

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 16 September 1980

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

RECREATION

Telecasts of Major Sporting Events: Petition

MR COWAN (Merredin) [4.31 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition from 143 residents of Lake Grace praying that the Parliament make representation to the proper authorities to ensure the live television broadcast of major sporting events be made available to all members of Western Australian communities.

The petition conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I certify accordingly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 17.)

STOCK (BRANDS AND MOVEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [4.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 28

Mr Clarko
Sir Charles Court
Mr Cowan
Mr Coyne
Mrs Craig
Mr Crane
Dr Dadour
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr McPharlin

Mr Mensaros
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Stephens
Mr Trethowan
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Young
Mr Blaikie

(Teller)

Noes 17

Mr Bridge
Mr B. T. Burke
Mr T. J. Burke
Mr Carr
Mr Davies
Mr H. D. Evans
Mr Harman
Mr Hodge
Mr Jamieson

Mr T. H. Jones
Mr McIver
Mr Parker
Mr Pearce
Mr Taylor
Mr Tonkin
Mr Wilson
Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes
Mr Shalders
Mr Grayden
Mr Sibson

Noes
Mr E. T. Evans
Mr Bryce
Mr Barnett

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry), and transmitted to the Council.

ESSENTIAL FOODSTUFFS AND COMMODITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [4.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [4.39 p.m.]: I regret I was not in the House on Thursday afternoon when this issue was debated, because I want to go on record as being strongly opposed to it. I am as strongly opposed to it now, as I was when it was introduced initially over 16 months ago. It was introduced as a stunt for a particular purpose.

By the time the Bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament, the reason for its introduction no longer remained. It was a disgraceful incident. The legislation has never been used in the 12 months it has been in force, and I doubt whether the Government would be game to use it in the next 12-month period during which it is intended to extend the life of the Bill.

Had we not discussed the Industrial Arbitration Act since then, and had not all kinds of things happened, the Government may reasonably claim there is some good cause to extend the legislation. But, there is no good cause whatsoever. No reason was provided by the Minister in his second reading speech, nor was it supplied when he replied to the very brief debate which took place last Thursday afternoon. Can the Minister provide any grounds to make us believe the

Government has good reason for continuing this kind of legislation?

When the legislation was introduced it was described as "draconian", and it is legislation which I believe should not be on the Statute book of this State. This kind of legislation suggests to the other States that we are conservative; that we are reactionary, and that the people who are running the State—and I refer to the people working for the State—are not getting a fair go.

It is quite clear to me the Government regarded this as handy legislation to have. I ask: Why was it not used during the whole of the period it has been on the Statute book? I thought there would have been some reason for the Government to use the legislation. However, I believe it was not game to use the legislation, and it will not be game to use it during the next 12 months. It was a panic stunt just before the election last year when the Government tried to show it was adopting a hard line, and that it intended to deal with the unions and bring them to heel, or to boot, and to make them knuckle under.

I have said time and time again that the Government should realise the unions are part of the community, and they should be used and not abused. If the unions are approached in a proper manner, instead of being abused as they constantly are, the Government would be surprised how helpful they could be.

This Government does not want to use the unions, it wants to get them out of the way. It has taken every possible action it reasonably could—and some unreasonable action as well—in its attempt to control the unions. We are going back to the times of the early 1960s when we had to have solicitors vetting the rules of the unions and raising all kinds of obstacles to ensure that the unions were, as the Government put it, "properly run". One or two unions might not have been playing the game; I am not saying that all unions are lilly white, the same as all business undertakings or all Governments are not lilly white. The fact remains that the Government was able to suggest that this kind of legislation was necessary. Of course, the Government was able to convince the community that it was necessary.

Already we are beginning to see some of the effect of the breakdown in union relationships with their members. People are beginning to come to me saying that they are no longer members of a union, and that the union will not help them. They ask whether I can help. Members can imagine the answer I give to them. I refer them to the Government, or to the Department of Labour and Industry. I tell them that the Government

should be able to help, and I tell them to ask the Government whether it is prepared to help.

This legislation has not been justified during the time it has been on our Statute book, and it was not justified when the Minister moved to extend it for a further period of 12 months. This is the type of legislation which leaves a nasty taste in one's mouth. It is the kind of reactionary legislation which the average Australian—conservative as he is, unfortunately—accepts. He likes to pretend it is not the kind of thing he likes, but does nothing about it.

I believe the Government is making a mistake. It is breaking an undertaking it gave when the legislation was introduced; that it was to remain in force until about this time this year—I think, 21 days after the sitting of the Thirtieth Parliament. That was a period in excess of 12 months. It was a disgraceful episode on the part of the Government. The legislation was not justified, and it should not be extended.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [4.44 p.m.]: The comments by the Leader of the Opposition rather amaze me. He said that the unions are part of the community, but he has to realise that people also are part of the community. When the Leader of the Opposition tells me that people have gone to him for help, and he has refused that help because those people have not been members of unions—or that is what he implied—I wonder what sort of member of Parliament he really is.

Surely there is nothing wrong with people wanting to be free to do what they want to do, and to decide whether or not they should belong to any particular organisation.

Mr Davies: That is nonsense, and you know it.

Mr O'CONNOR: I know that is the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition but we on this side of the House believe people should have freedom of choice. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware that this legislation was introduced to protect the community, and to ensure that when any extreme action is taken by militant unions the Government is able to ensure the provision of bread, milk, and other essential foodstuffs and commodities. I think members opposite would agree there is a need to provide these things, but they are not prepared to do so.

The Leader of the Opposition said the Government had not used this legislation during the past 12 months, but the need did not arise. He also said the provisions of this measure will not be used in the future. I can assure him that if the need arises we will use the legislation. We will not

be told what to do by union bosses, as is the Leader of the Opposition. We will provide the community with the freedom we believe they are entitled to.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 28

Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Sir Charles Court	Mr Nanovich
Mr Cowan	Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne	Mr Old
Mrs Craig	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Sodeman
Dr Dadour	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Young
Mr McPharlin	Mr Blaikie

(Teller)

Noes 20

Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bridge	Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr Harman	Mr Wilson
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Shalders	Mr E. T. Evans
Mr Grayden	Mr Bryce
Mr Sibson	Mr Grill

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (4): THIRD READING

1. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

2. Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Rushton (Minister for Transport), and transmitted to the Council.

3. Slaughter of Calves Restriction Act Repeal Bill.

4. Stallions Act Repeal Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

**CHANGE OF NAMES REGULATION
AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary) [4.52 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to transfer the issuing of change of name licences to the Registrar General subject to any directions given by the Chief Secretary so that these can be dealt with in the same office that is ordinarily responsible for the registration of names and at the same time modify the procedures involved in processing applications.

Approximately 750 persons annually avail themselves of the provisions of the Change of Names Regulation Act in order to be granted a change of name licence to correct mistakes made by parents at registration of birth, to anglicise foreign names, to minimise embarrassment to children with different surnames from a parent, and for various other reasons.

The original intent of the legislation passed in 1923 was to inhibit any change of name of men avoiding domestic responsibilities, thus increasing the burden on the State in supporting deserted wives. Mention was made at the time of the difficulties encountered by the police in tracing men who assumed a different name as, under common law, a man could change his name as often as he liked.

Methods available to the police in tracing persons are now much improved, but the problems of identification have not been eliminated completely.

The usage of the legislation has changed considerably since its enactment in 1923, and policy constraints have relaxed progressively to the stage where a change of name licence is now available almost at call for reasons already mentioned.

The Bill now before the House proposes to limit use of former married names where there has been a subsequent marriage, and exclude the use of former registered names under licence or deed poll where there is a subsequent licence or deed poll. The registered birth name of all persons would, however, still be available for use.

Prior to 25 May 1977 the procedure required that application be made to the Crown Law Department, where, after full examination, a recommendation was made to the Minister and the licence, if approved, was issued. If the licence was issued in respect of a person born or married in this State, it was necessary for a further

application to be made to the Registrar General to have the change of name responded to on the relevant birth or marriage registration.

In an effort to reduce inconvenience to the public and to speed up the procedures the function of issuing the licence was delegated to the Chief Secretary and the handling of applications to the Registrar General on 25 May 1977.

It is now proposed further to simplify and speed up the procedure by transferring the authority to issue change of name licences to the Registrar General acting within limits imposed by any direction given by the Chief Secretary. Generally, a licence is required urgently for marriage, passports, or a child commencing school. Discrepancies or inconsistencies in a person's name often become apparent only when an extract of birth is obtained from the Registrar General for one of the abovementioned purposes.

There would be a rearrangement for processing applications to change a name, which would result in more efficient procedures and better service to the public.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Jamieson.

BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY COMPANY LIMITED AGREEMENTS (VARIATION) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [4.56 p.m.]: This Bill seeks to amend the legislation relating to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited agreement which was first passed by this House well over a quarter of a century ago—in fact, in 1952; some 28 years ago. On that occasion the Liberal-Country Party Government of the day approached Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited with the intention of persuading that company to enter into the development of the resources of Western Australia.

When the Bill was first introduced into the House the then Minister made these observations—

The Bill when it becomes an Act will inaugurate in Western Australia the second largest piece of industrial development that has taken place.

A little later on he said—

. . . it will involve the greatest capital expenditure outside the enterprise that has been agreed upon—

He is referring to the Anglo-Iranian petroleum industry of Kwinana. To continue—

—and secondly, it will have the most important ultimate effects on the State's economy and industrial capacity.

That is fairly emotive language, but it is the jargon of Ministers for Industrial Development. A little later on I will refer to comments from another Minister which were even a little more emotive, but statements similar to those we have heard here on many occasions.

Firstly, let us go back to the agreement of 1952 and look at what it sought to do. On that occasion the Government made an arrangement with Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited to make available 600 acres of land at Kwinana for the company to purchase from the Government after the Government had arranged with private people and with the Commonwealth Government to acquire the land. That 600 acres was to be used as a site for a rolling mill which had to be installed by BHP under the agreement of 1952. The Government agreed to undertake some work on the wharf as well as some dredging in the area.

It was resolved subsequently that the Government of the day would grant to Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited a lease of the Koolan Island iron ore deposits on the basis of a 50-year lease with an option to extend for another 21 years. It was in the agreement also that BHP would take over the lease of Cockatoo Island which it held already on a similar basis to that of Koolan Island. In other words, at that time Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited was given complete ownership and control of iron ore deposits in two very well located areas of Western Australia—deposits which contain in excess of 100 million tonnes of iron ore—for over 71 years.

When members recall the location of these two islands, they will realise they are in a very handy position when it comes to the extracting and transhipment of ore. The situation there is much different from some of the developments which took place later in the hinterland of the Pilbara, where large scale railway works over long distances were required to haul the iron ore to the ports.

Eight years later, in 1960, this Act was again under debate in this House. On that occasion, the amending Bill was brought forward on behalf of the Liberal-Country Party Government by the newly appointed Minister for Industrial Development, and now Premier. He opened his remarks with the following observations—

The agreement which the Bill seeks to ratify is probably the most important

secondary industry agreement made in the State's history . . .

The agreement provides for a fully integrated iron and steel industry to be established in Western Australia. It provides for an industry which can be classed as large in anybody's language. It is made with a great Australian company which has demonstrated its technical, industrial, and commercial capacity. Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. is the biggest and most outstanding of all Australian companies.

If members wish to appreciate the jargon on resource development of the then Minister for Industrial Development and now Premier of this State, I recommend they read the rest of that speech. I am sure all members are well aware of the flowery words and the promises which have been made *ad nauseam* by the Premier over the last 25 years.

In the same speech in 1960, the now Premier stated as follows—

Briefly stated, the agreement provides—

The establishment of an integrated iron and steel industry at Kwinana at a cost of not less than £40,000,000 the whole of which money will be provided by B.H.P.

The company also undertakes to provide production capacity of not less than—

Blast furnace capacity of not less than 450 000 tons of basic iron a year. This would involve processing approximately 800 000 tons of iron ore a year.

Steel-making plant.

Rolling mill or mills with capacity not less than 330 000 tons a year.

Ancillary plant and other development work at Kwinana.

Additional wharf facilities.

Mr Davies: It is very unfair of you to remind members opposite of all this.

Mr HARMAN: As part of the 1960 amendment, BHP obtained the leases of the Koolyanobbing iron ore deposits, situated north of Southern Cross on the way to Kalgoorlie. Under the 1952 agreement, these leases had been frozen for 10 years, and no allocation was to be made except for the quantity of ore needed to supply Wundowie. However, in 1960 this deposit in

excess of 100 000 tonnes of iron ore was made available to BHP.

Mr Mensaros: An amount of 100 000 tonnes would equal one shipload.

Mr HARMAN: I am sorry; I should have said 100 million tonnes. In addition, the company was given rights to any other minerals it may find on those leases, or the leases in an adjacent area.

So, by the year 1960, the Liberal-Country Party Government of this State had handed over—virtually forever—to BHP access to iron ore deposits in excess of 200 million tonnes. In return, BHP was to provide Western Australia with a rolling mill, a blast furnace, and an integrated iron and steel industry.

After all these years, what do we have? We have a blast furnace at Kwinana which converts Koolyanobbing iron ore into pig iron. The pig iron is then sent to the Eastern States and converted into steel billets which, in turn, are returned to Kwinana, where the rolling mill converts them into star pickets, which are common angle iron fence posts. That is all we have after 28 years of negotiations by this Liberal-Country Party Government. Western Australia does not have an integrated iron and steel industry, as promised in 1960 by the then Minister for Industrial Development, and now Premier.

It is no wonder we feel constrained to protest at the ineptitude of the Government. It has given to BHP a tremendous amount of Western Australia's natural resources, comprising millions and millions of tonnes of iron ore deposits.

This illustrates to the people of Western Australia how shallow and hollow have been the promises of our Premier, not only as Premier of this State but also as Minister for Industrial Development. He has hoodwinked the people of this State into expecting that "within a decade" or "within the next few years" or "within the reasonably near future" a steel mill would be constructed in Western Australia. This Bill serves to point out just how shallow and hollow have been these extravagant promises of the Premier—promises he knew could never be brought to fruition. They were simply dreams, and illustrate how this man romances when it comes to the development of the resources of this country.

When we examine what this Bill proposes to do, we understand the extent to which this Government has developed the natural resources in Western Australia; it does not amount to a great deal. Firstly, let us consider what the Bill proposes to do, bearing in mind that BHP was party to an agreement that, by 1978, it should

provide an integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia. This Bill seeks to remove clause 3 of the 1960 agreement. The Bill states as follows—

The Principal Agreement is hereby varied as to Clause 3—

Clause 3 of the 1960 agreement states as follows—

3. The Company hereby covenants and agrees with the State that—

- (a) the Company will within the time hereinafter limited construct and install on the works site a blast furnace of modern design and construction having a production capacity of not less than 450,000 tons per annum of basic pig iron or equivalent foundry iron together with all necessary ancillary buildings works plant and equipment and all other works associated therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto;
- (b) the Company shall complete the said construction and installation of such blast furnace and ancillary equipment to the stage of readiness for production before the production date;

The company did provide a blast furnace, but I am not sure whether it has been a successful operation for the company. I do not know whether it was constructed at the insistence of the Government, bearing in mind some remarks I will make later; I was not privy to the discussions held at that time between the then Minister for Industrial Development and BHP. In any event, a blast furnace was established at Kwinana.

The third paragraph of the 1960 agreement is the important one, and the one which is being amended by this Bill. It states as follows—

- (c) the Company shall take all necessary steps to ensure that it shall complete to the stage of readiness for production before the expiration of 10 years after the production date the construction and installation on the works site of steel making facilities and a new rolling mill in a new or extended building or buildings and all necessary ancillary works and equipment of modern design and construction capable of producing in conjunction with the blast furnace and steel making facilities (on a working

basis normally applicable to rolling mills in Australia) together with the production from the rolling mill already in operation on the works site not less than 330,000 tons of finished products per annum;

This is to be amended by this Bill with the substitution of the following paragraph—

- (c) (i) the Company shall carry out an ongoing programme of investigation into the technical and economic feasibility of establishing steel making facilities within the said State;

We are to be returned to where we were in 1952. The underlying principle of the 1952 Act passed by this House was the ultimate establishment in Western Australia of an integrated iron and steel industry. Inherent in the 1952 legislation was the understanding that BHP would undertake feasibility studies into the coking potential of Collie coal, and the economics of establishing a steel mill in Western Australia. Now, after 28 years, we are back to where we started from, which must be some sort of record for this Government.

The second part of the new paragraph states as follows—

- (ii) the Company shall keep the State fully informed concerning investigations carried out pursuant to sub-paragraph (i) of this paragraph and shall when required by the Minister so to do but not more frequently than at three yearly intervals submit a detailed report to the Minister concerning such investigations and shall when so required by the Minister consult with him with respect to such detailed report;

What we have now is a situation where BHP, having got these massive iron ore deposits, will go off and make inquiries into the establishment of a steel mill in Western Australia, and in three years' time it will return to see the Minister for Industrial Development and give him a report. If the company says the establishment of such a mill is not viable at that time, off it will go again and it will be given another three years or whatever time the Minister allows until he wants to talk with the company again.

This situation is a long way from that promised by our Premier in 1960 when he said that BHP, in

return for its Koolyanobbing leases and its previous arrangements, would establish a fully integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia. But after 28 years have elapsed, this is the situation to which we have come. The Government must surely be proud of its record!

It must be said in defence of BHP that since 1978 there has been a recession in the steel industry throughout the world. I gained first hand knowledge of this after travelling through Europe recently. I saw that the steel mills in Europe, England, and America were all affected by this recession. A reading of various reports has indicated that Japan also has been affected. All the steel industries in these countries are working below capacity and have done so for several years. There does not seem to be any indication of a pick-up in the production of steel throughout the world. Even here in Australia BHP itself has reported a reduction in the amount of steel being manufactured by that company. At the same time, however, the company is looking at the possibility of opening works in other parts of Australia; but there is no mention of anything being done in Western Australia. Up till now the company has been committed to doing certain things under legislation and agreements agreed to by this House.

Recently we heard the Premier saying that by the end of the 1980s there would be a fully integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia and that the Parliament would be passing legislation allowing BHP another three years to consider the feasibility and economics of a steel mill in Western Australia. However, at the same time, we have had this recession throughout the steel industry.

