

Legislative Council

Thursday, 21 March 1996

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

STATEMENT - PRESIDENT

Televising of Parliament, Opening of Windows

THE PRESIDENT: Honourable members, I have approved of the opening of the four windows where the television monitors are currently located. The windows are due to be removed completely at the end of next week. I have arranged for them to be opened for the sitting next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in order that not only the staff but also members of this Chamber can view what is happening during the televising of question time. A few adjustments are necessary in order to focus correctly on where honourable members are standing and to take into account the difference in height between members. Members can see the outline of the television monitors behind the dark part of the leadlight windows which are to be removed. However, because they will not be removed until Friday week I thought we should open the windows next week. I give members some notice of this, as I always do.

MOTION - ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION

HON TOM STEPHENS (Mining and Pastoral) [2.36 pm]: I move -

That this House resolves -

- (a) to note that in 1991, the Parliament of the Commonwealth unanimously enacted the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991, (Commonwealth) to promote a process of reconciliation between the indigenous and wider Australian communities;
- (b) to support the concept of constructive reconciliation between indigenous and wider Australian communities; and
- (c) in acknowledgement of this support, to adopt the vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation; namely -

"a united Australia which respects this land of ours; values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage; and provides justice and equity for all"

as a vision shared by this House.

This is the third occasion during the life of this Government that I have moved this motion. I am very appreciative of my opposition colleagues for having seen this as a matter of sufficient importance and urgency that in this first full week of the parliamentary sitting they have been prepared to push aside the Opposition's time during which we bring on matters of urgency in this Chamber and allow me to speak to the motion of which I gave notice on opening day.

Aboriginal reconciliation is more important today for the community of Western Australia than it has ever been. In recent times we have seen across the nation an outpouring of what can only be described as incredibly insensitive, racially based comments. Comments that were particularly provocative and divisive were utilised by some candidates in the run up to the recent federal election. They were utilised successfully in the case of many people who articulated those racially insensitive comments. One of the most insensitive comments was articulated by the one time Liberal candidate and now federal member for the seat of Oxley, Ms Pauline Hansen. On 4 March 1996, the Monday after the election, *The Australian* ran an article at page 10 entitled "Liberal reject proclaims a victory for the white community". In that article the journalist reports some of the comments of this new federal member. It states -

The shock winner in Labor's western Brisbane citadel of Oxley - dumped Liberal Ms Pauline Hanson - claimed victory for the "white community" and vowed to continue to fight for all, "apart from the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders".

The Ipswich fish and chip shop owner, disendorsed by the Liberal Party last month over her controversial remarks about Aborigines, was swept to power with an extraordinary 24 per cent primary vote swing.

Ms Hansen, who has denied charges of racism, reaffirmed her view that it was unfair that indigenous Australians were entitled to benefits "that are only available to them".

She said she was fighting for "the white community, the immigrants, the Italians, the Greeks, whoever, it really doesn't matter - anyone apart from the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders."

Those comments are now the subject of complaint to the Human Rights Commission and will be dealt with in that forum, and eventually by the electors of Ipswich when the opportunity arises once more.

In the week following the federal election *The Australian* carried another article. This one dealt with topics closer to home. On 7 March the comments of Western Australian Mines Minister Hon George Cash are reported. The article is headed "State insists on resolution of native title" and states -

The West Australian Government is demanding that the new Federal Coalition Government legislate urgently to ensure that pastoral leases extinguish native title.

The State Mines Minister, Mr Cash, will travel to Canberra next week -

The article is dated 7 March, so presumably that visit occurred in the week commencing 10 March. The article continues -

- to insist that without immediate changes to the national native title legislation the mining industry in Australia will be irreparably damaged.

He said yesterday there was a timetable for the early resolution of some of the key issues on native title with the new Government.

The meeting will put into sharp relief the federal Opposition's ambivalent attitude to the legislation which flowed from the historic High Court Mabo decision in June 1992.

Mr Cash is quoted later in the article as follows -

This just has to be resolved and I'm sure that it will be done so, quickly.

... Mr Cash said his Canberra discussions would also involve administrative changes to the operations of the National Native Title Tribunal so that it could more speedily handle applications.

"The situation is that if the Commonwealth legislation was designed to assist Aborigines it certainly isn't and they are not benefiting from it at all now," Mr Cash said.

