anguish in Fremantle, but the siting of so many workers in Fremantle would have aided the city's economic well-being. I am sure that the workers at Alcoa would much prefer to be ensconced in Fremantle than be stuck at Booragoon, which does not have the same ambience.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: A decision of the Fremantle Council prevented that.

Hon GARRY KELLY: I realise that. I think even the Council recognised that it was trying to achieve a balance there. I am not sure that the balance tipped the right way in that instance. Perhaps with a bit more negotiation a more suitable compromise could have been reached. It is important that the buildings preserved remain in use and that these old buildings remain an integral part of the life of the city and are not quarantined or roped off from everyday use.

In conclusion I ask the Opposition to reconsider its position on the case for the need for compensation in the way expressed in the other place. Experience around this country and overseas indicates that compensation paid in the way the Opposition suggests is inimical to

preserving buildings. I do not think it is something we want to emulate in this State. There are more innovative and laterally thought out solutions to the question of providing, not direct payments, but incentives to preserve our old buildings.

I earnestly urge the Opposition to step back from its single-minded attempt to push ahead with monetary compensation because experience in Australia and overseas has shown that that is not the answer and it would be a great mistake if it were thrust upon this legislation. In fact, the Government would not accept it, so we will be in the position of the legislation being delayed and even more buildings being lost to future generations. I urge members to support the Bill.

**HON DERRICK TOMLINSON** (East Metropolitan) [5.25 pm]: Hon Garry Kelly raised three matters, two of which I will address now. The third matter is the question of compensation, which will be the subject of considerable and heated debate in this House at later stages of the Bill. Therefore, I will not engage in that discussion at this time.

The first of the other two matters relates to Hon Garry Kelly's question as to when a building or a place becomes deemed worthy of heritage preservation or conservation; the second to his statement about a need for legislation to preserve that which is left - suggesting, of course, that there is not much left of heritage value in this city or State. The focus of debate so far has been looking backwards with some degree of nostalgia, I venture to say, upon the colonial period and regretting the passing of buildings of that period. I wish to bring some balance to that debate.

I suggest that a large part of the heritage of this State in terms of buildings erected in the colonial period and the first half of this century is extant. I agree with the sentiments expressed in the Minister's second reading speech where she referred in the opening section to the pattern of cultural development which was unique and which reflected the location and the subculture emerging in Australia's western third. One cannot help but note and regret that we no longer have buildings such as The Public Office.

I will refer now to a particularly impressive volume published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press and written by George Seddon and David Ravine and titled, "A City and Its Setting - Images of Perth, Western Australia". This is a particularly valuable publication because not only does it have the written history of many of the buildings people would perhaps be moved to call heritage buildings in the City of Perth, but also has a worthwhile pictorial history.

One picture that catches my eye is "The Public Office", which was designed by Henry Willey Reveley. It was situated on St George's Terrace, on the present site of Council House. The building was later used by the Legislative Council and then the Department of Agriculture until it was demolished in 1961. I regret that that has been replaced by the edifice now known as Council House. It is not that I am critical of the architecture of Council House, as it is characteristic of its day, and in some respects, while others might deem it to be an ugly building, it is of some historic and cultural value in this city. I can provide members with many references from this volume to buildings which have been demolished and progressively replaced, and not just in the past 30 years.

The development of the city of Perth is a reflection of the economic wellbeing of this city. There were very few buildings in the early colonial period before 1850, when the history of Western Australia indicates that the colony was struggling financially. It was not until a decision was made to import convicts under the Pentonville scheme that the colony started to thrive as an agricultural centre. It was only in the 1890s, as a consequence of the gold rush in the Kalgoorlie/Coolgardie area, that the city of Perth began to develop some of those buildings which are now regarded as heritage buildings and which, I regret to say, have either been demolished in the past 20 years or are certain to be under threat of demolition. That was the first phase of growth of our city.