In fact, the Premier is still up to his old tricks of building up the expectation in people's minds that we would have a fully integrated iron and steel mill by the end of the 1980s. But will this be true; will we have one? It is difficult for me, and for any reasoning person, to say that we would have one by the end of the 1980s, bearing in mind the sort of legislation Parliament has been asked to pass and the world situation as it is.

The Premier cannot have it both ways. I realise that it is nice to be optimistic about development, but we do not have to be charlatans. One should say precisely and with full knowledge that certain things are likely to occur. It is not good enough for the Premier to race off to the newspapers after a trip overseas and to say that we will have a fully integrated iron and steel industry by the end of the 1980s. This is certainly not the case when we consider the recession throughout the world and the sort of legislation we have now.

This legislation demonstrates the ineptitude of the Government, and particularly its leader. The Premier was responsible for this matter for many years, as Minister for Industrial Development, and this Bill indicates his ineptitude in negotiating with a company as large as BHP. He promised in those days that Western Australia would have an integrated iron and steel industry in 20 years, but he has been unable to deliver the goods. The current situation certainly lays bare all the promises he made over the years whilst building up the expectations of the people, and this when he must have been aware that he was romancing.

In making this protest the Opposition is endeavouring to illustrate exactly what has happened with respect to the establishment of an iron and steel industry in Western Australia. The subject has been discussed in a book written by a Mr Barnett entitled *Minerals and Energy in Australia*. His comments are interesting and ought to be recorded in *Hansard*. I shall quote from page 195 of his book as follows—

In 1958, BHP announced it would build an integrated steelworks at Whyalla in return for an extension of existing leases and the granting of new leases over a much larger area of iron-bearing country. By 1970, its steelmaking capacity had reached 1 million tonnes, while the shipyards had totalled 750 000 tonnes output and were working on a series of 55 000 dead-weight tonne bulk carriers. The population had increased to 30 000. Australia's shipbuilding industry has since all but foundered and these facilities are being run down.

A second move away from New South Wales came in 1954 when BHP established a rolling mill at Kwinana, 32 kilometres south of Perth, Western Australia, in exchange for leases from the Western Australian government over the Yampi Sound iron ore deposits. In 1960, BHP agreed to establish a 600 000 tonne capacity blast furnace at Kwinana in return for leases over the iron ore deposit at Koolyanobbing, about 500 kilometres east of Perth.

Further on it states—

Although the construction of small iron and steelmaking facilities in South Australia and Western Australia obviously benefited the development of the two states, they are not without cost to Australia as a whole. The Industries Assistance Commission has suggested that the high cost of Australian iron and steel is because BHP has too many small iron and steel plants. The Industries

Assistance Commission estimated that pig iron produced from a blast furnace of less than 1 500 cubic metres capacity would cost more than twice as much as pig iron produced in a furnace of 3 000 cubic metres capacity. Ten of BHP's twelve blast furnaces are smaller than 1 500 cubic metres. The blast furnaces at Kwinana and Whyalla are obviously high cost, but so too are most of the furnaces at Newcastle. Similar cost disadvantages may exist for the small steel-making, rolling and finishing plants built or planned at Whyalla and Kwinana. In addition, the small boats that bring iron ore, coke and semi-finished iron and steel to or from Kwinana and Whyalla increase freight costs which, in turn, increase the price of Australian steel. It is twice as expensive to ship iron ore from Port Hedland to Port Kembla in 18 000 dead-weight tonne vessels as it is in 100 000 dead-weight tonne ships and twice as expensive again in 11 500 dead-weight tonne boats. It is estimated that if larger boats had been used in 1974 and the crews' pay and productivity were comparable to the Scandinavian's (that is, lower salaries and higher productivity rates), the freight savings to BHP would have exceeded \$16 million.

Since Western Australia does not have coking coal, coal has to be imported from New South Wales, but this can be largely accomplished by backloading ore carriers.

That is an indication of what has happened over the last 28 years. It would be foolish of me and the Opposition to suggest that it would be all plain sailing for BHP to establish an integrated iron and steel industry in Western Australia. Considering the advances in technology over the past years, and particularly the last 10 years, it is obvious that the way the Premier saw this industry occurring in 1960 is not the way it would develop now. But it is a principle of the Australian Labor Party that if we are to have an iron and steel industry in this State, it should be developed very carefully with very careful planning so that the infrastructure costs are such that the majority of Western Australians would obtain a benefit from them. We do not believe there should be some sort of one-off steel mill associated with one particular company and developed on an *ad hoc* basis. We believe that if we had an opportunity in Government we would be able to get together the companies involved, both in this State and overseas, so that we could have developed an integrated iron and steel

industry in this State on the basis that a majority of Western Australians should benefit from it.

It is a great pity that we are debating this particular piece of legislation now, as the industry was first mooted 28 years ago. The establishment of such an industry seems to have been taken from us; we cannot see it on the horizon now. This is certainly so when we have the Government saying, "Pass this legislation and let the company go away so that it may then come back in three year's time with a report on what has occurred during those three years."

That is not good enough. We believe something better could be achieved and for that reason we make this protest.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [5.28 p.m.]: What my colleague, the member for Maylands, has just said about the situation being very unsatisfactory should be enlarged upon, because one has only to look back to the more recent agreement of 1962 to realise BHP was given considerable concessions for the purpose of doing something in this State. Because of what the company was to do, the then Minister for Industrial Development, who is the present Premier, put a con job over the people of this State.

For instance, among other things in the 1960 agreement, the following can be found—

- (a) a sole and exclusive right to prospect for and obtain iron ore, pyrites and other iron bearing substances; and
- (b) a sole and exclusive right to prospect for all other metals, minerals and natural substances.

This was in respect of the leases around Koolyanobbing granted to the company. This was to be for a period of 50 years, plus extensions for 21 years. When one considers the royalties which have been set out, one will note that 1s.6d. per ton is one figure and the other is: "sixpence per ton for jaspilite and/or haematite quartzite, pyrites and other iron-bearing substances of a similar grade, which without beneficiation (all of which ores and substances are hereinafter referred to as "low grade iron ore") are transported from the leased areas."

They were reasonable assessments considering the amount and variety of minerals that were likely to be found in this particular area around Koolyanobbing. If the legislation dealt with that matter only, one would have said that the

agreement for an integrated steel mill for Western Australia was a good one. Very few of these agreements will come to fruition unless the Government ensures by force that the agreements are kept.

The object of the legislation was to have an integrated steelworks in Western Australia. In his introduction to this Bill, the Minister mentioned that \$40 million had been spent. I guess in days past \$40 million could have provided an integrated steel mill. However, that amount would be nowhere near what would be required today. The amount of money required would have to be subject to the consideration of the inflationary spiral which has taken place since the 1952 agreement and, indeed, the 1960 agreement. There was also an agreement in 1952 which provided for mining at Koolyanobbing and the two islands in Yampi Sound, Koolan Island and Irvine Island. There had already been an agreement made earlier to mine at Cockatoo Island. The royalty to be paid for that iron ore—which is a rich iron ore—was to be 6d. a ton. In those days that was a good concession.

I remember the Premier at that time (the Hon. A. R. G. Hawke) said that BHP was a good company. That company had volunteered to increase its royalties from 6d. to 1s. 6d. When Premier Hawke learnt this he said, "I must write to them and thank them." Before he was able to put pen to paper the company announced that it had increased the price of steel by £2 a ton. Of course, that dissuaded him from complimenting the company on its royalty rates for iron ore from Yampi Sound.

Of course, that is all past history now and we still have not seen a steelworks, despite the promises of the then Minister in charge. We have had Bills before us *ad nauseam*. Obviously, the Government felt it was obliged to do something regarding the final project for iron ore and the project to create a steel mill. These Bills included the Pilbara agreement of 1962, which inspired the BHP agreement.

We have seen a parade of agreements being amended to excuse the companies of their obligations. It is an absolute con job which should not have been approved of in the first place. Anyone who indulged in that caper to rid Western Australia of its natural heritage acted in a very despicable way. It is most dishonest and disgraceful. The Government was fully aware of the chances of such a mill being constructed. It was a million-to-one chance and it will continue to be a million-to-one chance.

In his second reading speech the Minister stated in part as follows—

- (c) The company shall carry out an on-going programme of investigation into the financial and economic feasibility of establishing steel-making facilities within the said State.

And that is it. He carried on *ad infinitum*. If the companies believe that it will not be a viable proposition they are required to report to the Minister every three years.

The companies do not have to put forward any concrete ideas at all; they just have to report every three years for the excesses of the heritage of this state—be they in the form of iron ore at Koolyanobbing or the activities of subsidiary companies.

This is not a fair or just proposition to be before this Parliament. However, I would be the first to agree with any proposals for iron and steel making ventures for Western Australia. The yield of the BHP steel industries has not been as high as in the past, but I understand that of recent time the yield has shown a remarkable improvement.

Apart from the question of whether or not they are showing a profit for Western Australia, the fact remains that the companies are obtaining their raw products from Western Australia; either to produce iron ore or mill products to sell at the world market prices. I suggest the Minister should provide a greater explanation than has been given. Why has he fallen for this nonsense at this time in the history of the State when the Government could have demanded much more for the people of Western Australia?

We have heard the constant carping of the Premier about the jumbo steel mill. The Minister, whilst speaking in the second reading debate, may have convinced me that it would not be desirable when he referred to the world position. The world prices for these products have been at a drastically low level for several years and will be for some time.

A few months ago—when the election was on—the Premier reminded us that there would be a jumbo steel mill in Western Australia. What a lot of nonsense and rubbish! The Premier harped on this constantly. He was being quite dishonest because he knew that there was no prospect of a steel mill ever materialising. People such as the Premier knew that the jumbo steel mill in Brazil

was not yet on stream although it had been constructed for some time.

Would the people of the world be interested in steel projects when there is already an oversupply? Are these people likely to put more money into such activities in this State when there is an oversupply in the world and there has been for a considerable time? The Japanese steel mills are running at a very low capacity. Their outputs could be doubled tomorrow if required.

Yet, the people of Western Australia have been told that a jumbo steel mill would be a feasible proposition in Western Australia. They were told that there would be an integrated steel mill. It was just a lot of nonsense and rubbish!

The Premier—who was responsible for these agreements in his capacity as Minister for Industrial Development—will not be with us for very much longer in this Parliament. Even if he is a member of this Parliament for a few more years, he will not live to see his mistakes as the ongoing population of this State will. He will not be able to see the effect of his mistakes and ill judgments on the people of this State. He will not see that the people of this State will be forced to put up with the low royalties returned to them by these companies by his mistakes.

The companies have not come up with any type of works as a compensatory measure for their failure to be able to perform in respect to the agreements they have with the Government of Western Australia. Instead, the companies negotiated with the Minister—conned him—to produce a useless piece of legislation which requires them to report to the Minister every three years on what they propose to do. That will not do much good for the people of this State.

The people of Western Australia deserve better than has been proposed by the Minister who is supposed to be looking after the interests of this State. If the Minister is not prepared to do better then it is time he vacated his position. It is nonsense that the Minister has agreed to such an agreement when the companies are giving nothing at all in return for what has been provided by the State of Western Australia. I will always stand up for the State of Western Australia against all the business interests represented by those on the front row of the Government. Those Ministers of the Government are interested only in the dollar: I am interested in the welfare of Western Australia.

I will stand up for the State of Western Australia every time it is required and I hope the citizens of Western Australia will remember my stand in regard to this shoddy Bill before us.

It will only be time before this legislation is labelled as a dishonest approach to con the people of Western Australia. There is no doubt about it; the Opposition is not happy at all with the proposition before the House.

MR P. V. JONES (Narrogin—Minister for Resources Development) [5.43 p.m.]: It is somewhat interesting that the member for Welshpool should on the one hand indicate to us his knowledge of the world steel industry by saying there has been a general downturn and then speak about the Japanese steel industry and its existing capacity and its general downturn and, on the other hand, should criticise the Government and the company concerned for not proceeding to the construction of a clearly unviable and uneconomic integrated steel mill.

Mr Jamieson: Don't you come at that. I gave an alternative—I said: or offer some alternative for their conversion.

MR P. V. JONES: The Bill provides for that because it deals with more than just the steel-making aspect which is involved in the agreement.

Mr Jamieson: It contained nothing.

MR P. V. JONES: The member for Maylands referred to the historical aspects which related to the original agreements and their subsequent development and changes. It is a pity the member for Welshpool and the member for Maylands have chosen to denigrate a company which has done much for the development of this State.

Mr Davies: Except ignore its promise.

MR P. V. JONES: The member for Welshpool indicated how he intended to stand up for this State of Western Australia. I applaud him for that but why should he at the same time seek to denigrate a company which has done much for this State in its development over a long period? The company has provided many jobs and provided much in the way of an Australian equity situation in major developments.

The Premier's remarks—in his ministerial capacity in 1960—were quoted by both members. I do not think either of them would deny the fact that those remarks related to the industrial development situation which pertained 20 years ago.

Indeed, the future which was painted at that time certainly reflected what was reasonable in both economic and production terms to achieve as far as development of this particular industry is concerned. I am not talking only about the blast furnace and the rolling mill but the total project which was envisaged for Kwinana.

Both members acknowledged that there have been some economic changes as regards emphasis and priorities in industrial development, but neither member acknowledged the realities of what BHP has done as an alternative to its original programme, or the fact that there has been a considerable change in the State's priorities.

Much has been made of the so-called studies in regard to the steel mill. It is wrong to suggest that the studies are just starting, as the member for Maylands said. They have been going on for a long time.

Mr Jamieson: They will be going on for a long time yet, too.

Mr P. V. JONES: Perhaps they will be, but it is wrong to say that just because at one time there was a priority for an integrated steel mill producing finished products of a certain tonnage capacity that priority exists forever.

Mr Jamieson: You set a date on it.

Mr P. V. JONES: The date was amended from December 1978 to December 1980. The priorities have changed.

The member for Welshpool made some reference to royalties. I record the fact that royalties were not the only contribution made by the company in any of the projects in question. The honourable member will be aware that at Koolyanobbing, for instance, the company provided loading and unloading facilities, a certain amount of railway rolling stock and railway line, and so on.

Mr Jamieson: And received freight concessions from the Fremantle Port Authority. The agreement contained many things.

Mr Davies: Do not show the Minister that you know more about it than he does.

Mr P. V. JONES: I mention the fact that the priorities of the State alter, and we have sought the co-operation of BHP in other matters. Since those particular agreements were entered into, there have been two other projects—and I need mention only two. One is BHP's participation in the North-West Shelf and the other is its 20 per cent shareholding in the Worsley alumina refinery. Is all that, which provides for an Australian equity participation in these projects, to be denied? The Opposition has not acknowledged that.

I thank members for their comments.

Mr Davies: Very poor.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.11 to 7.30 p.m.

BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY COMPANY LIMITED AGREEMENTS (VARIATION) BILL

In Committee, etc.

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

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION AND RURAL ADJUSTMENT SCHEMES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.33 p.m.]: I suppose to some extent this could be called a procedural or machinery Bill because, as the Minister indicated, in the first instance it ratifies the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States with regard to the fourth separate agreement under the rural adjustment scheme. However, in this instance there are seven modifications or seven separate alterations brought about at the same time; and in the main these are commendable. They allow a greater degree of flexibility. On the whole they have updated the previous agreement to the stage where it can cater for modern circumstances in rural industries to a greater extent.

It might be as well to elaborate briefly on the Minister's notes. His second reading speech was pertinent, but it lacked expansion on a few of the matters that should have been raised. I will deal with them *seriatim*.

In his brevity, the Minister did not refer to the pastoral industry and to the position regarding clearing bans, compensation, and the manner in which it will be determined as the Rural Adjustment Authority becomes more prominent in handling clearing bans and the problems which have arisen. Further elaboration is required.

The first provision in the Bill is to allow the provision of supplementary moneys to a State other than on an annual basis. Previously the allocation of moneys by the Commonwealth was on an annual basis, and the rural adjustment authorities in the various States had no access to extra Commonwealth funds in the event of unforeseen circumstances arising. Should an unforeseen occurrence arise, and the Commonwealth was prepared to accept it as

meriting funding, now it is possible to make the arrangements under the adjusted Act.

The second point is that under the Act the States which did not expend their full allocation in the course of the year could lose the unspent balance to the Commonwealth. That will be altered so that the unspent sums can be reallocated to other States which can demonstrate a need for them. I do not think that need will arise very frequently. Not too many States will hand back funds because, generally speaking, if one State is in trouble with its rural industries, it is a fairly certain wager that the other States will be in the same position.

The third aspect of the amendments concerns the fact that the existing legislation does not allow the States to spend the moneys due in a succeeding year ahead of the allocation for that year. The amendment will allow that to be done. It means that if a State is in dire circumstances—it cannot obtain additional funds from the Commonwealth, and no funds have been handed back by any other State—it can spend some of the finance for the next year in advance. I should think that State would have to convince the Commonwealth that the case was a reasonable one. There would have to be that safeguard—the concurrence of the Commonwealth.

This is a situation that would be used only in exceptional circumstances. However, it allows greater flexibility and it could be to the benefit of somebody in a rural area, in one of the rural industries, at some stage.

The fourth matter relates to the removal of the eligibility requirement for an existing farmer. The new agreement requires the applicant to be a bona fide farmer who intends to remain on the property and who, given assistance, has sound prospects in the long term, as clause 5(b) indicates. Obviously, the applicant would have exhausted all other sources of rural funding before he had recourse to rural adjustment funds. It is not clear from what the Minister said whether this pertains, or whether that clause in the schedule means that the entire concept of viability has changed—that it is possible for an applicant to approach the rural reconstruction authorities whilst still not having tried the last funding resource, and not being declared not viable. The corollary to that, of course, is that a lot of farmers who have reached that desperate stage could apply for funds, whereas now they would be required to make an approach to the Commonwealth Development Bank, or some other source of rural funding. That is another aspect that could require a little elaboration. It

seems it broadens the scope of eligibility, which is desirable; but the parameters of that are not clear.

On the aspect of household support in clause 5(c) and 5(e) of the schedule, the amount has been raised from \$3 000 to \$5 000; and the period of time has been extended from two years to three years. This is desirable and defensible in the light of the fact that the amount has not been increased since 1972, and costs have increased manifold during that time, of course, under the Government in Canberra.