It is interesting to hear the reports from Canberra of representations that are being made to the Howard Government by the Court coalition Government, and to realise that the damage that the Court Government did to its own credibility with the Howard-led Opposition in its handling of the Crichton-Browne affair in Western Australia has had ramifications right through to the representations that are currently being made by a number of Court Government Ministers to their federal colleagues. Interestingly enough the feedback has started to filter through the system to those of us in WA operating with a close interest in this area of Aboriginal affairs. The extremist representations of the Court Government in this area have been given short shrift at a senior level in the Howard Administration, at least that is so with the initial representations. I hope that the short shrift will be sustained. Mr Howard owes nothing to the Court coalition in Western Australia in his efforts to win national Government. Mr Howard's efforts at the state level were distracted by the disputes between Liberal factions.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: We won two more seats.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: And the party lost two to independents.

Hon I.D. MacLean: You did not win them.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hon Iain MacLean boasted to this House that Mr Filing would be destroyed at the federal poll, and only a short while later Mr Filing was re-elected with a handsome majority.

Hon Kim Chance: Hon Iain MacLean said Mr Filing was the worst federal member in Liberal Party history.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Hon Iain MacLean and his colleagues, particularly his frontbench colleagues, have discredited themselves with the Howard Government in a number of areas, and specifically in this area of native title legislation. Interestingly, after the courtesies had been extended by the new federal Ministers and the State's representations had been listened to, the belly laughs could be heard all the way down the corridors of the Federal Parliament over these clowns from Western Australia who think that somehow or other by the wave of some magic wand they can wave away the judgment of the High Court in this matter.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I find it rather odd that your motion calls for reconciliation and you are preaching hatred and division. You are a hypocrite. You are a terrible, terrible person.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I believe there is justification for reconciliation. That reconciliation must be based on justice and equity. I will not rush to the end of my speech at the beginning just because Hon Ross Lightfoot has interjected. However, the conclusion will deal with how I will invite the Government to handle my motion. It will not be simply for the Government glibly to pass the motion. I do not want this place to join every other Chamber in every other Parliament of the Commonwealth and simply pass this motion, as has been done everywhere else, because that would make members opposite hypocrites. In the period in which the coalition has been in government it has undertaken initiatives that have been the source of division in the Western Australian community and have worked against the long term prospect of our reconciliation with the Aboriginal people. It is through that litany of sins that I invite members to mend their ways, to have a change of heart and to get on with the process of announcing new policies and directions in Aboriginal affairs so that this Chamber can be invited to join hands and pass this Aboriginal reconciliation motion in an expression of real commitment to the future of Aboriginal affairs in this State.

Referring back to Minister Cash, it is a bit rich for a Minister of this Government to make such a statement when the Government spent its first two years in office fighting the High Court judgment and the past 12 months frustrating that judgment and waiting for a federal election in the hope that a new coalition Government might somehow miraculously reverse that judgment on the native title question.

In the lead up to the federal poll an article called "Elections in the air" was written in a journal that I take great delight in regularly receiving - that is, the journal produced by the Jesuit Social Justice Centre. The article is written by Frank Brennan, a Jesuit priest.

Hon N.F. Moore: Who is renowned for his unbiased views.

Hon Kim Chance: Exactly; I am glad Hon Norman Moore recognises it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He received one of the highest Australian orders in the most recent allocation.

Hon N.F. Moore: For his unbiased views on the subject.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In a display of his commitment to this issue he made himself available to the likes of Hon Norman Moore when we discussed these matters in the Chamber. He was available to speak to the Minister and his colleagues. From memory, the only person who spoke with him despite the invitation, either before the Bar of the House or outside, was the late Bob Pike.

Hon N.F. Moore: We wanted to talk about other things, such as the long term future.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Father Frank Brennan was available to members who wanted to engage him in dialogue if they wanted.

The article from Frank Brennan is headed "Elections in the Air . . . Aboriginal Rights on the Ground". It reads -

As I write, Australia is gearing up for another federal election, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders can be certain that, whoever wins government, some initiatives and developments are now irreversible. Any future prime minister will have to honour the implementation of the post-Mabo land arrangements. Otherwise we will all be back in court and the miners will be cheated of the certainty they wanted. Reconciliation and self-determination are key concepts confronting any party in power and any government seeking to be a responsible member of the international community.

He then wrote -

On his appointment as Australia's last Governor-General, Sir William Deane, who in the Mabo judgment spoke of the dispossession and devastation of Aborigines as 'a national legacy of unutterable shame', said, 'If I were allowed to, without being involved in any political dispute or partisan activity, I'd very much like to play a small part in the process of reconciliation.'