The second phase occurred in the 1950s, which corresponded with a period of great financial prosperity as a result of the boom, particularly in the wool markets, and that was reflected in the redevelopment of much of the city. A third boom coincided with the mineral exploitation in the 1960s and 1970s. The city changed with each of those phases of great economic prosperity, and during those periods older buildings made way for new buildings. Many of the buildings which were constructed in the early colonial period between 1829 and 1850,

and which exist today only in pictorial representation, were demolished and replaced in the 1890s and the first decade of this century by what were then substantial commercial edifices. So there was not merely a period of building but a period of deconstruction, when those colonial buildings were replaced by the buildings which we are now looking at with some nostalgia. Some of them are extant and some of them were demolished during the boom of the 1960s and 1970s and replaced by buildings which some people look at and say are ugly and not worthy of heritage preservation.

Hon Tom Helm: Did you say deconstruction? I have never heard of that.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Perhaps when the member joins the "Amalgamated Deconstruction Union" he will become very familiar with the deconstruction process, but it is the opposite of the construction process.

Hon Tom Helm: You were constructing your speech very well, except for deconstruction. I have never heard of that.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The member has now.

Hon Tom Helm: What is the difference between demolition and deconstruction?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: In terms of the hole that is left in the ground, not much.

I return to my comments on the period of demolition and construction, and the phases of Western Australian history, and, since records have been kept about very few of the buildings of the period 1829 to 1850, I will refer instead to the first period of prosperity of the colony post 1850. It is rather interesting that Seddon has listed in the appendix of his volume the major buildings of the period 1850 to 1889. Even though this will be tedious, I will read through this list because it is instructive. The first one is the Bishop's Palace, circa 1850, extant; in other words, it is still standing. The other buildings are: Mechanics' Institute, 1851, demolished; Mount House, 1851, demolished 1960; Colonial Hospital, 1852, extant; Perth Boy's School, circa 1854, extant; Perth Gaol, 1853, extant; Bishop Hale's School, part extant; Bishop Hale's House, 1859, part demolished in 1985; the Deanery, 1859, extant; Elderslie, 1850s, question mark, demolished; Government House, 1859 to 1864, extant; the Guard House, 1861, demolished 1960, so it stood for 99 years; J.H. Monger House, built 1861, demolished 1985; Pensioner Barracks, 1836 to 1867, and all we can say is that the archway is extant and unfortunately the rest has been demolished; St Mary's Cathedral, 1863, extant; First Trinity Church, 1864, extant; Town Hall, 1867 to 1870, extant; Freemasons Lodge, 1867, demolished; Wesley Church, 1867, extant; General Post Office, or Treasury Building, as it is now known, built 1874 plus, extant; St George's Cathedral, 1879 to 1888, extant; St George's Hall, which was spoken about by Hon Peter Foss, constructed in 1879, and unfortunately only the facade is standing; Royal Hotel, built in 1882, extant; Ozone Hotel, built in the 1880s, demolished 1985; Perth Railway Station, 1893 to 1897, extant, although I do not think there is a better word than bastardised; and Working Men's Institute, 1887, demolished. I hope that members were counting because I read out the names of 24 buildings, of which eight have been demolished, or deconstructed, and 16 are extant. That is quite remarkable.

Hon Tom Helm: You like the word deconstructed!

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Yes, I do because we need to bring that perspective into the debate. We regret that some of the attractive buildings that characterised the city of Perth, and particularly the colonial era of the city, have gone; but there is still much that remains and, Hon Garry Kelly would be pleased to observe, is in fact very much alive. They are not simply museum pieces or displays for the National Trust of Australia (WA) but are working and living buildings. All the buildings I referred to which are extant are in fact well and truly in use. Were I to extend that period into the first half of this century I would have to read a much longer list, which includes the Victoria Insurance Building, built in 1927, demolished 1986; Yorkshire House, circa 1930, demolished 1980; Capitol Theatre, which I have fond memories of, built in 1929 and demolished; and Colonial Mutual Life Building, built in 1936 and demolished in 1980.

While I can read of five buildings which have been demolished, I can see five times that number which are still very much part of the city of Perth. Much remains of the colonial character of Perth as demonstrated by the buildings of that period and of the first half of the twentieth century. In particular, the buildings of the first part of this century now attract the

greatest attention when people talk about the preservation or conservation of buildings. These are the targets of the heritage legislation.