A further amendment allows the apicultural industry to be included under the scheme. Although the apicultural industry is small, it is a valuable export industry. However, it is subject to disease, to drought, to bushfires and other devastations. The provision means it will be covered by Rural Adjustment Authority funding. The consequences of that will be nothing but benefit to that very small but useful export industry which has developed. It is an industry that has organised itself very well. It has attended to its own marketing, and it has done so very successfully.

I would mention that the Northern Territory now comes within the scope of the rural adjustment scheme. There is no reason it should not. The scheme had been extended to the pastoral areas prior to this time. There is no reason that the Northern Territory should be debarred, if the Commonwealth is prepared to make funding available. Its pastoral industry has the same problems as that in the other States.

As the operation of the Rural Reconstruction and Rural Adjustment Schemes Act is under review, and its scope has been altered, I should amplify two areas of activity on which questions need to be answered. The first of these relates to farmers subject to compensation and readjustment because of the effects of clearing bans in the catchment areas of the four declared rivers. There is a considerable amount of confusion about how these farmers are to be handled and treated under the new set-up. The questions relate to how the Rural Adjustment Authority will apply its approach, to what extent rural adjustment money is available, and where the Public Works Department compensation funds come in. It could be that they are treated as two separate entities, with both funds treated separately under separate applications. Once again, this is very unclear, particularly to the people in the catchment areas who are more confused than ever at present.

It is fair to say that the bungling that occurred with the introduction of the Bill implementing the prohibition of clearing in the four catchment areas has been maintained to a fairly large degree. Certainly it has been maintained to the extent that many farmers in the area are able to obtain answers to the questions that face them.

As you will appreciate, Sir, the big problem is that farmers who are no longer able to clear the land will become unviable very quickly if they cannot do something about the situation. They are at a loss to know how they can advance their applications and what procedures and avenues are open to them.

The Public Works Act, as it stands now, enables the Public Works Department to resume or purchase land; but if the farmer is to remain in operation, it depends on the land which he retains. Therefore, funds need to be made available so that farmers can stay in business and make a viable proposition out of the land which remains to them on properties which cannot be cleared fully.

It is necessary to clarify the way in which the Rural Adjustment Authority may be approached and the mechanism available to solve these problems.

As far as the administration of compensation funds is concerned, it is obvious funding would need to come from the PWD, no doubt through general revenue or directly on the recommendation of the PWD to the State Treasury; but, once again, this is an area of very real concern to a number of farmers of my acquaintance. I hope the Minister can provide the answers to my queries when he replies.

A further aspect in connection with the Rural Adjustment Authority and its expanded role, concerns the pastoral industry and the fact that the Jennings report made certain recommendations for the restructuring of that industry at a cost of \$3 million. This gives rise to an interesting situation, particularly in view of the reply I received to a question, which said that the recommendations of the Jennings report on the pastoral industry would be implemented by the Government.

In its policy document, the Liberal Party included a section of the recommendations of the Jennings report as part of its rural policy. Another matter which is still unclear, is whether there is to be some special arrangement to achieve restructuring of the pastoral industry and whether funding will come totally from the Rural Adjustment Authority or whether the State intends to make funds available in addition to

RAA funds. It is appropriate this matter should be mentioned at this time, because the Act is to be amended by the Bill before us.

The two additional matters to which I have referred are of considerable consequence. The recommendation in the Jennings report that funds will be needed for restructuring the boundaries of the pastoral leases, seems to be somewhat contrary to the approach under the original Rural Adjustment Authority agreement. The previous alteration to the scheme made it possible for pastoralists to take advantage of the rural adjustment scheme. I believe the Government should make additional information available on these two matters.

We should know precisely the expanded role of the Rural Adjustment Authority with regard to the catchment areas and the farmers who have been affected adversely by the clearing bans. We should know also the extent of the expanded role of the RAA with regard to the pastoral industry in light of the recommendations of the Jennings report, which the Government has indicated it will implement as a matter of policy and also in reply to a specific question.

We do not quarrel with the seven points contained in the amendment. Each of them will contribute to improved efficiency and flexibility in the operation of the Act.

As far as funding of the authority is concerned, in 1979-80 all funds of the authority were expended; therefore, the amendment to the Act in that regard would not result in a loss in that situation. As far as I can understand from my inquiries, the figure of \$2.9 million allocated for the 1980-81 year appears to be sufficient for anticipated requirements. However, should it be necessary to obtain further funds because of unforeseen circumstances, the likelihood of success is greater as a result of the amendment than it would have been previously.

For those reasons, the Opposition supports the Bill.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [7.51 p.m.]: In giving my support to the Bill, I note a degree of flexibility has been given to the Act as a result of these amendments. That is a very acceptable situation in view of the fact that many farmers in various areas of the country will find themselves in difficult circumstances due to the extensive drought conditions which are worsening day by day. There has been a heavy call on the funds of the Rural Adjustment Authority over the past few years, because of the drought situation. The position will not improve this year if one looks at the way the season is progressing, and there will

be a need for greater flexibility in the manner of funding and also for extra funds.

The Federal Budget allowed an increase in funds for this purpose; but I do not believe that increase will meet the requirements of farmers who will be affected badly by drought conditions this season. However, it is pleasing to note amendments have been made which will enable greater flexibility.

One matter mentioned by the previous speaker was that of supplementary moneys being paid to a State, other than on an annual basis. That matter is quite acceptable, provided the Commonwealth is willing to accept applications and provide money to assist States who may need it.

Another provision referred to money unspent by one State being reallocated with the consent of the other States. I can see some difficulties could arise here. I do not believe such a provision would be utilised frequently and that a question mark may be placed against it.

A third point related to the fact that approval may be given to spend part of the next year's allocation of funds, if such a situation becomes necessary. That gives the administrators more flexibility and it is a commendable move, because such flexibility will be required.

It is rather satisfying to note that the eligibility requirements have been eased. This is a matter which will meet with approval, because a number of cases have existed in which the eligibility requirements under the Act have caused dissatisfaction and harsh criticism. It is not proposed that all eligibility provisions should be removed; but the situation will be much more flexible than it is at the present time.

A further amendment related to household support. I note that, under part 7 of the schedule, there has been an extension of the provisions concerning assistance in the form of advances of unemployment benefits. The period laid down in the provision has been increased from two years to three years. This will be most helpful to people in difficult positions.

A further provision under part 7 relates to an extension of the period during which a farmer receives household support, from six months to 12 months. That is a welcome move.

Part 7(1) relates to a farmer receiving a lump sum payment in lieu of household support assistance and the sum concerned has been increased from \$3 000 to \$5 000.

All the measures I have mentioned will be most helpful to the people involved.

The Northern Territory is to be included as a State within the meaning of the Act. One can only hope the Commonwealth Government will see its way clear to provide adequate funds to make provision for the Northern Territory, without reducing the funds required by the other States. The Commonwealth Government has not demonstrated its generosity in allocating funds in numerous directions when States have applied for them. Therefore, I hope the Commonwealth Government makes an allocation to the Northern Territory over and above the sums allocated to the States.

The amendments have my support and I hope the fund is operated in a more flexible and workable manner as a result of them.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [7.57 p.m.]: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Marshall for their support of the Bill. I should like to answer a few queries raised by them.

As pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this measure is virtually a machinery Bill. It involves the ratification of the new agreement with the Commonwealth in which we have been able to include a few more facets which have eased some of the eligibility provisions for rural adjustment funds.

The Bill is also important inasmuch as it brings the Northern Territory into the area as a body able to receive funds from the Commonwealth under the assistance scheme.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made much of the catchment areas compensation and reconstruction scheme; but I should like to point out that this has virtually nothing to do with the rural adjustment scheme except that we will be utilising the Rural Adjustment Authority to administer the funds on behalf of the State. Admittedly, there is eligibility within the Rural Adjustment Authority funds for those funds to be applied to the catchment areas in the same way as they can be applied to any other part of agriculture.

Mr H. D. Evans: If a farmer is rendered unviable because of the effects of the clearing bans, does that allow him to become eligible for rural adjustment funds?

Mr OLD: Yes. Within the terms of the rural adjustment scheme that would be an eligible criterion for reconstruction under that scheme. However, as members are well aware the amount of funds available within the rural adjustment scheme are limited, and we would expect—because of demands from pastoral areas—there may not be much money available

for the catchment areas. That is the reason for the establishment of the scheme, and funds will be provided from the State and Commonwealth Governments for reconstruction and compensation within the industry. But, there is nothing within the current Bill which applies specifically to catchment areas. However, I do take note of the remarks of the honourable member on that particular aspect and he can rest assured the scheme will go ahead.

I am concerned to hear the member say there is still a lot of confusion within the areas which will be affected. The authority has sent officers to the areas recently and they have met individual farmers in those areas. I understand they explained the scheme to the satisfaction of the people they met.

It was said that it was unlikely any money would be handed back to the authority for redistribution to other States. I would point out that although I do not expect this to occur very often, it did occur some two years ago when surplus money was distributed to the States in greater need. In that particular instance the Minister had to take the matter back to the Government and get special authority to redistribute the money. The amendment will mean that such redistribution may be undertaken automatically by the Minister in consultation with the various State Ministers. As the honourable member would be well aware, it is obvious that a fair amount of lobbying would go on if any extra money was available.

One of the factors which possibly has had an influence on the position where money has been made available from other States has been the creation of the Primary Industries Bank. There is no doubt a considerable sum of money has been lent through that bank. That action, together with more activity on the part of the Commonwealth Development Bank, has taken a lot of pressure off the rural adjustment scheme.

Mr H. D. Evans: That would be only because of the change of circumstances in the major primary industries.

Mr OLD: I was coming to that. The need which existed in the mid and late 1960s is not there now. Indeed, it has made a difference and I hope it will be a lasting difference.

Both members who have spoken will be well aware of the object of the rural adjustment scheme. It is to enable an organisation or a person to adjust out of a situation where he is experiencing a temporary setback and which is considered could be brought back into viability by the application of these funds. The method of

applying the funds is that they will be loaned at concessional rates of interest only for the period of need. As the farmer becomes more viable, so the money will be recalled or the interest rate will be adjusted accordingly. This brings its own problems because people sometimes regard concessional loans as being available over a long period. That is not so, and this is the difference between the rural adjustment scheme and the drought loan scheme where, in fact, a concessional rate of interest operates over a period. There are avenues whereby people in difficulty may apply for reconstruction of their debts.

The member for Warren mentioned 'viability' and the difference in the definitions. The difference is not great; it is quite subtle. It does broaden and soften the requirement to prove necessity before money is made available. If in the opinion of the authority the application of money will give somebody a chance before he actually becomes non-viable, a person in that situation may come within the scheme, whereas a person who has reached a non-viable situation will have to demonstrate that the injection of some money could return him to viability.

I take the points raised with regard to the application of the rural adjustment scheme in the pastoral industry, and the reference to the Jennings report. I can assure both members who have spoken that any recommendation from pastoral areas will receive sympathetic consideration from the authority. Provided they come within the criteria of the authority, they will receive some consideration in the same way as people in the agricultural areas.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR McIVER (Avon) [8.10 p.m.]: The Bill before us is, more or less, an administrative measure. It relates to the discontinuance of the Pindar-Meekatharra railway, and it will allow the Government to dispose of the material available from that section of line. It is necessary, of course, to bring the matter before this Parliament in order to receive that consent.

At the outset I advise the Minister that the Opposition, naturally on that basis, has no quarrel with the legislation. However, I want to make some comments relating to this particular section of railway.

Firstly, the person who prepared the Minister's second reading speech did not do his homework very well—not that that is of great significance. However, in this Parliament we must have accuracy. I refer to the comment about when the railway was constructed. In his remarks the Minister said that the railway was constructed early in the 1900s.

Mr Rushton: I think it was 1904.

Mr McIVER: I thank the Minister for his interjection, but it is not quite correct. For the sake of accuracy, for which we always strive in this place, I will mention an article in the *Encyclopaedia of Western Australia*. It is stated that in the Murchison district the extension of the line from Mullewa inland, 190 miles further to Cue, was completed and opened on 1 July 1898.

Mr Rushton: In the report I have, 1898 is the date.

Mr McIVER: An additional extension of 46 miles to Nannine was opened in June 1903.

I want to say—particularly to the rural members of this Parliament—members should look at the history of our railways from the opening of the Wongan Hills line right through to Wiluna.

Mr Rushton: I have just read the report again, and it sets out that the Mullewa-Meekatharra line was constructed between 1898 and 1910. That is in accord with what you are saying.

Mr McIVER: I thank the Minister.

In the early stages of the development of the Murchison, when the pastoral industry and gold production were booming, the railway went right through to Wiluna. I want to look at the matter in that context, and not just in the context of the section from Pindar to Meekatharra, which is the section covered by the Bill.

Rural members in this House would find it very interesting to examine the history of the line, and read the discussions which occurred in this place under Premier Moore and Premier Scaddan. The debates which took place at that time were parallel with those which take place now. There was reference to freight rates, the resumption of land, and where the line ought to go. What takes place today is a replica of what occurred during that era. That is relevant; the debates which took place in those early days are very similar to the debates which are occurring these days.

I notice there are motions on our notice paper related to what should be done with our Westrail system, which is not significantly different from what was previously known as the Western Australian Government Railways. Although our currency is now metric, in those early days it was pounds, shillings, and pence. We hear arguments from the producers and from Westrail with regard to the amount of money that should be charged to transport freight. The point I want to make is that it is quite apparent now, as it was quite apparent then, that the primary producers of Western Australia rely heavily on rail transport, and also our railway system relies very heavily on primary producers.

We should all agree about that. Nothing has changed from the 1800s. If someone had told me 20 years ago that I would be standing in this Parliament to support legislation to discontinue a railway line I would assume either that person was intoxicated or in need of psychiatric treatment.

Mr Hassell: Or you were.

Mr Rushton: Like me with the Perth-Fremantle railway.

Mr McIVER: I feel it is incumbent on me, as a person who worked on that section of line, to relate for *Hansard* and posterity some of the history of those days, and to pay tribute to the many people who helped develop our railways.

When the Murchison was booming and there was great activity at mines such as the Big Bell, and in areas such as Yalgoo, Cue, Meekatharra, and Wiluna, there were some very interesting characters. Each and every one of these people contributed in their own way to that era.

Mr Coyne: You will never be forgotten!

Mr McIVER: I went there as a young man of 17 years of age. I think my physical features can be imagined from the name I received when I arrived—I was called "Split Pin".

Mr T. H. Jones: You've altered a bit since.

Mr McIVER: Being young I participated in all sports, and our football coach used to say to me, "You will make a marvellous centre half back because if anyone hits you he will cut himself to pieces." I played in that position in various places, and although I realise the game is very different now, during the war years I was invited to play a few games with East Perth, and perhaps without being egotistical I could say that I did not do too badly in the centre half back position. I can remember playing in a big district game at Geraldton and I had the privilege to be playing on Nugget Hilz, and halfway through the first

quarter Nugget hit me with everything he had. I can still feel things jiggling around inside me today from that whack.

I would like members here to imagine the conditions under which the men worked in those days. There were no lights, very little water, and the early railway barracks were very stark indeed. The railway barracks of today are like motels by comparison. The work was very hard in the early days, and a 15 or 16-hour day was nothing.

Mr T. H. Jones: Did you have coal there or not?

Mr McIVER: Yes, but I will come to that in a minute, although the member for Collic will not like what I have to say.

It was a 709-mile trip from Perth to Wiluna, and it must be remembered that everything had to be transported—coal, water, and all the necessities of life.

The enginemens of that era were very fine men indeed, and their main ambition was always to run to time. Each man had his own engine, and irrespective of the length of a shift, heaven help the man who had left coal dust on the footplate when the engine was stabled. The engine drivers worked in overalls with creases, they wore black shirts, waistcoats, black caps, white ties, and fob watches. If an engine driver touched a footplate and found it to be greasy, heaven help the person responsible. What a difference between these old engines and our modern diesel locomotives. Rail transport in Western Australia has advanced tremendously over the years. Certainly they were very hard times, but this was always a very important section of railway. Not only was it used to transport wool from the pastoral areas, but also it was used to bring all the supplies to the outback. The railways provided a lifeline for the people throughout the agricultural areas of our State. No submissions were put forward to the Minister for Transport then by the wool producers wanting to cart their own wool; they wanted the most modern method of transport, and that was rail.

We have a new generation of primary producers now, many of whom do not feel the same way. However, they must be educated to understand that if they do not use the railways, they will place an additional burden on their colleagues further afield.

With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to some of the characters of those days. One driver who weighed 21 stone always took about five minutes to get into his seat. He was aptly named "Feathers". In the early days he educated many young railwaymen, including me.

I can remember when I was a very new trainee engineman and the fireman from Cue went off ill. I had to take the train from Yalgoo to Cue, a distance of 123 miles. Of course this was a great thrill for a young man, but also a great responsibility. We proceeded for miles and miles into the darkness, and all of a sudden there appeared a chink of light. I thought, "Thank heavens for that. We have arrived." I have told members how particular the enginemens of those days were, and so I started to pack and clean the kit. This engine driver said to me, "Son, what are you doing?" I said, "I am packing the kit." He said, "What for?" I said, "Because we're here." He said, "I have news for you; this happens to be Mt. Magnet and we are just halfway." My heart went down to my boots, but I remembered the experience, and years later, when I took out young men for the first time—

Mr MacKinnon: Took out young men?

Mr McIVER: —to instruct them in the intricacies of their duties work, I had patience with them.

Another great character we used to call "Persil Whiteness"—the only time he saw water was when it rained. It was also well known that he kept his wife very short of housekeeping money. On one occasion he was very sick and was taken to hospital, and so he had to sign an order for his wife to collect his wages.

When his wife collected his wages, she noticed the net amount. She was amazed, and also infuriated, and she could not get to the hospital quickly enough to challenge her husband. He said to her, "Just steady down, my dear—take it easy. You have got to realise that I haven't even paid the fireman yet."

Mr Young: Did she fall for it?

Mr McIVER: This was typical of the men of those times. I have referred to the war years, but I would be very remiss if I did not remind members of the hours worked by the railwaymen who drove the Army trains. Members will know that all railway services have code names, and the numbers are even to the capital and odd away from it. The army trains were known as "D" trains.

The Army trains going to Meekatharra and beyond were really loaded up. They carried tanks and army vehicles, and most certainly they were well overloaded. However, the enginemens battled with them for very long hours. It is only right that I should stand in this Parliament and recall to our minds the men who served so valiantly. I tried to obtain a copy of a book for this debate, but unfortunately it appears to have been lost. It was

not written by a railwayman, but by a postmaster. It was titled *Knights of the Iron Track*.