The article continues at length. It is the sort of article I should take the opportunity of circulating to all my colleagues and anyone who is interested. It is the sort of article I would normally seek to have incorporated into my speech in *Hansard*. However, I guess I run some risk of that not being agreed to. The article concludes -

Last year, the Australian embassy in Washington co-sponsored, in an American Mid-west, an exhibition of native American and Aboriginal artists. Aboriginal artist Judith Watson came from Australia and explained some of her painting touching on the Mabo theme. As a white Australian I was proud to be in the audience and to hear an Aboriginal explain to Americans that Mabo meant the end of *terra nullius*. Some things are now beyond politics. Some Aboriginal gains cannot be brought under threat even at election time. Reconciliation through justice and recognition is indeed well grounded, an immovable part of the Australian political landscape.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I heard Frank Brennan got the Order of Australia because he got rid of you from the Jesuits.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: As with all of Hon Ross Lightfoot's claims, and those of Hon Phil Lockyer, they need to be juxtaposed against the truth. I never studied with the Jesuits, much to my regret. Had I had the opportunity to study under the Jesuits I might have had an even greater passion for the pursuits of justice and equity in our society. I might have had perhaps more intellectual rigour to bring to that pursuit if I had been subject to their discipline. I reckon Hon Ross Lightfoot could do with a dose of Jesuit education as well.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I would not talk about that if I were you. Get on with your speech.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: We need to remember that it is the same Minister for Lands who trotted off to Canberra last week. With that different hat as Minister for Lands he has deliberately set out to deny opportunities for Aboriginal people to gain access to land in this State. This Minister has frozen the granting of excisions of land title to Aboriginal people across the State. This Minister commissioned the report into the excision process from pastoral leases. Then, having received it, he refused to release it or act upon its recommendations because it did not confirm his own prejudices. The report recommended against his own biases and indicated that the Aboriginal excision process from pastoral leases was of enormous benefit to the Aboriginal people of this State. Rather than act upon its recommendations the Minister for Lands and Mines has continued to sit on that report.

That report is no longer the sole voice on this topic. An inquiry has been undertaken in recent months and a report is now available for release in final form. It was undertaken by the Northern Health Authority on the topic of the health of Aboriginal people in outstations and small communities in the remote areas of

Western Australia. It reports most positively on the improvement in health being experienced by Aboriginal people gaining access to healthy lifestyles in the outstations and small communities away from the population centres where they have until now lived as fringe dwellers and, in many cases, as refugees.

Hon George Cash: I did not hear the comment you made earlier about the report. Which report is it?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It is the report the Minister commissioned into the Aboriginal excision process.

Hon George Cash: You will recall that when you raised this before I asked you to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and use your best endeavours to obtain guarantees for funding capital and recurrent expenditure so that we can avoid any difficulties and health problems that may occur when those excisions take place.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: If the Leader of the House had listened to my speech he would have heard me say that his own Government has commissioned a report on that very topic of the health status of Aboriginal communities living on the excisions that were granted to them during the period we were in government. That report has been prepared by the Northern Health Authority but not yet released. It indicates that those Aboriginal people who have been able to get themselves onto their excisions away from the major population centres, which in many cases are the causes of the Aboriginal peoples' ill-health, have now had a dramatic improvement in their health and wellbeing. The Leader of the House is denying them further opportunity of doing that because he will not get on and lift the ban he has placed on the Aboriginal pastoral lease excision program.

Hon George Cash: I want to get on with the excision program but I need a guarantee from ATSIC that it will pay the capital expenditure for whatever facilities are required and also the recurrent costs. The State otherwise will put itself in a position where it could be found to be liable should someone fall ill on one of those living areas.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: These people are falling ill in droves as refugees and fringe dwellers on the edges of the major towns in my electorate. I have no argument with the general thrust of the argument that the Commonwealth Government needs to continue to improve the funding allocations in the pursuit of Aboriginal interests in Western Australia. However, I believe the State Government has responsibilities which it can act on but has not done so to this point. An artificial construction has led the Minister for Lands to freeze the excision process on the pastoral leases.

Hon George Cash: We will deal with the excisions tomorrow if someone gives me a letter guaranteeing the funding for capital and recurrent costs.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is a false way to start.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Stop having a conversation with the Leader of the House.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, you are right. The Leader will have the opportunity of responding at length whenever he is ready to come back and produce the indications of a change of heart on the part of this Government. I look forward to his speech. I want simply to indicate on that point that developing within the Aboriginal community of Western Australia is a preparation for litigation against his Government on the basis that it is failing in its obligations to respond to the needs of Aboriginal citizens of this State across a whole range of areas. That litigation will yet again be a cause of a further waste of their money and the State's money.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: They are one and the same.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Government has an obligation to respond to their health needs. When reports clearly indicate that the excision program has advanced and improved the health and the lot of Aboriginal people who have been the beneficiaries by going to those outstations, no-one can gainsay that their health or the finances of the State are placed in jeopardy because of a decision not to continue the excision process. It is a failure of logic and a failure to absorb the realities on the ground. In the short period that I hope the Leader of the House has left in office -

Hon I.D. MacLean: About 30 years!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It may be about 40 weeks; anyway, it is not too long. It may be less time if the Government takes the opportunity of holding an early state election. I would enjoy nothing more than the opportunity of taking the Leader of the House to the Aboriginal outstations of the Kimberley region, for instance, to see the positive impact upon the lives of so many Aboriginal people who have been the beneficiaries of the excision program that has operated as a result of the previous Labor Administration. He might change his mind as a result.