I applaud the intention of maintaining that character in the city of Perth. I applaud the purposes of the Bill in that respect, but I reiterate that it is not just a case of too little too late. That is an oversimplification. When we look at the records of buildings demolished and those which are still very much a part of the life of our city, the weight is heavily in favour of the extant rather than the demolished buildings.

Hon Garry Kelly: You would find some trouble with that view if you looked at the Terrace as it was.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The Terrace has certainly changed. Like the honourable member, being of a similar age, I look back with nostalgia on the city of my youth and when I see the city of my advancing years, I regret, as elderly people do, the passing of time. I am not merely being facetious.

Hon Garry Kelly: The United Services Hotel was the oldest licensed building in Western Australia and they pulled that down. That building should have been preserved for that reason alone.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The United Services Hotel is an excellent example of a building which I look back on and say, "Was it not a pity that was not preserved?" The T & G building is another example. The interesting thing about the United Services Hotel is that what was demolished was a building with a new facade; the building was not the original building.

Hon Garry Kelly: I was not aware of that.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: While I agree with the concern that buildings such as the United Services Hotel were demolished - and that is what this Bill is all about - we must look at these buildings with a proper knowledge of their history rather than through the distorted, retrospective vision of nostalgia.

Hon Peter Foss: That building had undergone a lot of restoration over the years.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: That is also true for other buildings. Let us consider the Perth Railway Station. I am not particularly enamoured with some of the changes being imposed on that building now, but it has been modified progressively over the years. The Horseshoe Bridge and the Barrack Street Bridge and their attachments have been progressively modified. The history of modification is worth considering and worth preserving, because if a building cannot be preserved in its physical state it can be preserved in volumes such as that I have already referred to, *A City and its Setting*.

Hon Fred McKenzie: That is the point. Both those bridges were modified or they would have fallen down.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Of course. Likewise the Perth Town Hall has been modified and "uglified". The modification, particularly with regard to the granite in the archways, has produced an uglier facade than the original brick pillars and archways. I suspect that if that had not been done, however, the Town Hall would have fallen down.

Let me move to the second point Hon Garry Kelly raised. The focus has been upon the buildings, particularly those of our colonial period, and the desire to preserve them. A substantial number of major buildings in the Perth city block date from our colonial period. Hon Garry Kelly referred to the City of Fremantle, which did not undergo the same economic revolution as the city of Perth. Other speakers have referred to the towns of York, Albany and Toodyay. Parts of Geraldton and Greenough are also involved. Much of our history remains, and much of our colonial heritage is worthy of preservation.

Hon John Caldwell said he wondered what heritage meant, and he referred to a dictionary. I was moved by his speech to refer to a dictionary, and I went to the Macquarie Concise Dictionary where I found the definition which is most appropriate to this debate. It said: "The culture, traditions and national assets preserved from one generation to another."

I return to the history of Western Australia and refer again to these periods of boom in building which corresponded with periods of great economic prosperity. I look at the buildings constructed in the 1960s, and I take as an example Allendale Square, since

Hon Garry Kelly singled that building out as unworthy of preservation. I contrast the original edifice on the site of Council House with the present building. I suggest we need to ask what our successors will inherit from us.

We are talking about the characteristics of buildings and places of the colonial period or the gold rush period of Western Australia's history, and those periods were no more than three generations ago. This is a very young country and we are a very young State. We cannot compare ourselves with the hundreds of years of European history or the thousands of years of Asian history; unfortunately, the many thousands of years of our Aboriginal history are not characterised by the same cultural artefacts. We look upon the colonial period and the gold rush period with some degree of nostalgia. We appreciate their historical value and regret their passing, and we are moved to preserve those which remain; hence the motivation for the legislation we are now debating.