Mr Rushton: Would you like me to lend you my copy?

Mr Harman: Not now thanks.

Mr McIVER: This book referred to many such instances. The stories make very enjoyable reading.

Setting up and operating the railways cost the various Governments a great deal of money. All the coal was carted by this method of transport, and I would like now to come back to the point raised by the member for Collie. Irrespective of its sheeting and protection—

Mr T. H. Jones: You don't know how to fire it—light and often.

Mr McIVER: —it was all perished. It was practically just sand. Most of the water was carted to the Murchison in those days, and of course, it came by water train from that great town of Northam, a town which seems to supply just about everything in this State. Tonnes of water had to be supplied to the Murchison until 1954, when it was revolutionised with the introduction of diesel traction. This was a further lifeline to the people of the Murchison.

I wish to mention the cartage of cattle from those areas. The cattle were driven thousands of miles to Wiluna and the railhead at Meekatharra, and were transported from there to the markets in Perth. In those days, one felt quite proud to work the cattle trains. We used to run about 40 wagons, all bogey vehicles, which travelled faster than passenger trains. We knew that the quicker we got those cattle to market, the more money the producers would receive. I could relate some very humorous incidents from those days, but I will not take up the time of the House. The cattle producers of that era owed a lot to the railwaymen.

On occasions, the people who looked after the cattle became intoxicated after one day on the track, and it was then up to the railwaymen to make sure that cattle got to Perth safely. In those days, they would fetch £50 or £60 a head.

Sometimes some of the cattle would go down in a truck, and we knew it would not be long before we had a disaster on our hands. The general solution was to heat fire irons in the locomotive and then take them back to the cattle. I will not say where the hot iron was placed on the beasts, but I can assure members it was a very quick exercise, and they were soon back on their feet!

Many people of that era were delighted with the service provided by the railways. It hurts me

to hear the adverse comments being made about the service provided today, with people wishing to cart their own produce. Perhaps these comments are being made by the sons or even the grandsons of the pastoralists who were only too happy to use the rail service.

It is with great sadness that I see this line now is closed. It was in a rundown condition. A speed limit of 20 miles an hour was enforced from Mullewa to Meekatharra due to the poor condition of the track. However, I believe it is nothing short of criminal for any Government—and I do not refer only to the Liberal Government, because a Labor Government was in power between 1971 and 1974—to allow a line of such importance to run down to its present condition. Rail is an important facet of transport, and I believe the community eventually will pay the price for the closure of the line.

Members may correct me if I am wrong, but I noticed in the newspaper the other day that gold is running at around \$600 an ounce. We know there are mines at Cue, Meekatharra and other areas which are ready to reopen. Perhaps in five or six years' time, Hill 50 might bloom again.

Mr Coyne: In five or six months' time.

Mr McIVER: How will these people be able to transport large quantities of freight? It cannot all be diverted to road transport. The Government may be faced with spending three times the amount of money to construct a new railway as it would have spent had it persevered with maintaining this line until such time as it could be upgraded. I realise it has only 45lb. rails; nevertheless, it provided relatively cheap transport. The people of the region are going to pay more for road transport than they did for rail.

People do not seem to understand the social implications inherent in the closure of a railway line. When personnel are transferred from an area, they take their families with them. Their children are taken away from the local school, and the money they normally would spend in that town disappears. The economy of the town suffers. When five or six families leave the area due to the closure of the line, the enrolment at the local school becomes so low that the school teacher is transferred elsewhere. The local policeman is transferred to a larger town. The butcher, and other local shopkeepers also are affected by the lack of money in the town; as the economy of the town worsens, the town shrivels. Members have only to look at the history of our State to know I am not exaggerating. I am concerned that this will happen once again.

Yesterday, at the invitation of the Shire of Wagin, I visited Wagin. They propose to construct a loop line from Lake Grace to the main Katanning-Albany line at a cost of some \$94 000. I can see advantages in this because it will save some \$40 000 per annum. However, when I recall the closure of the Perth-Fremantle line, I am very concerned at the long-term future of the town of Wagin.

Mr Rushton: It could cost \$2 million to rehabilitate the shunting area at Wagin. The railwaymen with whom you are closely associated support what is happening there.

Mr McIVER: I am fully aware of that, and I accept that the Minister has made the correct decision based on the evidence presented to him. However, when the Lake Grace-Hyden line is upgraded, I am firmly convinced a lot more freight will result. The Minister cannot tell me Westrail's economists are considering spending \$94 000 to save \$40 000.

Mr Rushton: No, to save \$2 million.

Mr McIVER: No, the \$2 million would be to upgrade the Wagin yard. Am I correct? Is that the alternative?

Mr Rushton: The \$2 million would be capital investment.

Mr McIVER: Co-operative Bulk Handling has been very secretive about this matter. However, it is quite apparent to me that in 10 or 12 years' time the grain produced in this region will be diverted to Kwinana. This will affect the outer ports of Geraldton, Albany and Esperance; it has already affected Bunbury. I believe this is the long-term aim of the Government, and neither the Opposition nor the people of Western Australia have been informed on the matter. No-one can tell me, with all the experience I have had, that this small section of rail is going to be installed to save \$40 000.

Mr Rushton: They will take the grain to Albany.

Mr McIVER: Perhaps it might go to Albany now; however, I am looking at, say, six years hence. Capital of some \$45 million is invested in the Kwinana terminal, and there must be a return somewhere. CBH will not get a return by allowing grain to be sent to Albany, Esperance and Geraldton. It will take some time before Geraldton will be affected, but I am sure that Esperance, Albany and Bunbury will feel the effects of this decision quite soon. If there is no substance to my argument, why does not CBH come out and say, "We will install additional storage facilities at Wagin"?

Mr Rushton: Because they have just put them in at Albany.

Mr McIVER: The Minister knows full well that thousands of tonnes of wheat are produced in the Lake Grace-Hyden area, and he knows that the CBH installation at Wagin is inadequate. In a good season, wheat must be pigstied in the open because the bins cannot handle it.

Mr Rushton: But you know the Wagin situation. Westrail has given an assurance that it will not stand in the way if CBH decides to establish a facility at Wagin.

Mr McIVER: That may be so, but why has not an assurance been given—

The SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the member for Avon that the subject before the House relates to the closure of the Meekatharra railway line. I find very little relevance between the situation at Wagin, and the subject before the Chair.

Mr McIVER: Mr Speaker, I was referring to the overall economics of the situation. I referred to the economics of the Pindar-Meekatharra line, which is why this line is to close and I was enlarging on that point. However, I take note of your direction and will adhere to it.

It is with a very heavy heart that I must support this measure. I do not believe the Government has given enough attention to the long-term planning of its overall transport policy. I believe most Government economists are boys on men's errands. It is all very well to employ young people from university, with letters after their names—people who are able to write theses on all sorts of subjects—if they can do the job they are employed to do. However, I believe even I can advise the Government on the economy. These young people are put into an office in the metropolitan area and told to get on with the job. However, they have never come to grips with the fundamentals, or the nitty-gritty of the issue.

It follows, therefore, that many decisions which have been made have been the wrong decisions. I believe it was wrong to close the Pindar-Meekatharra line; we should have paid closer attention to this matter. I went up there and had a look at the line. Even when taking into consideration the 20 miles an hour speed restriction and the age of the track, with its 45lb rails, every train which departed was pulled by two locomotives, and was full to capacity. They were quite willing to continue the service.

I cannot understand the Premier's attitude to this matter. I have said on many occasions both inside and outside Parliament that the Premier was one of the best Ministers for Transport we

have ever had in Western Australia when it came to the efficient and economic running of the railways. I say that without any fear of contradiction. Therefore, I cannot understand how this proposal passed without strong opposition from the Premier. No doubt, it came forward as a recommendation from senior officers of Westrail. The Government stands condemned for not having checked thoroughly the implications on the region of closing this railway line. It is not so much now but perhaps in 10 or 15 years' time and with a great emphasis on the social implications that the effects will be felt.

Let us consider the United Kingdom where its railways are being brought back. The UK Government is going back to rail. It is costing millions of dollars to reinstate those railways. That is why I say the Government is not giving sufficient attention to the long-term situation.

Mr Rushton: Spending \$300 million in the next five years is not a bad effort for this State.

Mr McIVER: It is a drop in the bucket. I am glad the Minister interjected in that vein, because it is his Government which has allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where that amount of money is necessary.

Mr Rushton: That is not fair.

Mr McIVER: It is factual. The Minister has allowed the situation to come about, not only in terms of wagons and locomotives but also in terms of morale. The Government has allowed the morale of Westrail employees to reach its lowest ebb. The greatest aim of the members of Westrail is to reach 60 or 65 and retire. When we do not have the experienced people behind us—because we do not give them an inducement to give of their best—we must accept that things are bad. As I said at the outset, we no longer have men with the same attitude as those in the 1800s and those during the war years who always gave of their best.

Mr Rushton: We have plenty who are doing their best.

Mr McIVER: Men of this calibre have been lost because of the decisions the Government has made. The Government has a top-heavy administration; there are too many boys coming from universities and putting forward their ideas. They are boys on mens' errands.

What has the Government done with respect to the locomotive section. It has amalgamated it with the traffic section. That was one of the most retrograde steps the Government has ever taken.

How would the Minister feel if he were a driver and he had a little upstart who had never driven a

train telling him how he should handle a train? The Minister would not like it if he knew that this young fellow had never had the responsibility of looking after all that tonnage and caring for the passengers.

Mr Rushton: When I was there the other day in that very section I found that the people making the decisions were in fact ex-railwaymen. They asked me to remember them to you. What you are saying is factual in that there are loco drivers who are in the administrative section. I thought they were doing a good job.

Mr McIVER: The Minister should not misconstrue what I have said. I said that because of the amalgamation there are men in charge who do not know the industrial awards or the time-tabling.

Mr Rushton: They are loco drivers. Mr Bob Hunter is there and I know you have a high regard for him.

Mr McIVER: I am not talking about the chief traffic manager. The Minister has young men who were stationmasters and are now footplate inspectors who have been promoted because of the amalgamation. Many of these young men have never had the responsibility of driving a train, yet they are telling men with 30 or 40 years' experience just what they should do. Have I made my point clear?

Mr Rushton: Next time I go there I would like to take you with me. You would find some of your old friends are back in administration doing the jobs you would like them to do.

Mr McIVER: I have no malice towards those men. Good luck to them. It is through their initiative, dedication, and application that they have reached those positions.

Mr Rushton: They are ex-loco drivers.

Mr McIVER: I am talking about the men there who are telling the drivers what to do. I am talking about men who have never had the responsibility of driving a train.

Mr Rushton: I have not got my message across.

Mr McIVER: It looks like the situation of an immovable force meeting an immovable object.

It costs not only Westrail but also the taxpayers of Western Australia thousands of dollars to have this sort of top-heavy administration, and this is an unnecessary situation.

I remember when I first joined the railways. We had just one shed foreman to handle the rosters and other duties whereas now it takes six men to do the work and the other aspects associated with it. The Minister need not take any notice of me; he could talk to the people who do

the job. He would find that what I am saying is not an exaggeration. The men want to go back to the old system where they had the chief mechanical engineer in charge of the locomotive section.

Mr Rushton: I was talking to them last week.

Mr McIVER: Can members imagine what would happen if a Minister in charge of Westrail or a company such as Alcoa went up to a worker and said, "How are you, Fred, are you happy in the service?" Members can imagine that the answer would be something like, "No, I am not happy, Mr Minister. It is a shocking situation and you should do this, that, and the other."

Mr Rushton: Mr Hunter relates very well to his men.

Mr McIVER: The Minister is talking about a senior administrator in Westrail. I am talking about the people on the lower rungs.

Mr Rushton: I was talking to them, too.

Mr McIVER: I do not want to waste the time of the House.

Mr Young: The member for Albany wants you to tell the story about the fellow who pinched a train to go to a dance.

Sir Charles Court: Tell us how the trains could go faster when the drivers had to get back to the football.

Mr McIVER: I think not. These days they are a little late for the football.

Although the Opposition naturally supports this Bill, I felt I had to make these comments. I felt it was incumbent upon me as an ex-railwayman to pay tribute to those men who have made such a great contribution to the railways in this State. To give service of perhaps 40 or 45 years to a Government instrumentality is a great contribution. Those men did a marvellous job under shocking conditions, certainly compared with the barracks which are available today. The Liberal Government deserves credit for the new barracks because it was a Liberal Government which brought Mr du Plessis from South Africa to head a Royal Commission into the railways generally following the Garratt strike. The Hawke Labor Government went out of office because of that strike. Mr du Plessis said that the barracks throughout the State needed to be upgraded. The old barracks had old pots and pans, no refrigeration, and no hot water; they were in a terrible state. The young men of today do not know they are born.

Mr Rushton: They are in good shape. I visited many the other day.

Mr McIVER: However, this change came about only through constant negotiation by the locomotive union. It went through the various channels and conducted sensible discussions. If only that could be done today there would not be half the industrial trouble that there is.

Mr Rushton: They have a good record.

Mr McIVER: They have a good record because they are balanced people who look at things in a balanced way.

Gone are the days when the men worked 15 or 16 hours and then tried to go to sleep in the old barracks. Gone are the days when the stillness of the night was broken by one boot hitting the floor when, from somewhere down the other end could be heard a raucous voice shouting, "Don't hesitate; drop the other B". Every time one bed squeaked, they all went. It was one awake, all awake. One had barely got to sleep before one was up again for another 16 hours of duty. I have not exaggerated while speaking about the old times on the Murchison railway.

I was only a young fellow when Mr du Plessis was here. He was on our train at one time and he spoke to us for a while. When he went back to his carriage I said to the driver in a very naive way, "He speaks English." The driver said to me, "Did you expect a bloody Zulu!"

My comments were meant to bring a little colour into the debate and were meant to pay tribute to the men who served the railways so valiantly during those times. The Opposition supports the measure before the House.

MR COYNE (Murchison-Eyre) [8.58 p.m.]: Firstly—

Mr Watt: A hard act to follow.

Mr T. H. Jones: Don't try to outdo him.

Mr COYNE: It is a hard act to follow. It will be very difficult, having listened to all the experiences mentioned by the member for Avon.

Originally I was not very well informed on what the Bill was all about and in order to get some understanding of it and to understand its mechanisms I thought I would check on previous debates. I point out here that initially I had indicated in the party room that I would not vote for this Bill because the Meekatharra line was very important to my bailiwick. I had a lot of affection for the old line, but the hard realities of the situation were that it had to go.

I did some background reading on the debates which attended the closure of some of the older railway lines. I was amazed at the quality of those debates when there were discussions on the closure of lines such as those between

Meekatharra and Wiluna, Big Bell and Cue, and Laverton and Malcolm. There was a great deal of emotion stirred up in those old-timers, but there was no logical way that those railways could have been kept open. They had deteriorated to such a degree in terms of quality and traffic on them that the reason for their existence had ceased to be. They were railway lines to once flourishing goldmines in areas like Wiluna, Laverton, and Big Bell, which had ceased operations.

All the population had gone and there was no reason that the railways should continue to exist. The present Premier was then the Minister for Railways and I believe he brought a little sense to the arguments by pointing out how the railways had deteriorated through lack of use. Even then, there were some suggestions by Country Party members who thought that a train a fortnight would suffice. The existence of a railway on that basis could not be justified.

I believe the mechanism of this discontinuance of railways legislation is a means to place the accounts back into Treasury where they belong. It also allows the processes to be pursued for the winding up of the property structure and for the salvage of the railway's fittings.

The discontinuance of this railway makes way for the future of the north-south railway line. I believe that objective is becoming closer and it heartens me somewhat.

Last week I attended a conference with the staff of Mr Bruce Kirkwood of the State Energy Commission. The speakers provided us with some very good grounding in the various aspects of the production of energy. One aspect which was mentioned was the cost of transmitting power. It was pointed out that it is cheaper to transmit power to remote locations by power transmission lines than it is to set up independent power stations in far flung localities. The linking of the Pilbara power station for the eventual electricity requirement of the Pilbara through transmission lines from the south was discussed. This matter is being investigated and will be presented in a feasibility study. This power transmission system could help link the Pilbara railways network with the South-West Land Division standard gauge railroad. I think the forecasts were somewhat optimistic but the realities were spelt out quite logically.

The Liberal Party policy now should be framed to define and indicate that the line to the Pilbara will eventually come to reality. I hope it will be constructed and it has to happen soon. I should imagine that it will be before 1990. It does not seem long for 10 years to pass, and I believe the

initial investigations on the setting up of this project should begin now. However, with planning, one should have some sort of realistic and achievable objective.

I remember, when I was in the insurance business I visited a butcher in Nedlands. He had a coloured plan on the wall of his showroom depicting a home he wanted to build on the seafront. He eventually built that home in much quicker time than he had thought simply by pursuing a defined object. So, if we in the Liberal Party could indicate that this is a part of our policy it would help us in the long run to achieve this national objective.

I could not support the retention of the Meekatharra-Pindar railway line because it has reached the stage where it is completely unsafe. The discontinuance of the rail service has had a drastic effect on the towns of Mt. Magnet, Cue, and Meekatharra. It has depleted the population of those towns. I think they have now bottomed out and are about to re-emerge as populous centres once again. Those towns have an effective road transport system and they are managing better than ever before. It certainly is more satisfactory as far as the small traders are concerned. There was no way that the railway could be justified. It could not be justified in terms of an economic proposition, despite the fact that there were indications that the area would grow.

Sixty per cent of the livestock coming into the metropolitan area comes from the north. The transport of heavy quality goods over a long distance has increased but there is no doubt that it would not justify the retention of the line. It was announced at the time of the proposed closure that \$34 million would be required to upgrade the railway to an efficient standard which would handle something like 100 000 tonnes of goods.

Mr McIver: You have had quite a few road fatalities up that way now.

Mr COYNE: That would happen anyway.

There must be an industrial strategic link between the Pilbara and the South-West Land Division. This was recommended in the Wayne report of 1956 and the Pilbara study. Both reports recommended that the railway should link Mt. Newman and Meekatharra. In the Pilbara Study the reports indicated that below Meekatharra the line should divert through the Weld Range to look after the tonnages from the Weld Range iron ore deposits, if and when it develops.