We look around at the buildings which have been constructed in the last 20 or 30 years - buildings which have replaced those which were demolished and whose passing we regret - and we say, "They are not worthy of preservation." I suspect that in the 1890s, when some of those early colonial buildings were to be replaced, those who were to replace them looked at the original buildings and said, "They are not worthy of preservation", and bowled them over and built in their place buildings which, in their estimation, were worthy of preservation. We now look at those buildings of the 1890 to 1910 period and we regret those which have been demolished. Some we look at and say, "They are not worthy of preservation. Demolish them and replace them with buildings which are more functional, and more appropriate to the style of life and business of the city today."

Hon Tom Helm: They are only concrete and glass.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: We say, "They are only concrete and glass". Even though they are only concrete and glass compared with the stone which was hewn from the quarry on Mt Eliza, underneath the site of the present War Memorial, and even though we say, "That stone in those buildings is much more beautiful than the concrete and glass of today", in fact it represents and characterises the culture and history of the period. Perhaps in three generations' time our successors will look upon those buildings and say, "They are worthy of preservation because they represent the history and culture of that time." I put it to the House that, when looking at heritage value, it is not just a question of being backward looking, because the reason for preservation is to pass on to succeeding generations those things which will become national assets preserved from one generation to the next.

In the listing of buildings of cultural heritage value we must guard against the tendency to allow nostalgia to determine that which is of value, and to balance that with a forward looking estimation of what, in our society today, represents the culture and ethos of our community. It is not merely a question of putting a heritage preservation order upon old buildings. There is also value in putting heritage preservation orders on new buildings, and I will give some examples of places I would preserve: Allendale Square would be one, the Narrows Bridge another, and I could go on.

Hon Max Evans: Parliament House?

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I would certainly preserve Parliament House. I would not allow one thing of it to be touched, other than to turn it around again.

Hon Tom Helm interjected.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I would only put the dynamite under "soom" people! I will try to regain my theme. To illustrate my point, I remind members of the teaching of literature that the older ones endured. The only poets worth reading were dead poets, so we were brought up on the poetry of the nineteenth century - Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth. Not only were we not encouraged to read live poets; we were discouraged from reading them, because live poets in that generation of schooling were not deemed to be worthy of consideration. Now, of course, we encourage people to read live poets as well as dead poets because it is through that appreciation of their cultural history that they come to an appreciation of themselves.

In looking at this heritage legislation it would be very shortsighted of us to look only at the colonial period and the gold rush period - the first half of this century - and say it is only those buildings, places and precincts which are worthy of preservation. I sincerely hope that



when the legislation passes into law the body charged with preserving the cultural heritage will look forward from the perspective of now instead of looking backward from the perspective of nostalgia. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Tom Helm.

### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

**HON KAY HALLAHAN** (East Metropolitan - Minister for Planning) [5.57 pm]: I move -  
That the House do now adjourn.

#### *Adjournment Debate - Parliamentary Privilege - Member for Peel's Allegations - Premier's Statement*

**HON R.G. PIKE** (North Metropolitan) [5.58 pm]: The House should not adjourn until it has considered the following information. Premier Lawrence has been very vocal recently about standards of behaviour and ethics in Parliament, saying that they need to be reformed. Some people have even said that she has the attributes of Joan of Arc on that question.

Yesterday in another place we had a despicable display of low behaviour and no ethics by the Labor Party member for Peel, Norman Marlborough, who made baseless allegations concerning the son of a Federal member of Parliament. The Premier - and I ask the House to note this - sat silent in the House while her colleague battered and broke every behavioural and ethical standard of the Parliament.

In order that the people of Western Australia can judge the Premier's ethics and integrity, and since, to be fair, it is possible I may be misjudging her, I take the opportunity to use this forum to publicly ask her to set aside what the community sees as her approval of Mr Marlborough's actions by her silence and to tell the people of Western Australia that she does not support that deplorable behaviour in Parliament.

Hon Fred McKenzie: I think the Premier has already done that.

Hon R.G. PIKE: If she has, so much the better. I have yet to see that.

Hon Tom Helm: There are none so blind as those who will not see.