There was some criticism about the present route during the 1977 controversy. It was said that it was in the wrong place. I take issue with that

because I believe the route west of Cue would be much more treacherous than the route from Mt. Magnet to Mullewa. The Murchison River and its tributaries on the west side, flowing down to Kalbarri are very treacherous and would need substantial earthworks to effectively traverse the route to Drummonds Cove just north of Geraldton.

I believe the money must come from the Federal Government which should take responsibility for this railway line if only for one reason; that is, the defence requirements of this State and nation. That is one factor underpinning the strategy of our north-south railroad development.

I have given a great deal of thought to the railways concept ever since the decision was made to close the railway line between Meekatharra and Pindar. I have studied everything I could on railways and now am better informed than I was previously. I have studied the Queensland system, and what a tremendously efficient system that is. I have also studied the South Australian system including the Australian national line from Tarcoola to Alice Springs. A railway line for the north of this State is justified far more than is a line in any other State.

Mr McIver: You had better talk to Uncle Malcolm!

Mr COYNE: The social implications of such a railway have already been dealt with and the re-opening of some goldmines will occur as has been predicted. The Big Bell is one mine which will emerge as a significant producer in the Murchison area.

Perhaps my speeches on the railway and the defence implications are like a record, but I do not understand why we cannot make some sort of policy decision or take the initiative to study plans for a future railway.

I will do my utmost to influence the Government to undertake such a study. One line which was the subject of a great deal of attention in the days of closing lines was the one from Kalgoorlie to Leonora. Fortunately, enough protest emerged from that area to convince the Government that it should remain. At the present time we have a high capacity railway road from Esperance to Leonora. That line escaped the same fate as the Meekatharra-Pindar line, by a hair's breadth. That is a living testimony to the change of attitude by this Government. However, I could not agree that we could ever justify the continuation of the Meekatharra-Pindar line.

I hope the salvage operation on the line takes place expeditiously and I would like to see some

consideration given to the people of the area with regard to access to some of the material, particularly the rail. Whenever railway lines were discontinued in the past there was a stockpile in the areas made available to pastoralists and others who were anxious to use the lines. I support the Bill.

MR CRANE (Moore) [9.13 p.m.]: It was not my intention to speak to this Bill but many points have been mentioned to which I would like to give my support and also I wish to give my support to the points raised by the member for Murchison-Eyre.

I would also like to congratulate the member for Avon for the entertainment he has given the House over quite a period of time. It has been entertaining and enjoyed by all. It is refreshing to have the House conducted in a more congenial atmosphere. It is unfortunate that this does not happen often.

I am a railways man from way back, even though I have not worked on them. I have always been a person who has supported them. When I first went to Bindi Bindi to farm the train fare to Perth was 13s.10d. The journey was an eight-hour one and the member for Avon will remember as I do that the conductor walked outside the carriage and topped up our waterbags if they happened to be a little dry because of the hot wind. Those were enjoyable days and it is an era we have left behind.

It is rather sad to see a railway line being pulled up but, as the member for Murchison-Eyre has said, it is the only sensible thing to do. On occasions I have experienced a little sadness when I have had to put the sulky or the wagon away and never use it again. So it is with this railway line.

But we must look to the future, and I believe the member for Murchison-Eyre made some very important points regarding the future. He made some comments about Mr Kirkwood and the State Energy Commission, the transmission of electricity, and the possibility that railway lines could go through connecting the South-West Land Division and the Pilbara and areas further north, which perhaps one day will be electrified.

Particularly in view of our energy crisis and the way the cost of fuel has escalated over the last few years, I have always cherished the hope that the cost of tidal power will come down relative to the cost of energy produced from oil, coal, and other means. If it does, we have a tremendous untapped wealth of energy with the tides in the north-west, and this railway should be planned to start from the day we pull up the tracks on the

Murchison-Pindar line. I believe we must make our plans for the future now. With our escalating fuel costs, I am sure it must be more economic in the long term to look at the possibility of connecting a standard gauge line, perhaps on the same alignment as has been suggested; and I am pleased to note the land will be available for future use, if needed, for a line through Meekatharra to Mt. Newman. There is already a service line from Mt. Newman to Port Hedland and I understand it will be possible for the State to use it when necessary. I am sure this arrangement would have been written into the agreement with mining company concerned.

Mr McIver: How would you finance this?

Mr CRANE: How was it financed in the first place? Let us not go into financing. If a war broke out tomorrow, I am sure there would not be any shortage of finance for it. We would have all the finance we wanted at the stroke of a pen. We cannot be fooled by that trick.

I strongly support the suggestion of the member for Murchison-Eyre that plans should now be laid for the possible connection by rail of the Pilbara and the South-West Land Division. With fuel supplies diminishing at an ever-increasing rate, we must give close attention to any possibilities for alternative transport in the north in the future.

It is unfortunate that we have not been able to use sea transport as it was once used in this State. Unfortunately—and I must say this—when seamen are paid for over six months' holiday a year on full pay it is very expensive for ships to operate. I do not believe we will ever reach the situation where we can afford to pay people for six months' holiday a year. No matter which industry they are connected with, it cannot be viable. As I have said on many occasions, I believe the Seamen's Union has become completely out of hand and should have been brought into gear many years ago.

Mr McIver: What do you mean by six months' holiday?

Mr CRANE: Seamen get six months' holiday a year on full pay. We cannot afford to use ships for this simple reason. But perhaps one day common sense will prevail and we will get them back to a fair and just rate of pay. I am not objecting to seamen earning good money but the economy will not stand full pay for six months' holiday a year for anyone.

Mr Jamieson: It is about as sensible as members of Parliament working for only four or five months a year.

Mr CRANE: Some members of Parliament may work only four or five months a year but I

think the majority would agree with me when I say we work very close to 20 hours a day.

Mr McIver: The seamen work seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Mr CRANE: Many of us do.

Mr McIver: They are away from their families for months at a time.

Mr CRANE: I remember one occasion when I was away at sea for over 12 months and did not see my family. That was in more difficult circumstances. As a matter of fact, I did not see a woman for 12 months. I could not believe it when I did see a woman again; she seemed to be going in and coming out in the wrong places, and I mentioned what she was; but not for long. Many of us face those circumstances at times, I suppose.

The fact remains that this railway could be a very useful and economic addition to the transport system of Western Australia, and I believe now is the time to be planning for it. I strongly support the member for Murchison-Eyre, who put a very sensible approach to this Parliament, and I urge that we take steps immediately to get it on the drawing board.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [9.22 p.m.]: I thank the three members who have contributed to the debate. It is interesting to note the nostalgia in this House in relation to railways. I share that nostalgia. I could tell some exciting stories about my days as a passenger on the Wongan Hills line when I was a schoolboy going to Morawa and back and to other places along the line. I did not realise then that the member for Avon might well have been in charge on the footplate.

Mr McIver: It was always on time.

Mr RUSHTON: I enjoyed it. But I want to touch on a few points the member raised. I appreciate his humour and application to the subject. That he wandered a little confirms his high regard for railways, and the member for Murchison-Eyre and the member for Moore conveyed the same opinion. When I was on a relative's farm at Ballidu I was told the railway line should have passed nearby and we would have to go only two miles to a silo; but that did not take place and we had to cart the wheat 13 miles because when the line was constructed it included a big bend at Damboring.

I agree that the railways have been the life blood of this State in regard to transport. They have made a tremendous contribution to the development of the State, and I share with the member for Avon disappointment at the disparaging words which are spoken about the

system from time to time. I think it is as well to remember the transition from steam to diesel, and then to standardisation. Members should remember that from about 1965 to 1973 there was not a freight rate increase, due to the improvement which took place with dieselisation and standardisation; and the people throughout the State shared in that benefit.

I will have the opportunity when some of the motions on the notice paper are debated to mention the upgrading that has taken place in transport. In every facet of transport—State ships, railways, buses, the airport, urban public transport—progress is being made.

I firmly believe that the railway system is the greatest contributor to decentralisation in this State. One has only to think of a town like Merredin, with 232 people directly employed in the railways. Together with their families, something like 1 000 people in that town are directly associated with Westrail. When we look at it in terms of pay packets and social involvement, it is a very important contribution to the community.

The member for Avon mentioned the barracks. I have inspected them and agree with him that the standard is very high. By interjection I told him that quite a few loco drivers are in management now, and they asked me to convey their best wishes to him. The member for Avon took the opportunity to relate to the House some of his experiences—not all of them, I might add—and it was a pleasant, nostalgic journey.

The member for Murchison-Eyre spoke about the reasons for winding up the railway, which have already been conveyed to the House in my second reading speech and the director general's report. He quite rightly placed great emphasis on the future construction of a railway linking the south and the north at Mt. Newman. Members will know that the Cabinet and the Premier have charged me with the responsibility of constantly reviewing the feasibility of constructing such a line with a view to making a recommendation for the consideration of Cabinet in due course. I think there will come a time when we have such a line. I am already working on selection of the route, the gauge, and other matters associated with it, in conjunction with my advisers. I can assure the member for Murchison-Eyre that I am totally on side with him in his objectives.

Had we rebuilt the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line, we would have had to pull up the line which exists now and put down something of higher standard. I therefore think it was advisable to wait until we had opportunities of greater

tonnages, and we will not have lost any money; we will have saved money.

The member for Murchison-Eyre said that the service which has replaced rail is operating effectively and has resulted in reduced freight rates to the people in those areas, who have welcomed it, although they are sad not to see the train running through.

The member for Moore supported what we are doing in progressing towards the eventual construction of a line from south to north. All in all, members have supported the legislation and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

ACTS AMENDMENT (MOTOR VEHICLE POOLS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR McIVER (Avon) [9.32 p.m.]: At the outset I want to put the House at ease by saying I do not intend to spend as much time on this Bill as I spent on the previous measure.

The measure before us amends the Transport Act, the Road Traffic Act, and the Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act, to allow for vehicle pooling. I firmly believe vehicle pooling has been happening for a long time. People who are employed by a Government instrumentality travel together to their place of employment to save fuel costs and for other reasons; and they have been doing this for some considerable time. So all this Bill does is make it legal for those people to continue to pool their vehicles and to enable the driver to be paid for his services.

One would expect that the taxi industry would be opposed to this Bill. As I understand the situation, although initially there was some form of objection, the industry is happy now that the situation has been explained to its members by the Transport Commission. Of course, the MTT now has free clipper bus services in the city, and the taxi industry does not object to them. Therefore I do not see there could be any objection to this Bill, which will assist and make legal the pooling of vehicles by rotation to take colleagues to their place of employment. Not only will participants share in the cost of fuel, but also, no doubt, in the cost of parking fees.

In essence this measure simply makes legal something that has been going on for a considerable number of years, particularly since fuel costs have increased. It is obvious from the manner in which I have spoken that the Opposition raises no objection to it, and I indicate that we support the Bill.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [9.35 p.m.]: I support this measure which concerns, as the member for Avon has said, the legitimisation of current car pooling arrangements. Car pooling, of course, is clearly unlawful today, but I am not aware that any prosecutions have taken place either recently or in the past.

Mr Skidmore: It is not an offence unless you pay for it.

Mr CLARKO: Perhaps I should have said I am convinced a great deal of car pooling has occurred in which people have been charged for the service rendered, but no action has been taken against them even though it is illegal. Therefore this Bill seeks to make legal something which is currently illegal.

The reason I have risen to speak is that I am concerned that this legislation may lead to something else; that is, the encouragement of further car pooling for payment. I note that the Minister in his second reading speech stated explicitly that the Government will not set out to promote paid car pooling. In the same speech the Minister gave four substantial reasons that the Government supports the introduction of this measure. The first is that it is asserted this will reduce air pollution; the second is that it will conserve scarce fuel; the third is that it will reduce traffic congestion; and the fourth is that it will defer expenditure on road improvements and parking facilities.

In respect of the last point, I hope that is not only a saving in the short term but that in the long term when the deferred road improvements and parking facilities are made they will not cost more in real terms.

I wonder whether it is expected that car pooling will continue at the same rate, because if that is the case I am not sure we will have achieved a great deal.

Promotion is one way of stepping up the incidence of car pooling, but it could also result from positive encouragement by legislation or by taking negative action against sole-occupant motorists.

I am most concerned about and most supportive of the motorist. Let me say frankly and unequivocally that it is my view that as time goes on, irrespective of the steps we take in

metropolitan Perth along the lines that have been put forward so far, we will move into an ever-increasing deficit in real terms in metropolitan transport. That concerns me because the taxpayer makes available the money for that ever-growing deficit, but the users of public transport in no way pay according to their capacity to pay.

There are some transport economists and others who suggest that drivers of one-occupant cars are selfish and wasteful, and something should be done about them. They should be branded as being unacceptable to our community, almost to the stage of branding them as being unpatriotic in some way. Certainly it has been suggested in other places very firmly that steps should be taken against the freedom of the single-car occupant in respect of his use of our roads, and particularly our freeways. That argument extends to the point where some suggest that just as it is promoted that buses on a busy road should be given a free lane to themselves, similarly drivers with more than one or two passengers should have access to the same free, fast moving bus lane, or perhaps an additional lane if one is available.

The effect of that, of course, is that a person travelling to work on his own will find himself in a tremendous strangulation of traffic, and a person with two or three passengers will sail merrily past the first driver in a lane with much less traffic.

I have a great deal of reservation about people who promote that because I think it will lead to everybody arguing about how dreadful is the person who happens to be driving on his own. The fact that a person drives on his own could have nothing at all to do with what he believes or what he would like to do. It is very easy for people who work in a big Government department—for example, the Transport Commission—and who have neighbours living a couple of doors away who wish to travel to work at the same time. It is a piece of cake for those people to make a car pooling arrangement. Probably it does not happen under this dreadful flexi-time arrangement whereby nobody is available in the office when one wants something.

However, it is not so easy for a person who is a shift worker or one who must go to less populated areas to reach his factory or office. Such arrangements bear unevenly and unfairly on such people and I believe there is no justification at all for saying the single occupant of a car should be constrained and deliberately left in a laneway which is always congested while a person who happens to have a couple of paying passengers should be entitled to sail freely down the road.

I am concerned if this is seen by some people as the essence of this legislation; that it is yet another step in that direction. You know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), that in Singapore the central part of the city is barred to drivers who do not have sufficient occupants in their cars. I understand in certain places it is suggested that unless one has two or three people in the car one will not be able to enter the central part of the city and park one's car. All these things will have only one effect: they will lead to the demise of the central city area of Perth, and I believe that would be a tremendous tragedy. We need the central Perth city and, of course, it needs us.

I hope in future when we consider measures such as this we will give more consideration to all motorists and in this case to the single-occupant motorist. The motorist is the complete bunny of Australia when one thinks of the burdens he must bear. The drinker of beer pays about half the price of a glass of beer in Government revenues of one sort or other; and he is in paradise compared with the poor motorist who is paying out inordinate sums of money which have been increased recently by the movement in the world parity pricing of fuel, about which I have a great deal of reservation.

I mentioned my reservations to the Prime Minister when he attended our State conference in July, because I believe world parity pricing represents a most uneven imposition on a State as large as Western Australia. It is a tremendous burden for us to carry, and this applies to the ordinary consumer who must pay freight charges; it applies even more deleteriously to the person who lives in the remote parts of Western Australia who must pay freight from Perth to his place in addition to the freight from the Eastern States to Perth. I believe we must look carefully at world parity pricing because it has many faults.

It is necessary to have an impost which would raise the price of petroleum products, particularly gasoline, in Australia so there is enough incentive for companies to search for oil. If there is further search, I believe there is a great probability of finding new reserves of oil. If the sheiks of the world were to come together and increase the price of petrol 100-fold, is that what we would do in Australia? I think not.

I am concerned also about the effect extensive car pooling would have on the taxi industry. Obviously the taxi industry is dependent on its pool of potential customers. We should be very proud of the taxis operating in metropolitan Perth. I have travelled in taxis, as no doubt you have, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Watt), in places like Amsterdam, Nairobi, Athens, and "dreadful"

Sydney. The service one receives from taxi drivers in those towns is not a fraction or a tithe of the standard of service we receive in Perth. Our taxi industry is something of which we can be proud. I do not know whether that is due to good legislation. Perhaps our good Minister for Transport should receive credit for that. Certainly the taxi drivers perform a tremendous service.

The cost of taxi fares in Perth is not high; and as the price of petrol becomes higher, more and more people are turning to the use of taxis as an alternative to the use of public transport. It is important that we keep a large number of taxi drivers on the road. They should have a reasonable and proper income.

Whilst I support this legislation, I feel there will be difficulty in policing it. Now there are car pools, and the members of them do pay. The Bill aims at stopping a driver from soliciting for passengers. Frankly I would be amazed if a successful prosecution could be launched under that provision. If I drive down the street in my car and there happens to be an attractive young girl at the bus stop, and I stop and offer her the opportunity to join my car pool, I would be very surprised if an action could be taken against me. Under the Bill, the chances of a prosecution will be equally great or as small as they are now. They will be negligible.

I would be surprised also if somebody were charged in our courts with requiring one of his car pool passengers to pay an amount greater than the two items set out under the legislation—that is, a charge for the running costs and a charge for parking. How is anybody to work out accurately what those charges will be? If a person in a car pool is happy to pay a higher amount, I see nothing wrong with that. As I say, this is not something that will be able to be policed.

I support the legislation as it is written. There may be problems with it. It might encourage excessive use of car pooling to the detriment of the taxi industry and to the detriment of the public transport system. In particular, I would be very much concerned if it was to the detriment of the ordinary motorist.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [9.49 p.m.]: I do not intend to delay the House very long in support of this Bill because, unlike my colleague the member for Karrinyup, I do not have fears about the effects of this legislation. It is a very simple piece of legislation that will legalise what is already happening to an unknown extent. However, the measure needs support because even if there is not much need for car pooling now, the demand will increase as time goes by. For that

reason alone, it is a wise and farsighted Government which brings forward this legislation.

The Minister pointed out that research had been done into the use of car pooling in other parts of Australia. That enabled me to compare the figures with some which came to my attention as a result of research and experimentation I did in my electorate. I will come to the results of that research in a moment.

Whilst there may not be many benefits in car pooling or car sharing in the State as a whole, it has particular significance to the outlying parts of the metropolitan area. It has significance to the sort of area I represent. The people in areas like my electorate commute long distances to work. They have to travel a great distance to reach their daily work places. As fuel prices and the costs of operating a car increase, I believe those people will seek to reduce the cost of travel to work by this method.

I mentioned I had conducted an experiment. Members will recollect at the beginning of 1979, when fuel prices started to increase rapidly, a great deal of public attention was focused upon the question of energy policies. Those policies related to liquid fuels in particular. In the debate that took place at that time, one of the most frequent and recurring themes was that there was a need to reduce the use of private motor vehicles. Much attention was focused upon public transport and its use or lack of patronage. At that time, the most frequent suggestion made by members of the public was that car pooling was a practical solution for reducing the cost of commuting; it was a practical way of reducing the amount of fuel used.

For this reason, I initiated a scheme in which I offered my office for use as a central data collecting and distribution point for matching people who might wish to participate in a car pooling arrangement. I thought my electorate, and the Mundaring Shire portion, was an appropriate area in which to see what could be done to encourage people to travel together. A large proportion of the work force living in the Mundaring Shire commuted to their work places in one direction, and that was westward. The major proportion commuted in their own cars, normally not carrying a passenger. That area was not served extremely well by public transport; and as a result of that the area had a high rate of ownership of motor vehicles *per capita*.

I took it upon myself to put out some "Householder" letters offering my office as a clearing house for bringing together the people who wanted to use car pooling. A total of 2 500

"Householder" deliveries were made; and the results are extremely interesting. I received six responses only, out of 2 500 letters. Of course, it may be that all those who wanted to participate in a car pooling system had already made their own arrangements. However, considering the traffic on the road each day, it is more likely that people did not want the inconvenience of sharing their vehicles with others. It seemed this also indicated that the price of fuel was not such at that stage that it would discourage people from using their own vehicles, and maintaining the convenience and freedom of being on their own.

As a result of correspondence with the Director General of Transport I discovered that the retail price of petrol in January last year represented only 75 per cent of the cost of fuel in 1966-67, if one compared the price with average weekly earnings. That was a clue to why people were not looking for ways to leave the family car at home. Of course, since then fuel prices have gone up; and one can expect that they will continue to rise in the future.

The point must be reached when the price will be such that people will be discouraged from using their vehicles for commuting to work. When that time is reached, this legislation will become of increasing benefit to people in the outlying parts of the metropolitan area particularly. It is for that reason I support this forward-looking legislation. It falls into place within the total package of strategies that the Government has adopted in saving fuel, and eventually making Western Australia self sufficient in its energy needs.

I do not expect many of the problems that have been outlined tonight by the member for Karrinyup. I am sure if any of those problems arise, the Government will hasten back into this place with legislation to meet the situation. In due course we will learn whether the member for Karrinyup is right and I am wrong, or vice versa. However, that is not important at this stage.

The important aspect of this legislation is that it removes the restrictions that pertain at present to car sharing or car pooling. This legislation will give people the legal protection, allowing them to be insured in case of accident. They will thus be safe from prosecutions that could arise out of the existing legislation.

The Bill commends itself. It is sensible and proper. For those reasons, I support it.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [10.00 p.m.]: After listening to the member for Karrinyup, I decided I should make a few comments in regard to the way in which car pooling operates

effectively in the case of big companies with large numbers of workers.

An example of this can be seen at the Alcoa establishment in Pittsburgh. That company has placed a large sheet of paper on the wall and this contains the areas in which all their employees reside. The directors of the company expect all the employees who come from one district in Pittsburgh and drive to the experimental works, to share cars. It is a very labour-intensive operation, therefore, instead of five or six people driving their own cars from the same area to the works, the employers expect the employees to operate a system of car pooling. It is a great problem for the firm to provide adequate parking facilities for large numbers of vehicles; therefore, they favour a system of car pooling.

I believe such a system could work here. Local authorities which have large numbers of employees who drive to work, could adopt a similar scheme, and people could be encouraged to travel together in one vehicle now that this alternative will have a degree of legality.

Previously there was doubt as to where a person stood when sharing vehicle costs. We know car pooling has operated for a long time and it would continue to operate, regardless of this legislation. However, if we want to clear the roads of excessive numbers of vehicles, it is sensible to encourage people to travel together in one car during peak periods.

There is nothing more stupid than a situation in which many people travel from the same suburb into Perth in individual vehicles. They then park their vehicles in the nearest parking area and drive home again at the end of the day. It would be far better if they shared vehicles under a car pooling system, because they would find it was much more economical.

A car pooling system would work particularly well for employees of establishments which are situated outside the city area. In such circumstances—for example, many Government departments, such as the Department of Agriculture, are situated out of the city—almost everyone travels to work by car. Therefore, departmental heads should set up some sort of co-ordinated car pooling system to try to encourage people to travel to work together. It would have the double-barrelled advantage of saving fuel and lessening congestion on the roads.

I see no great danger in this situation. As mentioned by the member for Karrinyup, there may be a problem in regard to the effect car pooling will have on the taxi industry. However, I do not believe there will be any significant effect,

because people who drive to work in their own cars, or in shared cars, would not be liable to call for a taxi to take them to work.

Therefore, I believe this is a good move on the part of the Government. The Minister for Transport does not make many good moves, but he must make a good one occasionally—he cannot be wrong all the time. To that extent, I support the proposition, because it has some advantages.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [10.04 p.m.]: I thank the member for Avon for his support of the legislation. He referred to the fact that the Bill makes it legal for people to operate car pools and he mentioned also that such an arrangement would encourage conservation of fuel. Fuel conservation is consistent with our energy policy and that is why the legislation has been introduced.

The member for Karrinyup was somewhat apprehensive about the measure. I feel he has to come to grips with the whole issue of public and private transport. Both forms of transport have their place and, as far as I am concerned, a car is a very efficient means of transport, if used properly.

I do not deny the individual the right to use his car in the way he sees fit. The member for Karrinyup must acknowledge also that we have a changing pattern of energy use and the Government should be commended for its policy in this regard.

I should like to point out to the member for Karrinyup that in the area of public transport, I intend to identify the social service and commercial aspects of MTT funding. We can then come to grips with the cost factor in transport. It is my ambition to hold costs wherever possible and to provide a more efficient public transport system. I acknowledge some people in the community need public transport, because they do not have an alternative form of transport, and we provide that service. I am sure the member for Karrinyup would not deny such people a public transport service either. I did not take the contribution by the member for Karrinyup to be critical, but rather it appeared to me to display a degree of apprehension. He is fully entitled to make the House aware of his feelings and I appreciate his remarks.

The member for Mundaring represents an electorate similar to mine. He recognises that car pooling can be of benefit to people who live some distance from the city. However, as I have said already, we do not expect a dramatic change in the transport habits of people. Car pooling is an option; it enables people who live in Mundaring,

Roleystone, or other areas distant from Perth, to use this system legally. At the same time, they will be able to conserve fuel and effect a saving in transport costs.

The ideal situation is for people who do not live on a bus route to drive to, say, Midland or Kelmscott transport stations in cars loaded to their efficient levels—that is, four or five people—and then move onto the public transport system.

I appreciate the remarks made by the member for Mundaring and also those of the member for Welshpool. It is unfortunate the member for Welshpool blotted his copybook in the last

paragraph of his speech; but that is politics and I accept it. Generally speaking, I appreciate the remarks made by all members in this regard.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE INDUSTRY ADVANCES ACT

Losses

691. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

(1) Further to my question 530 of 1980 relating to losses incurred by industries assisted under the Industry Advances Act (1947), what are the names of the firms and the amount of payments made from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in respect of each firm which comprise the total amounts of—

(a) Government advances in 1975-76;

(b) guaranteed loans in—

(i) 1974-75;

(ii) 1975-76;

(iii) 1976-77;

(iv) 1977-78;

(v) 1978-79;

(vi) 1979-80;

(c) Government loans in—

(i) 1975-76;

(ii) 1976-77;

(iii) 1977-78;

(iv) 1978-79;

(v) 1979-80;

(d) other forms of assistance in—

(i) 1975-76;

(ii) 1977-78;

(iii) 1978-79?

(2) What are the other forms of assistance referred to in answer to (d) of part (2) of the question?

(3) Under what Act or other authority was the assistance given in each case?

(4) For what purpose was the assistance given to each firm?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) (a)	\$
Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty Ltd	440 613
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd.....	150 000
(b) (i) 1974-75	
Great West Processed Foods Pty Ltd.....	217
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	36 524
R. H. & V. A. Swift T/A Kimbolton Station	11 448
D. McDaniel and Son Pty Ltd.....	72
Emu Experimental & Research Farm Pty Ltd.....	29 658
Prosol (Australia) Ltd.....	40 824
Lenham Tanneries Pty Ltd.....	24 525
(ii) 1975-76	
Lenham Tanneries Pty Ltd.....	51 428
Albany Woollen Mills Ltd.....	9 651
John Cochran Pty Ltd.....	6 044
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	18 920

(iii) 1976-77	\$
Max Schmidt Denmark.....	6 335
Lenham Tanneries Pty Ltd.....	259 889
Southern Ocean Fish Processors Pty Ltd.....	1 328
Kinmar Marble Pty Ltd.....	35 255
John Cochran Pty Ltd.....	6 044
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd....	263 356
Graincol Ltd.....	28 108
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	19 701
Coral Bay Pty Ltd.....	174 065

(iv) 1977-78	
Coral Bay Pty Ltd.....	22 505
Mitex International Pty Ltd.....	305 181
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	19 701

(v) 1978-79	
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	19 701
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd....	400 000
Mitex International Pty Ltd.....	6 213
Lenham Tanneries Pty Ltd.....	93
Southern Ocean Fish Processors Pty Ltd.....	2

(vi) 1979-80	
WA Worsted & Woollen Mills Ltd.....	19 701
Mitex International Pty Ltd.....	575
Manjimup Canning Pty Ltd.....	72 000
K. W. & H. J. Forrest & Hagel Pty Ltd (Forrest Farms).....	175 000
G. J. Clarke Pty Ltd.....	44 149
Southern Ocean Fish Processors Pty Ltd.....	1 116 719

(c) (i) 1975-76	
Albany Woollen Mills.....	244 868
Industrial Extracts Ltd.....	642
South Australian Barytes Ltd....	13 250
Cygnus Productions Pty Ltd.....	42 000

(ii) 1976-77	
Foster Clarke (W.A.) Pty Ltd....	5 817

(iii) 1977-78	
Causal Ltd.....	19 000

(iv) 1978-79	
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd....	255 000
Academy Entertainment Pty. Ltd.....	500 000

(v) 1979-80	
Manjimup Canning Pty Ltd.....	100 000

(d) (i) 1975-76	
Great West Processed Foods Pty Ltd.....	125
Hill 50 Gold Mine.....	188 019

(ii) 1977-78	
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd....	300 000

(iii) 1979-80	
Manjimup Canning Co-op Ltd....	300 000

(2) Grants and Subsidies.

(3) All assistance was given under the Industry (Advances) Act (1947).

(4) Each firm received assistance for either working capital and/or capital expenditure purposes.

RAILWAYS

Freight Rates: Grain

728. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

On a per tonne basis, do grain growers in Western Australia pay a greater percentage of Westrail's fixed costs than Alcoa?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Yes, and indeed this is to be expected because grain operations include significantly more fixed cost resources than those required for Alcoa. For example, more kilometres of track, more locomotives and wagons (many of which have to be provided for seasonal peaks only) and more administrative and supervisory staff—and of course grain tonnage is less than half the tonnage hauled for Alcoa. If the comparison is made in terms of the proportion of total revenue received, Alcoa's contribution to fixed costs would be higher.

DECENTRALISATION

Assistance to Decentralised Industry Act

773. Mr COWAN, to the Treasurer:

- (1) In the last financial year, what was the maximum amount of money available through the Assistance to Decentralised Industry Act?
- (2) Is there a limitation placed on the amount of funds made available to individual businesses through the Act?
- (3) (a) How many businesses applied for assistance under the Act;
(b) how many were granted assistance;
(c) what was the value of the assistance granted?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) No specific amount was allocated for the purposes of the Assistance to Decentralised Industry Act.
- (2) The only limitation imposed by that Act is that the benefit received shall not exceed the amount of pay-roll tax actually paid by the beneficiary.
- (3) In the 1979-80 financial year—
 - (a) 46 decentralised businesses applied for assistance under the Act,
 - (b) 16 were granted assistance;
 - (c) to a value of \$88 195.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Museum of WA: Geraldton

782. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

- (1) What stage has been reached concerning the establishment of a branch of the Western Australia Museum in Geraldton?
- (2) When is it expected that the proposed branch will be fully operational?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The branch curator was appointed in May 1980, and has been in Geraldton since late June. The renovation of the old railway station building as part of the branch Museum complex was completed in 1979. Plans for the development of the complex, in particular its displays, are now progressing.
- (2) The Trustees of the Western Australian Museum have made submissions in their estimates for 1980-81 for the operations of the existing Maritime Museum to be taken over by the Western Australian Museum this financial year as part of the progressive development of the branch. The date of full operation of the branch will be dependent upon availability of future financial support, particularly for additional staffing and displays in the old railway station, and for upgrading the displays in the existing Maritime Museum.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

John Willcock and Geraldton

786. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Government given further consideration to when John Willcock High School will be upgraded to a five-year high school?
- (2) What is the Government's expected timetable for this development?
- (3) What is the current enrolment in each year at—
 - (a) John Willcock High School;
 - (b) Geraldton Senior High School?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) The future status of John Willcock High School was considered earlier in 1980. As the Geraldton Senior High School will be able to accommodate all upper-school students in its specialist facilities until 1985 at least, no change in the present secondary school pattern at Geraldton is required.

(3) (a) John Willcock High School—

Year 8	126	
Year 9	142	
Year 10	145	
Year 11	12	(other courses)
	<u>425</u>	

(b) Geraldton Senior High School—

Year 8	223	
Year 9	233	
Year 10	222	
Year 11	181	(Certificate of secondary education courses)
Year 11	24	(other courses)
Year 12	88	
Special Class	19	
	<u>990</u>	

RECREATION

Institute of Sport

788. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

What is the Government's contribution to the Western Australian Institute of Sport for the 1979-80 financial year and 1980-81?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The Western Australian Institute of Sport, which is an arm of the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation, was inaugurated in March, 1980.

Department for Youth Sport and Recreation assistance to sports education and development is part of the overall programme to develop general community recreation throughout Western Australia. Many of the programmes and services are, therefore, interwoven, for example, most of the facilities developed with State Government assistance are multi-purpose providing for social and cultural activities, as well as sporting activities.

It is, therefore, difficult to segregate items of expenditure.

Through DYSR the amount of funds expended during the financial year 1979-80 on sports education and sports development programmes is estimated at \$162 000.

No specific estimates are available for the period from April 1980, to 30 June 1980.

From April 1980, all programmes for sports development and sports education continue to be run by the Sports Development Branch of the department under the banner of the Western Australian Institute of Sport. Some of these programmes are assisted by private sponsorship.

Departmental funds available for 1980-81 will not be known until the Budget appropriations are made later this month.

ALUMINA REFINERY

Alwest: Worsley

789. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Will he release the Environmental Protection Authority's objections to the Worsley alumina project?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The Government has released all the documents which I believe should be released, and the Government has gone further than that and given very full explanations as to any minor differences between the EPA suggestions and what we finally approved.

So far as the Government is concerned, there are no further documents to be released.

POLICE

Crime Rate

790. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Does Western Australia have a higher crime rate than other States in terms of proportion of convicted prisoners per head of population and crimes per head of population each year in—

- (a) homicides;
- (b) serious assault;
- (c) robbery;

- (d) rape;
- (e) breaking and entering;
- (f) motor vehicle theft;
- (g) fraud;
- (h) forgery; and
- (i) false pretences?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) to (i) It is not possible with statistics available in this State to answer the question in its present form.

PREMIER

Reference to Political and Social Activists

795. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he name the political and social activists he described as evil in an address to police graduates in March this year?
- (2) Will he also list the actions of the political and social activists who are considered to be evil?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) In my speech to police graduates on 28 March 1980, I mentioned that the most dangerous enemy they would face was the political or social activist, cunning at using "front" organisations and setting themselves up as defenders of principles.

I also said that almost without exception, the principles they pretend to defend will be the very ones they seek to destroy.

I told the graduates their task would not be helped by the difficulty of distinguishing between these evil people and those whom these people seek to use.

The Leader of the Opposition should be aware that there is distinction between legal, honourable, and principled activity to advance a point of view and activity which is illegal, manipulative, divisive or against the interests of the whole community and which seeks to break down the fabric of our society. The determination of what is reasonable and what is actionable is often a very onerous task, but it is one which law-

makers and law-administrators must face with great sensitivity and integrity.

The point is that curbing the excesses of activists who exceed the limits of what is acceptable is a task for the police. They are the ones who may often have to face physical danger and foul abuse. Young police officers are entitled to be warned of this, as I warned them in my 28 March address.

For reasons which may only be guessed, the Leader of the Opposition in this question wishes me to provide him with a list of names of activists. This I will not do. I am sure he has had enough experience in public life to prepare his own list.

EDUCATION

Handicapped Children

797. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many children assessed as mentally handicapped are known to the Education Department to be waiting to be accommodated at "special schools"?
- (2) When and in what manner is it expected they will be accommodated?
- (3) In cases where it is apparent that distress is resulting to the child and/or parent, can special consideration be given to accommodating such child out of turn?
- (4) If so, what action should be taken by the parent?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) There are approximately eight children awaiting admission to one special school which serves a large area in the south-east metropolitan corridor.
- (2) These children will be accommodated in a special school due to open in 1981.
- (3) As a general rule children are not admitted to special schools in listed order but on a "needs" basis.
- (4) Close contact is maintained with parents of children with special needs and parents are always encouraged to consult principals. In this way departmental officers are kept fully aware of current circumstances and changing needs.

BOATS

Fremantle Sailing Club (Inc.)