Hon R.G. PIKE: Contrary to the statement by Hon Fred McKenzie, I have been monitoring the news media and she has not made a statement as far as I am aware. With my normal charitable attitude I have made the point that I could be misjudging the Premier, but if she does not speak out on the matter the public will condemn her for sitting silent. If the Premier does not make a statement, we will know what the Premier thinks about ethics and about a standard of behaviour for the Government - that is, "We will be ethical and upright but not this week." The facts of the matter will speak for themselves. It will be interesting to see whether the Premier makes a statement in regard to that despicable behaviour.

It will be a refreshing change in this place if the Minister in reply deals with the facts of the matter instead of retreading the personal attacks which have come my way during adjournment debates. I do not mind that at all, but it would be a refreshing change were the Minister to address the question. The real issue is that the Premier should make a statement and dissociate herself from this despicable behaviour instead of condoning it by her silence.

**HON KAY HALLAHAN** (East Metropolitan - Minister for Planning) [6.02 pm]: I am advised that the Premier has made a statement regarding the events in another place yesterday. However, I am absolutely astonished at the effrontery and gall of Hon Bob Pike in raising such a matter -

Hon R.G. Pike: This is exactly what I expected.

Hon KAY HALLAHAN: - because of the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition, Hon George Cash, in his denigration of Hon J.M. Berinson with no evidence whatsoever, and on a flimsy piece of material. I admit he referred to his own notes but that attack was without justification. It is no good for members to sit in this House and put themselves above other people's behaviour when the Leader of the Opposition in this House indulges in the most despicable behaviour I have ever seen. I wish those comments placed on Hon Bob Pike's

record of dissatisfaction with other members. Let us consider the behaviour of members in our own House.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.04 pm*

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## APPENDIX A

CASE 7 : MLC BUILDING, 171 ST GEORGES TERRACE PERTHHERITAGE LISTING

Assessed by the National Trust but not yet submitted to the Trust Council; on the Interim List of the Register of the National Estate (objection outstanding).

BOMA CASE

It is claimed that heritage listing would force the retention of the existing building, allowing no redevelopment, giving the site a value of \$6.6m. Given freedom to redevelop, the site itself is said to have a value of \$17m, giving a heritage listing penalty of \$10.4m.

PROCEDURE IF FULL COMPENSATION AVAILABLE

It is difficult to say how, should it be registered, an application to demolish this building would be treated by the Heritage Council: it would depend on the precise terms of the statement of significance. The range of possibilities encompasses total demolition after recording the significant features, through retention of an example of the curtain walling, to retention of the entire building.

The latter would be the worst case scenario for BOMA, and if after due processes had been followed consent to demolish was refused, a claim for compensation of \$10.4m would immediately be lodged.

ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE UNDER THE LEGISLATION

1. Conserve the building and transfer the development potential elsewhere. This would involve the transfer of  $4500\text{m}^2$ , or  $6200\text{m}^2$  if a bonus plot ratio was granted.

(BOMA evaluates the transfer of development rights and plot ratio option and concludes that a bonus of 61% would be required on an equivalent site, and that the sale value of these rights could be discounted in the property market by as much as 50%. It is claimed this could leave a shortfall in this case of \$5.2 to be absorbed or claimed by the owner. This is obviously a complex matter that would require a great deal of further discussion.)

2. The redevelopment option taking advantage of bonuses available under the Bill provides the option of retaining the building and developing the site to the rear with a plot ratio bonus, for example with a bonus of 1:

Standard plot ratio 5:1, $5 \times 1700\text{m}^2 =$	$8500\text{m}^2$	
Existing building	$400\text{m}^2$	
Available for new building	$4500\text{m}^2$	
Bonus plot ratio 6:1, $6 \times 1700\text{m}^2 =$	$10200\text{m}^2$	
Existing building	$400\text{m}^2$	
Available for new building	$6200\text{m}^2$	
a) demolish and redevelop		
Demolition cost	=	\$1
Redevelopment cost of $\$1650/\text{m}^2 \times 8500\text{m}^2$	=	\$14m
Land		= \$17m
		\$32m
b) refurbish existing and develop at rear		
Refurbish old building $\$500/\text{m}^2 \times 4000\text{m}^2$	=	\$2m
New building $\$1650/\text{m}^2 \times 6200\text{m}^2$	=	\$10m
Land		= \$17m
		\$29m

The retention and refurbishment option is comparable in cost to the demolition and redevelopment option and yields  $1700\text{m}^2$  more floor space. Doubling or even tripling the refurbishment costs retains the comparability of total cost.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows, albeit fairly crudely, that the legislation is capable of providing realistic alternatives to the simplistic approach of compensation.