798. Mr PARKER, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What are the financial arrangements existing between the Fremantle Sailing Club (Inc.) and the Government with respect to—
 - (a) grants;
 - (b) loans;
 - (c) guarantees?
- (2) (a) Has the Fremantle Sailing Club asked for any variation in these arrangements or for any additional assistance for any purpose;
- (b) if so, what variation or additional assistance; and
- (c) for what purpose?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1.) (a) An interest subsidy to a maximum of \$160 000 per annum for a three year period is being provided, or until such time as the total subsidy is paid, but not exceeding \$480 000 in total.
- (b) Nil.
- (c) Sureties to support borrowings of the amounts shown have been issued to—

State Government Insurance Office.....	\$1 600 000
Commonwealth Trading Bank of Australia	\$2 360 000
- (2.) (a) Yes.
- (b) To convert the existing loans and to increase the borrowings to \$4.5 million.
- (c) The additional funds were required to meet the cost of paving, kerbing, reticulation, and other works. The request has not been proceeded with by the club.

BOATS

Fremantle Sailing Club (Inc.)

799. Mr PARKER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has the Minister received a submission from the Fremantle Sailing Club (Inc.) relating to expansion of its harbour facilities, numbers of boat pens, and/or the building of additional on-land facilities?

- (2) If "Yes", did such a submission include reference to a three-storied car park with a public restaurant on top?
- (3) Has the Minister been advised of a resolution of the Fremantle City Council in the following terms—

That the Minister for Lands be requested that any expansion of the facilities at Success Harbour be subject to the approval of the Fremantle City Council, bearing in mind the terms of the existing lease agreement, and the 'on-land' implications of any increase in the number of boat pens?

- (4) Has the Minister considered—
 - (a) the Fremantle Sailing Club submission;
 - (b) the Fremantle City Council resolution?
- (5) If "Yes" to either, what is the result of the consideration in each case?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) No. However the Fremantle Sailing Club have advised of their intention to conduct a feasibility study into the possible future extension of the facilities provided.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) and (5) Answered by (1).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Upper Gascoyne, Murchison, and Yalgoo Shires

800. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) What are the total number of electors on the rolls for each of the following local authorities:—
 - (a) Upper Gascoyne;
 - (b) Murchison;
 - (c) Yalgoo?
- (2) (a) How many wards do each of these authorities have; and
- (b) what is the respective ward enrolment figure?
- (3) (a) Were there any elections in these shires at the last local government election day; and
- (b) if so, what were the details of voting in each election?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) This information is not kept at my department.
- (2) (a) Upper Gascoyne—six
Murchison—two
Yalgoo—four.
(b) This information is not kept at my department.
- (3) (a) and (b) The position on the occasion of the 1980 annual elections was as follows—
Shire of Upper Gascoyne
There were two vacancies of which one was filled by the sole candidate being returned unopposed. The first count for the other vacancy, which was contested by three candidates, was—

J. E. Orr—12 votes

A. G. Baun—10 votes

D. P. Steadman—7 votes

J. E. Orr was declared elected after the second count.

Shires of Murchison and Yalgoo

Three vacancies at each of these shires were filled by the sole candidates being returned unopposed.

WATER RESOURCES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Denmark, Kent, Warren, and Wellington Rivers: Land Clearing

801. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) How many landowners in each of the following catchment areas have received compensation payment for land for which they have been refused a clearing licence:
 - (a) Wellington;
 - (b) Warren;
 - (c) Denmark;
 - (d) Kent?
- (2) What amount of compensation has been paid for such land in each of these areas?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) (a) 3.
(b) 2.
(c) nil.
(d) nil.

- (2) (a) \$178 500.
(b) \$175 770
(c) Nil.
(d) Nil.

WEST TRADE CENTRE LIMITED

Members and Capital

802. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What are the names of the organisations and persons that constitute the West Trade Centre Limited?
- (2) (a) What is the total amount of the West Trade Centre's equity capital;
(b) what is the amount of equity capital subscribed or contributed by the Government;
(c) what is the amount of equity capital subscribed or contributed by each of the West Trade Centre's other shareholders?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Subscribers to the memorandum of association are—

The Perth Chamber of Commerce
The Confederation of Western
Australian Industry (Inc.)
Kenneth Arthur Dickson,
Chairman, 150th Anniversary
Industries Committee
The Chamber of Mines of W.A.
(Inc.)
Government of Western Australia.

- (2) (a) to (c) In the memorandum and articles of association, registered at the Corporate Affairs Office, each subscriber undertakes to contribute up to \$100 each in the event of the company being wound up; i.e. they are limited by guarantee—clause 6 of memorandum and articles.

COMPANIES

Government Interest

803. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

Further to my question without notice 133 of Thursday, 4 September 1980, and the corrected answer to question 527 given by the Treasurer on Tuesday, 9 September relating to financial assistance to the Systems Research Institute of Australia and the Government's interest therein, will he specify:—

- (a) the Minister and department shown in schedule B of the Appropriation Act (Consolidated Revenue Fund) 1979-80 under which the \$270 000 was voted to be advanced to the Systems Research Institute of Australia;
- (b) the category of expenditure of the Minister and the department shown in schedule D of the Appropriation Act (Consolidated Revenue Fund) 1979-80 under which the advance was authorised by Parliament;
- (c) the division and item of expenditure shown in the Estimates of the Consolidated Revenue Fund 1979-80 under which the advance was approved by Parliament to be made?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (a) to (c) The advance to the Systems Research Institute of Australia Ltd was made under schedule C of the Appropriation Act, and will be dealt with under the normal procedures for recoupable advances.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Electrical Workers Licensing Board

804. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Will regulations relating to the operations of electrical contractors and the Electrical Workers Licensing Board be laid upon the Table of the House in the foreseeable future?
- (2) If so, when is this likely to occur?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) There are a number of administrative matters still to be finalised. Subject to them being resolved in the near future, it is anticipated the regulations could be finalised by mid-1981.

EDUCATION

Swimming Classes

805. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Why has his department found it necessary to raise the cost of vacation swimming classes to \$4 per child?

- (2) Is he aware that two years ago the cost was \$1, last year \$2, and now a rise of 300 per cent?
- (3) Due to the many family economic factors, is he aware that this rise will prevent many parents from allowing their children to attend?
- (4) Is he further aware that a family of two children having to be transported by car or bus will cost approximately \$18 per week?
- (5) As this vitally important lesson to all children used to be called "free swimming lessons", will he give consideration to making the vacation swimming classes free to all school children?
- (6) If not, why not?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) The increase in the enrolment fee for vacation swimming classes to \$4 per child is the first increase for four years. Therefore the actual rise is 100 per cent over four years rather than the figure suggested by Mr Bateman of 300 per cent over two years.
- (2) The vacation swimming classes programme has always included an enrolment fee for children as part of its structure and, in fact, the entire operation has to a large degree been self-supporting. It is the income from enrolment fees which pays the instructors' allowances and these also have not been increased since January 1977.
- (3) and (4) The Education Department recognises the importance of keeping costs to the lowest possible level. However, in real terms, the costs for January 1981, are not considered to be excessive, nor are they significantly greater than they were in 1977 when the \$2 enrolment fee was first introduced.
- (5) and (6) There is no record over the history of these classes, under different Government administrations, of any attempt to provide free swimming lessons during the January vacation period. On the other hand, the Education Department does provide free classes for primary school children, in school time, for 11 weeks each year.

FUEL AND ENERGY: NUCLEAR

Power Station: Studies

806. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Further to part (3) of question 670 of 1980 concerning reports available to the Government on a nuclear power plant, can he advise why the information made available at this stage to the Government is not in a form appropriate to be tabled?
- (2) In view of the widespread interest in current nuclear developments throughout the world and aspects of nuclear power plant characteristics and planning, will he ensure that this information is made available to the public?
- (3) Will he table a detailed site engineering study of the Breton Bay site carried out by Maunsell & Partners?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The information currently being provided for the commission relates in most cases to specialised exchanges of correspondence on particular technical or regulatory aspects of nuclear development and, as such, are not suitable for tabling in Parliament, although the information will be integrated into overall studies.

Another area of technical information relating to nuclear plant is the survey of activities as reported in the technical and scientific literature and other sources throughout the world regarding all aspects of nuclear power plant, technical features, regulatory siting and other relevant information. The nature of the reports on this area now being provided to the commission are cryptic and prepared essentially for people with a background knowledge of nuclear affairs. Further, they are intended, in many cases, merely to flag up points and incidents which the commission may wish to have researched in detail. Hence they are often incomplete and the commission has advised me that they would require substantial further researching and documentation before they could be made public.

Consideration is being given and an assessment of costs prepared for the

regular presentation—perhaps at intervals of six or 12 months—of a report suitable to be tabled in Parliament and for public distribution which is fully researched and completely accurate, and which embraces all those issues which members would find of interest.

- (3) and (4) The report referred to is a detailed technical document containing geological and site engineering information. It represents part only of the information which must be gathered and analysed regarding the Breton Bay site. A report on the complete investigations is expected to be completed in one to two years' time and general information will be made available when the studies are completed.

MINING TOWNS

Carly Report

807. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Further to question 2079 of 7 November, 1979 to the former Minister for Industrial Development concerning the Carly Report, and the Minister's statement that the remaining volumes not tabled on 7 November, 1979 would be tabled in due course, why in his answer to question 558 of 3 September, 1980 did he refuse to table further volumes of the report?
- (2) Will he now table those further volumes?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) As I stated in my reply to question 558 of 3 September 1980, the Carly reports have been used as a starting point for discussions between the State, local authorities, and the companies involved.

Without coming to any conclusion on the balance of the Carly reports, the Government commissioned Mr G. Cooper to review the remaining volumes which translated the principles propounded in volume 1, tabled on 13 September 1979, to a number of towns and to develop agreements, if possible, between local authorities, companies, and Government as appropriate.

Negotiations are proceeding and at a suitable time, Mr Cooper will report on the outcome and a further statement can then be made.

NOONKANBAH STATION

Transport of Drilling Rig: Mobile Canteen

808. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Further to question 664 of 1980 concerning mobile canteens for the transport of a drilling rig, can he now advise the cost?

Mr HASSELL replied:

No.

DECENTRALISATION

Albany: Car Battery Manufacturer

809. Mr DAVIES, to the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) Is it fact that an Albany based firm producing car batteries is moving its operations to Perth?
- (2) If so, why?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Albany Battery Manufacturing Co. Pty Ltd. is the only manufacturer of batteries in this State. It markets throughout the State with 56 per cent of sales being made in the Perth metropolitan area. The company anticipates this proportion to increase substantially in the future. In order to withstand competition from major Eastern States' manufacturers, the company has found it necessary to locate near its major market.

The company has made it clear to the Government that there is nothing further it can do to affect its decision.

ALUMINA REFINERY

Alcoa: Residue Ponds

810. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Did he send to the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority on 14 July last a letter referring to residue disposal by Alcoa of Australia Ltd.?

- (2) Was reference made to the new designs for the residue ponds in the following terms: "These designs will be submitted to Government in August 1980."?

- (3) In the next paragraph was following comment made:—

I have decided that the above information should be referred to the Environmental Protection Authority in accordance with Section 57(1) of the Environment Protection Act, 1971.?

- (4) Did the letter then ask for any comments?

- (5) (a) Have the designs in fact been submitted to the Government and has he received any comments;
(b) if so, what were those comments?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (5) Correspondence between me and the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority is confidential, although I am aware that the letter referred to was apparently stolen and copies made available to *The West Australian*. This matter is still the subject of a police investigation. From the tenor of the member's question, he would appear to have detailed knowledge of the correspondence and the police would appreciate his assistance with their inquiries.

STATE HERITAGE LEGISLATION

Introduction

811. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Why is the Government unable to introduce heritage legislation in the current session of Parliament?
- (2) In view of the problem of buildings worthy of preservation being demolished, will he expedite matters to ensure that the legislation is brought to Parliament as soon as possible?
- (3) Is he aware that the National Trust suggested draft legislation providing for preservation orders on historic buildings about 10 years ago?

- (4) Is he also aware that the State Heritage Commission set up to draft legislation was formed nearly two years ago?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The new draft legislation has now been with the WA Heritage Committee for some 12 months and it is planned that a full report of the committee's deliberations and recommendations will be submitted to the Minister for Cultural Affairs by December of this year.

It has been necessary to very thoroughly examine and scrutinise the draft, as such questions as the infringement of the rights of property owners and adequate compensation are matters that cannot be dealt with lightly.

A balanced and workable piece of legislation has been the primary objective of the WA Heritage Committee and this has entailed the seeking of advice on the legalities of parts of the draft, as well as the interaction of other legislation.

- (2) It is the intention of the Government to introduce the draft in the autumn session 1981.
 (3) Yes.
 (4) Yes.

HEALTH

Abrolhos Islands Fishermen

812. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has his department given consideration to the need for improvement to the level of health facilities available at the Abrolhos Islands during the annual rock lobster fishing season?
 (2) If "Yes", what are the results of such consideration?
 (3) If "No" to (1), would he be prepared to initiate an examination of the needs of the fishermen and their families concerned to assess whether improvements can be made to the facilities available?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) General improvement effected with basic sanitation relating to toilet facilities, waste disposal, and housing.
 (3) Not applicable.

FISHERIES

Rock Lobsters

813. Mr CARR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Has the Minister received representations from an organisation of coastal rock lobster fishermen operating out of Geraldton, Dongara, and Kalbarri, for changes to be made to the rock lobster fishing season?
 (2) What consideration has been given or is being given to the submission?
 (3) Are any changes envisaged to the licensed "season" for rock lobster fishing?
 (4) If "Yes" to (3), will the Minister please advise of the details?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) Their representations have been considered in that the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife received a deputation from this group and the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee has considered the proposals put forward.
 (3) No.
 (4) See (3).

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

Centres: Geraldton

814. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Which pre-primary or pre-school centres in Geraldton are operated by the Education Department?
 (2) (a) Which buildings used for these centres are owned by the department;
 (b) which buildings are the subject of lease agreements or rental arrangements?
 (3) With regard to each building mentioned in answer to question (2)(b)—
 (a) who owns the building;
 (b) what is the rent or lease figure;
 (c) when does the lease expire?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Six of the seven early childhood centres in Geraldton are Education Department pre-primary centres. They are—

Primary schools at Allendale, Beachlands, Bluff Point, Geraldton, Mt. Tarcoola—2 Centres—and Rangeway.

- (2) (a) Beachlands, Bluff Point and Mt. Tarcoola—1 centre.
- (b) Allendale, Geraldton, Mt Tarcoola—1 centre—and Rangeway.
- (3) (a) Rangeway is owned by the State Housing Commission, Mt. Tarcoola belongs to the Shire of Greenough, and others are owned by the Geraldton Town Council.
- (b) and (c) Rangeway, \$26 per annum expiring on 3-7-83
Mt. Tarcoola, \$750 per annum expiring on 2-1-84
Allendale, \$750 per annum expiring on 29-9-84
Geraldton \$987.44 per annum expiring on 3-7-83.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Adult Franchise

815. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Further to her answer to question 720 of 1980 referring to a poll of metropolitan local authorities on the question of adult franchise:

- (a) which councils supported adult franchise;
- (b) which councils opposed adult franchise;
- (c) which councils expressed no opinion?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (a) Adult franchise was advocated by the following seven councils—

the Cities of Fremantle, Melville, and Subiaco; the Towns of Claremont, Cockburn, and Mosman Park; and the Shire of Kalamunda.

- (b) and (c) Of the 22 out of 26 metropolitan councils which submitted comments on the draft Bill, only the above seven specifically commented on the question of adult franchise.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Adult Franchise

816. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Further to her answer to part (3) of question 721 of 1980 relevant to local government elections, in which she claimed that my question was based on a premise which is not necessarily correct, will she please specify any wrong premises in my assertion that Western Australia has the most restrictive franchise in local government elections of all States?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

In part (3) of question 721, the member presumed to know the franchise that would be "retained" in future legislation. That will not be known until draft legislation is considered and passed by the Parliament.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Enrolments

817. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

What is the total number of persons enrolled on all local authority rolls in Western Australia?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

This information is not available from my department.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Public Participation

818. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Election returns for 1980 show candidates were either elected unopposed or, where an election was held, the voter turnout was generally between 10-30 per cent. Is the Government satisfied that this is a healthy state of affairs in municipal government?

- (2) What steps have been initiated to improve the level of participation at local elections?

- (3) What changes to part IV of the Local Government Act, as envisaged in the draft Bill, make efforts to improve public participation in local council elections, and how are these changes to effect such an aim?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Experience has shown that electors of a municipality go to the polls in much greater numbers when the council is involved in issues of a vital or controversial nature.

The smaller voter turnouts on other occasions is not symptomatic of an unhealthy state of affairs.

- (2) I believe that councils themselves have been to the fore in promoting greater awareness of the role of local government in the community. Much has been done by individual municipalities to keep their inhabitants fully informed about their councils' policies and activities.

Short of compulsion, I am not sure that there is any better way of encouraging greater participation in elections.

- (3) The early, absent and postal voting provisions in the draft Bill would provide greater opportunity for electors to cast their votes. However, I believe that any apathy that may exist with respect to local government could be overcome more effectively by greater public awareness of the important role played by local government in the community rather than by the imposition of statutory measures.

PASTORAL LEASES

Beneficial Interests

819. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Do any individuals or groups hold a beneficial interest in any area of pastoral leasehold land exceeding 404 000 hectares?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- (a) in how many cases does this apply;
- (b) with whom does the beneficial interest lie in each case?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) Apart from the Aboriginal Lands Trust which, as a trustee body is not subject to the pastoral lease area limitation of 404 686 hectares, there are no individuals registered as holding or maintaining a beneficial interest in an area of pastoral leasehold land exceeding the maximum statutorily permitted, but there are two companies in this category.

These are Thiess Brothers Pty Limited, of Queensland, and the Australian Land and Cattle Company Limited. The former is registered lessee while the latter holds shares in pastoral companies with leases in the Kimberley division.

There are a number of loosely termed "groups" which may appear to hold more than the permissible leasehold area, but these comprise company structures with diverse proprietorship and differing shareholding that does not infringe the Land Act in relation to maximum area.

SOIL EROSION

Pastoral Areas

820. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has an investigation into soil erosion in any part of the pastoral areas of Western Australia been carried out by the Commonwealth Government in the last 10 years?
- (2) If "Yes"—
- (a) when was such a survey carried out;
- (b) what recommendations did such investigation make with regard to the pastoral areas;
- (c) what would be the cost of implementing such recommendations;
- (d) does the Government propose to proceed with the implementation of such recommendations?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The information sought by the member was contained in a report "A Basis for Soil Conservation Policy in Australia" tabled in this House on 3 April 1979.

No special survey was carried out. The report was a collation and analysis of previous surveys and knowledge of land degradation in the pastoral and agricultural zones of Australia existing in 1977.