On larger scale projects such as this one there would clearly be opportunities for the development industry to exercise its ingenuity in exploiting a Heritage Act, in doing so making financial gains as well as an improved image.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SCHOOLS - EDUCATION GRANTS

*Secondary and Primary Students*

758. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Will the education grants of \$100 for secondary students and \$50 for primary students be continued in 1991?
- (2) If so, how will the administration of the grant be handled?
- (3) Will the grant be paid to schools or parents?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

(1)-(3)

The Minister for Education has provided the following information -

Details of the education allowance for 1991 will be provided in the 1990-91 State Budget package to be tabled in Parliament later this month.

SINAGRA, MR - WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM

*Minister for Education Refusal*

823. Hon N.F. MOORE to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it correct that the Minister for Education has refused to accept a claim for workers' compensation on behalf of the late Mr Sinagra, formerly a school gardener, who was killed whilst working in a school garden?
- (2) If so, what are the reasons for this decision?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following answer -

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

EDUCATION MINISTRY - BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCES

*Application Forms*

841. Hon MARGARET McALEER to the Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education:

Recently the problem of availability of living away from home application forms was drawn to my attention. I believe that it is necessary to contact the Ministry for Education in Perth on each occasion to obtain each individual form. Would the Minister advise if consideration could be given to establishing a more ready method for the supply of living away from home allowance forms to families who require them?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

The Minister for Education has provided the following answer -

In relation to the availability of boarding away from home allowance forms, the present procedure is as follows -

- (1) The boarding away from home allowance form is supplied in bulk by the Ministry of Education to the Department of Employment, Education and Training.
- (2) The intending applicant contracts DEET for the appropriate assistance to isolated children scheme form.
- (3) If the applicant is determined by DEET to be eligible, DEET then provides the Western Australian Government's boarding away from home allowance form.

- (4) The boarding away from home allowance is paid only if the applicant also receives DEET's assistance to isolated children payment.
- (5) As a matter of good public relations, some boarding away from home allowance forms are provided by administrative services branch of the Ministry of Education when requested by members of the public.

In respect of the question of wider availability, the ministry has not given consideration to extending its provision of forms because responsibility for approval of both allowances lies with DEET, as indicated in (4) above. DEET's position as a single point of focus for the public reduces the likelihood of conflicting or inaccurate information being provided to applicants. The ministry will take up the matter with DEET as soon as practical.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### CAR THEFT - KALGOORLIE-BOULDER AREA

629. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police:

I refer to question 618 asked by Hon Norman Moore yesterday in which he asked the Minister for Police whether he was aware of a recent spate of car thefts in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area and, if so, was the Police Force paying special attention to the matter?

- (1) Has the Minister had an opportunity to be briefed on that matter?
- (2) If so, will he advise the House of the current situation and of any action that the police or his department is taking?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

I have not been briefed on the problem since the question was asked by Hon Norman Moore yesterday. I have a regular meeting with the police, which will take place next Monday. I will raise the matter then. The police are constantly taking action in this area. However, I believe that this matter should not just be left to the police. Unfortunately, many groups in the community wish to wash their hands of the difficult subject of car theft and are happy to leave it to the police to deal with this matter.

Hon Reg Davies: Is the Minister advocating vigilante groups?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: That interjection displays the level of intelligence I expect from the other side of the House. Members opposite say consistently that they are concerned about the job the police are doing but pay little attention to the reality of the problems with which the police have to deal.

Hon Reg Davies: The Minister has that down pat now; he says it every second day.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: And I will keep saying it.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Jim Brown): Order! If the member interjecting wishes to ask a question it would be better if he stood and did so.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: I will keep saying it as often as I need to in order to get the message through some of the thick skulls in this and the other place. Car theft is not a problem to be left merely to the police to deal with; it is a problem that must also be tackled by other sections of the community.

In my view, car manufacturers must shoulder a fair proportion of the responsibility. I am not suggesting vigilante action, but I believe other groups in the community should be taking steps to assist the police in this matter. If the Leader of the Opposition wants specific information on what has happened in the Kalgoorlie area, I am happy to provide it.

**CABINET - ALBANY LUNCHEON**

*Albany Chamber of Commerce Late Invitation - Question 848 Correction*

630. Hon KAY HALLAHAN:

I seek leave to table on behalf of the Premier a correction to the answer to Legislative Council question on notice 848 given on 18 September 1990.

Leave granted.

[See paper No 558.]

**POLICE - BUDGET CUTS**

631. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police:

I appreciate the Minister's response to my previous question. My concern is not only about car thefts in Kalgoorlie but about car thefts generally across Western Australia. I appreciate the advice tendered. Is it anticipated that cuts in real terms will be made to the police budget when it is announced by the Premier next week?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I am not in a position to answer that question in advance of the Budget. I am on the public record, I think of last week, as saying that this will be a difficult Budget. There is no doubt about this and the police will have to share the burden to be carried by every other department in the State.

**FIREARMS - CAR CHASE ARREST**

632. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Police:

I have a personal interest in the matter involving the arrest of persons in a car carrying firearms yesterday as my son watched that arrest. Has anything further been established about where those firearms came from, as this is a serious situation?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I believe the honourable member is referring to the situation his son witnessed where two people were apprehended in an efficient and dramatic way by two members of the Police Force who took them into custody. A shot was fired and when the vehicle was searched a number of weapons were discovered, which I think were shown on the front page of *The West Australian* today. They were high calibre weapons. It is disturbing to see such weapons about the place. I understand they may have found their way into this State from Queensland.

I know that the Queensland Minister has recently put legislation through the Queensland Parliament to provide some order to the firearms situation in that State. It is a refreshing change in attitude as prior to the change in Government last December there had been a longstanding refusal by the Queensland Government to address the problem of firearms; that State had no gun laws. That situation has been rectified and I understand the legislation, which goes some way towards addressing the problem, comes into effect on 1 January 1990. I believe Tasmania is the other State which is yet to address the matter of gun control.

A meeting of the Police Ministers' council is scheduled for the Northern Territory later this year. The question of uniform gun laws will again be addressed at that meeting. I am hopeful we will receive support for uniform gun laws because that seems to me to be the best way to control the use of firearms. Interestingly the Queensland Minister has indicated his support for uniform gun laws and that is welcome. Regardless of uniformity or what the other States are doing, we are currently addressing this situation and will give further consideration to our position once the Police Ministers' council meeting is concluded.

I envisage issuing some sort of a discussion paper before the end of the year

which will publicly address our gun laws. It will publicly canvas the need for change, and it will seek some public input into what that change should be. One of the great difficulties in achieving change is getting support from the gun lobby. The gun lobby, in the main, is a responsible group of people, and it is important, if we are to seek change in this regard, to consult with it and seek some input from it. I reiterate - I am sorry the answer is going on a little - that we still have the toughest gun laws in Australia, but tough gun laws, taken in isolation in States like Western Australia, will not prevent the illegal importation of weapons from other States, particularly when those States refuse to address the issue.

I thank the member for his interest. I know the personal interest he has in this matter, and I hope that answer will fully explain the situation to him.

**ARTS - WOMEN**  
*Under-representation*

633. Hon B.L. JONES to the Minister for The Arts:

Is the Minister aware of the concerns in the community that women seem to be very under-represented in the arts?

Hon KAY HALLAHAN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Department for the Arts is working to address that concern expressed by women from time to time to make sure that they have every opportunity to participate in arts activities. A major conference called Active Expressions; Women in the Arts, will be held in conjunction with the Women's Advisory Council from 3 to 6 October 1990, and that is something members could usefully involve themselves in. There will be Perth based activities, and also activities in other regional centres.