This report is a useful background document in the formulation of policy for the pastoral industry.

HEALTH

Fluoride: Aluminium Smelter

821. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What amount of fluoride is it estimated that the proposed aluminium smelter at Wagerup will emit per annum—
 - (a) in total;
 - (b) within a radius of one kilometre of the smelter;
 - (c) within a radius of two kilometres of the smelter;
 - (d) within a radius of three kilometres of the smelter?
- (2) What are the maximum levels of fluoride emission which are tolerated from such works—
 - (a) in Western Australia;
 - (b) under world health standards;
 - (c) in the United States of America?
- (3) Will fluoride emissions from the proposed aluminium smelter at Wagerup come within the levels required by the Western Australian Department of Health?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) (a) 264 tonnes assuming an annual production of 264 000 tonnes of aluminium per annum;
- (b) to (d) The amount is independent of radius from the smelter.
- (2) (a) There is no level at the moment;
- (b) to my knowledge the World Health Organisation has not prescribed an emission standard for aluminium smelters;
- (c) 1.0 kilogram per tonne of aluminium produced, with excursions not exceeding 0.3 kilogram per tonne.

- (3) The Air Pollution Control Council is at present considering ambient levels of fluorides to protect human health, vegetation and grazing animals and it may be presumed that fluoride emissions from a proposed aluminium smelter will be set at levels which will not exceed these ambient levels.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Blood Alcohol Levels

822. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) (a) What number of drivers of motor vehicles were involved in fatal accidents in 1979;
- (b) of this number, how many had a blood alcohol level exceeding 0.08 per cent?
- (2) (a) What number of drivers of motor vehicles were involved in fatal accidents in the first half of 1980;
- (b) of this number, how many had a blood alcohol level exceeding 0.08 per cent?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) (a) 336 drivers of motor vehicles were involved in fatal accidents in 1979.
- (b) 85 of these had a blood alcohol level exceeding 0.08 per cent. There were another seven drivers who were suspected of having alcohol in their body, but either refused to be tested or were unable to be tested.
In 1979, alcohol had been consumed by persons involved in 50 per cent of fatal road traffic accidents in Western Australia. This included drivers, pedestrians and passengers—where passenger action is believed to have had some bearing on the accident.
- (2) (a) 153 drivers of motor vehicles were involved in fatal accidents in the first half of 1980.
- (b) 32 of these had a blood alcohol level exceeding 0.08 per cent. There were another 14 drivers who were suspected of having alcohol in their body, but either refused to be tested, were unable to be tested, or the alcohol level is not available.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Pesticide Levels

823. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many samples of fruit and vegetables were taken from the Perth metropolitan markets in—
 - (a) 1979;
 - (b) first half of 1980,
 to determine insecticide and pesticide residues?
- (2) For what specific pesticide residues were examinations carried out?
- (3) In how many instances was the permissible level exceeded, and by how much in each case?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) 305;
- (b) 194.
- (2) Organo phosphate, organo chlorine, and diphenylamine.
- (3) Organo phosphate—20

0.05 mg/kg	3 samples
0.10 mg/kg	4 samples
0.20 mg/kg	1 sample
0.30 mg/kg	1 sample
0.50 mg/kg	6 samples
0.80 mg/kg	1 sample
1.0 mg/kg	3 samples
1.50 mg/kg	1 sample

 Organo chlorine—10

0.1 mg/kg	3 samples
0.2 mg/kg	1 sample
0.4 mg/kg	2 samples
0.5 mg/kg	1 sample
2.0 mg/kg	1 sample
2.5 mg/kg	2 samples

In all cases where above tolerance levels are detected my department makes direct contact with the growers concerned.

STOCK: SHEEP

Export

824. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many live sheep have been exported from Western Australia to this time in 1980?

- (2) Has an estimation been undertaken of the number of those sheep exported which were—

- (a) below three years of age;
- (b) female,

and, if so, what were the numbers in each case?

- (3) If no estimation of young or female sheep has been undertaken, does the Government intend to carry out such estimations?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 1990 871 between 1 January to 31 August.
- (2) (a) No.
- (b) 47 435.
- (3) No. Dental inspection to determine age is not practical due to the large number of sheep in consignments.

FERTILISERS

Analyses

825. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many analyses of samples of fertilisers containing trace elements were carried out in 1979 and what minerals were involved?
- (2) Of these, how many showed a content of the specified mineral in the fertiliser at a lesser level than indicated by the manufacturer?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 70 analyses from 21 samples involving phosphorus, copper, zinc, and molybdenum.
- (2) Seven. In no case however was any analysis below the tolerance allowed under the Fertilizers Act.

HOUSING

Geraldton

826. Mr CARR, to the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) With reference to his answer to part (2) of Legislative Council question 179 of 1980 concerning State Housing

Commission building programmes, do the 38 dwelling units detailed constitute the commission's entire 1980-81 programme in the towns concerned, or is there to be an additional 1980-81 programme separate from these 38 "carry over" dwellings from the 1979-80 programme?

- (2) If there is to be a 1980-81 building programme in Geraldton in addition to the 13 units detailed in part (2) of Council question 179 and in Assembly question 697 of 1980, will he please provide details of such programme?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The 1980-81 construction programme will be finalised after the State Budget is brought down.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Enrolments

827. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Since many Government postings take place during the Christmas period for such people as teachers, and given that many will be occupiers who arrive at the end of January, is it possible for them to become electors under the existing Local Government Act or under the provisions of the draft Bill to part IV?
- (2) If "Yes", will she please explain how?
- (3) If not, what steps could be taken to ensure their enrolment?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) It is possible under both.
- (2) The provisions of section 59(2)(a) of the Local Government Act and the provisions of proposed subdivision E of the draft Bill, allow a new elector to be included on a municipal electoral roll.
- (3) Not applicable.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Flexibility of System

828. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Is it her policy that the electoral system for local councils should be the same for

all councils, or should it be sufficiently flexible to account for individual problems?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I believe it desirable that there be a high degree of uniformity in local government electoral procedures throughout the State.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Nominations

829. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Since the Local Government Act of South Australia does not allow public inspection of nomination forms before the close of nominations, and after nomination hour there can be no withdrawal or amendment of nomination, why does the draft bill to re-enact part IV of the Local Government Act allow public inspection of nominations?
- (2) Was the South Australian position examined?
- (3) Why has the draft Bill continued with the arrangement of allowing the withdrawal of a nomination within 72 hours of nomination hour in view of the many manipulative opportunities this allows candidates and potential candidates?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Because this long standing practice was considered to be satisfactory.
- (2) All existing provisions of the Local Government Act relating to municipal elections were examined, but no special examination was made of the position in South Australia.
- (3) In all the years that candidates have been allowed to withdraw nominations within 72 hours of the nomination date, I am not aware of any reports of reprehensible manipulative practices.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DECENTRALISATION

Albany: Car Battery Manufacturer

174. Mr DAVIES, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

In reply to question 809 he said that the Albany battery manufacturing company is the only manufacturer of batteries in this State. Is he able to confirm that that is an absolutely correct statement?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

As I am advised by my departmental officers, that is the case; but if the Leader of the Opposition has any doubts I will certainly follow the matter up for him.

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Seminar

175. Mr HARMAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he to attend the Northern Australia Development Council seminar in Cairns on 2-3 October?
- (2) Will any other Ministers of his Government attend?
- (3) If so, which ones?
- (4) How many Government officers will attend?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Currently I am scheduled to attend, but attendance may not be practicable.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The Hon. I. J. Laurance, MLA, Honorary Minister Assisting the Ministers in the portfolios of Housing, Regional Administration and the North West, and Tourism.
- (4) Not finally decided, but could be two or three, one of whom would be the immediate past Chairman of the Northern Australia Development Council and in his capacity as one of the three State Executive members.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY

Power Station: Bunbury

176. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in today's issue of the *South Western Times* wherein he is quoted as saying: "The

Commission's first move would be to study the feasibility of building a further generating plant adjacent to the Bunbury Power House"?

- (2) If "Yes", will he advise why Bunbury is being considered in preference to locating a new power station adjacent to the Collie coal reserves which, as he is aware, will result in substantial financial benefits?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) I have not seen the *South Western Times* but it is correct if it refers to studies which are to be carried out. Some preliminary studies are about to be undertaken adjacent to the Bunbury power station, and the reason it is being looked at at this stage as against further developments at Collie, over and above the two which have already been announced and on which preparatory work is proceeding, largely relates to the environmental aspects at Collie, without denying in any way the economic advantages of building right on top of the coal seam. The major environmental matter is the discharge of cooling water into the Wellington Dam catchment area, and a pipeline is being constructed to carry the discharged water to the coast.

It is correct that studies are being carried out at Bunbury. No commitment has been made in that regard but it is being looked at largely for the reasons I have given.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Katanning

177. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

In view of his Press statement on 4 September saying he was satisfied with health services in Katanning and Kojonup and his answer to question 785 of 11 September in which he indicated he was satisfied that emergency medical services available in Katanning were sufficient and compared favourably with those provided at other country centres of similar size, why did he announce on 10 September, a day before he answered my question, that "there may now be a

need to look into this situation to see if there is any need to take steps so that a service can be provided to satisfy everybody concerned”?

Mr YOUNG replied:

I have had no notice of the question, so I cannot verify those dates; but I will accept them as being correct. The honourable member perhaps ought to recognise that when one says a thing is satisfactory it does not necessarily mean one cannot ensure that legitimate complaints are looked into.

As far as I am concerned, the situation at Katanning and Kojonup was satisfactory on the surface. However, as a result of a number of complaints which were not verified—they were allegations—I intend to examine the matter further to see whether any amendments to the roster system are necessary.

Mr Hodge: But you told me one day you were satisfied and the day before you told the Press you were going to hold an inquiry.

Mr YOUNG: The member for Melville has the disconcerting habit of thinking that if he believes something is X everyone else ought to believe it is X. I explained the matter and I will explain it again, because one always has to repeat oneself to him.

The fact that one says one is going to look into a particular matter does not mean one is necessarily dissatisfied with it. If one did not look into it the member for Melville would be the first on his feet to demand that one did look into it. That does not necessarily indicate anything is unsatisfactory, but I will look into it.

NOONKANBAH STATION

Museum: Ban on Comments

178. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Has he seen the report on page 3 of tonight's issue of the *Daily News* which carries the headline “Noonkanbah: Talk of museum walkout”?

- (2) Can he confirm a statement that two formal instructions from the Government were sent through the Director of the Museum (Mr J. Bannister) to the effect that the staff were not in any way to comment on the Noonkanbah issue?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) I have not seen tonight's *Daily News*, so I cannot comment on pages 1, 2, or 3. Nor can I comment on the particular matter to which the Leader of the Opposition refers.

Mr Davies: You should know whether or not you have sent instructions.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will discuss the matter he raised with the Minister and see what instructions were issued; but many matters have passed between the Government and the Trustees of the Museum over the last few months, as the Leader of the Opposition will know.

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

Premier: Discussions with Speaker

179. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Premier:

Is it true that he discussed with the Speaker the question of the Constitution Amendment Bill prior to that Bill being debated in this House?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I am not prepared to answer to the honourable member or anyone else as to the discussions I had with the Speaker or anyone else.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Adult Franchise

180. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

With reference to her answer to question 724, in which she claimed not to know how many resident adults are denied a vote in local government elections because of the property franchise and in which she refused to find out, will she reconsider her answer and, in particular, will she consult with her colleague the Minister for Federal Affairs to see whether a document has been made

available to the Government estimating that 20 per cent of resident adults are denied a vote because of the property franchise?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I believe the answer I gave indicated that the records the honourable member required me to quote were not in the Local Government Department. That is so. We do not keep a record of the persons who register votes in local government elections.

I will be quite happy to ask my colleague to give me a copy of the report to which the honourable member refers, and perhaps he would be good enough to give me further details of the report so that I can ensure I get the correct one.

MINISTER FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Absence

181. Mr PEARCE, to the Premier:

Can he advise when we might expect to see the Minister for Cultural Affairs back in the House to answer questions without notice?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

My understanding is that the Minister for Cultural Affairs has a pair because of official business in the south-west of the State. As far as I know, he will be back in the House in the normal way tomorrow.

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

Deputy Premier: Discussions with Speaker

182. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Deputy Premier:

Is it true that he discussed with the Speaker the question of the Constitution Amendment Bill before that Bill was debated in this House?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

As the Premier pointed out, any discussions I have with the Speaker or anyone else are my own business.

HEALTH

Trachoma

183. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Minister agree with comments made in the *Daily News* on Friday by Dr J. M. Henzell, Acting Director of Community and Child Health Services, that the national trachoma and eye-health programme conducted by Professor Hollows would have been better if Professor Hollows had confined himself to the programme and not made a lot of inaccurate political statements?
- (2) If he does agree, will he substantiate the claims that Professor Hollows made a lot of inaccurate political statements?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) The question uses the word "political" and in answering it I will use the word in both senses: party political and political, generally. I think Dr Henzell was referring to the sort of inflammatory statements that Professor Hollows was inclined to make from time to time about the general health of Aborigines. Professor Hollows tried to sheet home the blame even for the environmental circumstances of Aborigines—when the Aborigines deliberately chose their own environmental circumstances—to the Government and the Public Health Department for which he has an abiding hatred, for some reason no-one can understand.

When Dr Henzell used the term "political" I think she was not referring to party political and to the sort of animosity generated by Professor Hollows within the Public Health Department. Notwithstanding that, it is my personal experience that the co-operation between the Public Health Department and the Hollows team was considerable and, I believe, exemplary. So I do not disagree with Dr Henzell's statements if the word "political" is used in that sense.

I had my own personal experience of the Hollows team working on a party political basis in the 1977 Kimberley by-election. I witnessed a community health vehicle, which was being used by members of the Hollows team, parked outside the Broome Courthouse during

the course of polling, almost for the entire day. Members of the team were working overtly for the new member for Kimberley, and quite clearly joining in the activities of the day on behalf of the ALP.

During the course of the Kimberley by-election it was my understanding that members of the Hollows team were present in the Kimberley. Of course, after Premier Bjelke-Petersen had asked them to leave Queensland—as it happened there was an election going on there at the time—they landed in the Kimberley by pure “coincidence”! Some of the team then proceeded to take part in Labor Party propaganda activities during the course of the by-election. That was my experience of the matter. Dr Henzell’s experience of the matter is her own experience.

WATER RESOURCES

MWB: New Staff Positions

184. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Water Resources:

I refer to the *Public Service Notices* of Wednesday 3 September in which five new positions are advertised in the Metropolitan Water Board. They include the director of finance and administration; manager of communications; engineer, level 4, in corporate planning; engineer, level 3, corporate planning; and research officer, C-II-8, corporate planning. The total salaries are in the order of \$130 000 a year.

Would the Minister tell us whether these positions were authorised by the board or by the Government.

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Yes. The positions were not only authorised by the board, but also they result from the suggestion of the board in co-operation with the Minister and the Government, and discussion over some time. The Government as well as the board is anxious to complete at least the initial reorganisation within the office, and also to obtain a financial expert for obvious reasons.

Mr B. T. Burke: Very obvious, too.

Mr MENSAROS: The financial expert is needed to enable the board properly to deal with loan moneys, which are becoming bigger and bigger each year, and also the placement of moneys. It must be said also that these positions will not increase the staff of the board, because corresponding reductions have occurred in the last few months particularly as a result of the introduction of a computer.

HEALTH

Trachoma

185. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

Will the Minister now advise the House whether Professor Hollows’ political activities were the main reason or one of the main reasons that he decided to opt out of the Federal trachoma and eye-health programme.

Mr YOUNG replied:

I am particularly glad the member asked that question. Had he not done so I would have got someone on my side to ask it because I forgot to add at the end of my previous answer that this had absolutely nothing to do with my decision.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Wearne Charitable Trust

186. Mr WILSON, to the Premier:

(1) Is he aware of a statement yesterday by a spokesman for the Wearne Charitable Trust that that charitable body is unable to keep up with increasing requests for assistance with payment of accounts of electricity, water and Housing Commission rents due to steep increases in charges by this Government and semi-Government authorities?

(2) Does he believe that the Government has any responsibility to take a more direct part in assisting people on low incomes facing such difficulties?

- (3) What is the Government's attitude to the possible introduction of rebated charges for electricity and water for low income earners?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I thank the member for being good enough to give me some notice of the question.

- (1) Only what was reported in yesterday's issue of *The West Australian*.

- (2) and (3) I appreciate the difficulties encountered by some people on lower incomes. However, social benefits are generally the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

Public utilities such as the SEC and MWB have to be self-supporting and operate as any other service business. They already carry some concessions but if they were to indulge in what is a form of social services to a greater extent than at present, this would have to be paid through higher tariffs by other consumers.

IMMIGRATION

Immigrants: Intake

187. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Immigration:

I wish to ask a further question to question 714 when I asked whether the Minister had set up a special committee of the State Government and trade union representatives to look at Western Australia's migrant intake. The Minister replied that in December 1978 he set up a tripartite committee. I want to point out that on 19 April 1980, in a Darwin Press release, the Minister said he was prepared to set up a special committee of the State Government, industry, and the trade union movement, to look at the same question. As the Minister did not

refer to this committee in his reply to my previous question, does this mean the special committee will not operate?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I discussed the committee referred to in the April Press release with the Trades and Labor Council and the Confederation of Western Australian Industry. The committee was discussed also with Mr Brown, a member of the West Australia House staff in London. Following discussions between Mr Brown and representatives of the TLC and the Confederation of Western Australian Industry, it was decided not to proceed further at this stage. No actual committee has been set up.

Mr Davies: Could you tell us what is being done to recruit labour?

Mr O'CONNOR: I have held discussions with members of the Department of Labour and Industry. The staff of West Australia House in London have been able to ascertain the countries from which particular labour can be obtained if required. As members know, the labour shortage generally over the next two or three years will most likely be in the metal trades. Naturally we will try to obtain as much labour as possible from Australia, but in some areas it will be impossible to find the number required.

The Commonwealth and State Governments are looking at a scheme to train 1 100 tradesmen. This idea has the backing of the unions and of the employers. However, the indications are that a number of migrants will be available from London and other parts of Europe—I believe in particular from Sweden and Germany. If the Leader of the Opposition wants more detail, the department has looked into this matter, and I will be quite happy to provide the information for him.