The themes will include looking at the representation of women in the arts, and sport as well, the nature of their work, and the media reflection of those activities. Among the speakers are Robyn Johnson of the ABC, dancer Chrissie Parrott, Marion Campbell and Dale Spender. The organisers have planned a thought provoking series of profiles and interviews which will explore creative relationships between women. A Department for the Arts events calendar for the summit is available to members now if they have an interest in it. I urge members to encourage the women in their electorates, particularly those following artistic and creative pursuits, to attend, because they may well find that their encouragement will be very much appreciated.

**CAR THEFT - POLICE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**  
*Security Systems*

634. Hon MAX EVANS to the Minister for Police:

Car stealing is becoming a burden on insurance policies throughout Australia. At the Police Ministers' conference later this year, will one of the subjects for discussion be whether we should fit new cars with alarm systems, or have better security systems? I believe some Scandinavian countries already have security systems installed. Has this been considered in this country? Would it need national laws or State laws to do this? I was in South Africa last year and I believe they have very good double electronic keys as well as an ordinary ignition key, and that is proving very satisfactory.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

I understand that question is being addressed at a meeting of Ministers for Transport. There is a great deal of interest in this matter. It has been discussed at previous Police Ministers' conferences. I am not sure whether it is on the agenda of the forthcoming one; I shall check that out and let the member know. If it is not, I shall certainly give consideration to more formally discussing the subject in that forum.



**FIREARMS ACT - AMENDMENTS**

635. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police :

I refer to the Minister's earlier answer to Hon Max Evans in regard to possible changes to the Firearms Act, and I ask him if he could give an idea of the likely direction of proposed changes on which he intends to seek public consultation?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

A couple of things spring to mind, such as the testing of a person's ability to handle a firearm, and to be fully aware of the safety requirements, not only of the firearm being purchased, but also of the general safe carriage of firearms. We must give some consideration to safe storage of firearms within the home. I do not support firearms being held at sporting clubs or at police stations, but I believe too many firearms are left unsecured in the home. These firearms become attractive targets for burglars.

As a matter of interest, in the Gingin area, as part of the community policing initiative - once again the police working closely with the community - people have come up with the idea of a secure, lockable cabinet in which firearms can be kept. The costs of these sorts of things have to be considered, but I would be keen to look closely at what has been done in Gingin in order to see whether something like that could not be implemented across the State. Whether that is achieved by way of legislation remains to be seen, but those are just a couple of the areas we have to address.

**FIREARMS ACT - TOUGHEST LEGISLATION**

*Uniform Legislation*

636. Hon GEORGE CASH to the Minister for Police:

Supplementary to my previous question, I ask -

- (1) Will the Minister agree that the current firearms legislation in Western Australia is more severe than that in any other State or territory in Australia?
- (2) Before any changes are proposed to the Firearms Act, will he give consideration to having those other States and Territories fall into line with the provisions of Western Australian legislation rather than imposing additional burdens on firearm owners in Western Australia?

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS replied:

(1)-(2)

I have already indicated my strong support for uniform gun laws. However, as members are aware, the greatest influence we can have is here in Western Australia where, with the support of the Opposition, we are in a position to change legislation. We will continue to push hard for uniform gun laws. It is recognised that the push has come from Western Australia. We have the toughest gun laws in Australia, but that is no reason to rest on our laurels. Tough as those gun laws are, they did not prevent firearms from being used in a couple of traumatic and horrific multiple shootings earlier this year. I do not know whether we will ever prevent those sorts of things from happening.

Hon Max Evans: You prevented them yesterday.

Hon GRAHAM EDWARDS: In the light of such occurrences, it is not good enough to say that we have the toughest legislation and we will not go any further. It is important for us to review the matter, even if at the end of the day we decide that the laws we have are appropriate for the time and that they can be reviewed again in a couple of years' time. However, I will not just sit back and not address the issue. I will address it, but in doing so I will be involving those people who have an interest in the matter, such as licensed firearm

dealers and shooting clubs of a sporting nature, so that they can have input. I am sure that if we address this matter correctly we will be in a position to have a good review. However, much of what may need to be done will be dependent upon the development of the Police Ministers' council.

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