Hon W.N. Stretch: Did you press ATSIC for any funding?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Minister Cash has sat in a Cabinet distinguished by its inactivity across the whole field of Aboriginal affairs. That is a great tragedy for all of us in this State and it will continue to be a source of problems for Aboriginal communities. Inactivity and failure to score any runs on this field have established this Government as a bit of a joke on the national stage for the past three years. I suspect from intelligence that I have received from the national Parliament that this Government will continue to be a joke in the eyes of the Howard Government in relation to this area until it gets its house in order.

This Minister shares the Treasury benches with the former Minister for Education. It is worth subjecting his record over the past three years in the Education portfolio to some scrutiny. In the lead up to the last election, the coalition Aboriginal affairs policy document stated -

A promise - the coalition will recognise that there are Aboriginal children, particularly in remote areas, who are considerably disadvantaged when they commence formal schooling and that success at school is vital to the future prospects of all children.

This document was released in January 1993. On 2 March 1993 *The West Australian* quotes Mr Moore, who was then Minister for Education, as follows -

Aboriginal demands for education and government services in remote areas are an attempt to bolster future land rights claims.

That was his justification for his behaviour over the three years that he was Minister for Education. He frustrated the aspirations of the Aboriginal communities and their efforts to have education services delivered to them in remote locations.

Hon N.F. Moore: I am sure when I respond to this you will have an open mind about this stupid nonsense. You have had your head buried in the sand about this issue ever since this Government came to power. You are not prepared to give credit for anything.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I invite the Minister to put his record on the Table.

Hon N.F. Moore: I would be delighted to do so, but I might not have enough time.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: His reputation is suffering very badly in the field of Aboriginal education.

Hon N.F. Moore: Ask the proper people about this instead of the people pandering to your needs. If you do so you will know the truth.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Minister should put on the record exactly what he has done in this field.

Hon N.F. Moore: I have every intention of doing so.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He should then tell us what he will do in his current portfolio areas.

Hon N.F. Moore: Have you ever been to the TAFE college in the Kimberley? Who set it up?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I invite the Minister to redouble his efforts in the field of employment and training.

Hon N.F. Moore: Have you ever seen it?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have had the opportunity of looking at the TAFE college. What has the Minister done in Broome? He should look at the absolute disgrace that has been allowed to continue while this Government has been in office.

Hon N.F. Moore: You know who built it - your Government. It is a disgrace.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Minister had responsibility for education for three years and, despite the representations I made, he has people crammed into that facility and has robbed them of any resources. Mr Moore has done nothing while he has been in office.

Hon N.F. Moore: Your Government told the department not to do anything in the Kimberley because it was a safe Labor seat. I will tell the truth.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: When he eventually responds I want the Minister to explain not only what he has done but also what he will do to advance the legitimate interests and aspirations of Aboriginal people across this State. He has a huge amount of work to do.

Hon N.F. Moore: I will tell you what I have done. Nothing was done in the past and that is why we have so much to do now.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: This Government has been in office for three years.

Hon N.F. Moore: You had 10 years in office before that.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It is this Government's responsibility to produce a decent track record. This Government promised as a priority to implement and monitor recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No, it was a media statement issued by Premier Court on 16 September. The response from the Aboriginal Legal Service has been to complain that its numerous attempts to get government authorities to act on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have been largely fruitless. The Government also promised to encourage Aboriginal men and women to participate in the mainstream of Western Australian life as being better than minority political development. It also opposed political moves to patronise and exploit Aboriginal people. That was part of the coalition's 1993 Aboriginal affairs policy. The Court Government's failed \$6m High Court challenge against Mabo was its response to its obligations and its commitments given prior to the election. Without

any reference to Aboriginal people, this was coupled with a scare campaign aimed at purely political gain and not the pursuit of the interests of the Aboriginal people.

Also on the Treasury benches of this House is the Transport Minister, Mr Charlton. In the period he was in opposition he promenaded upon the stage crying what have since been seen as crocodile tears in the field of Aboriginal advancement in this State. While he has been Transport Minister time and time again he has been subject to representations from Aboriginal constituents from my electorate and from me. We have been urging that some initiatives be taken in the transport area to ensure that Aboriginal communities - some of which are very large and in remote areas - have decent road access. Every initiative and representation to the Transport Minister has been met with the excuse that the State Government has to get money out of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. It is a bit like Mr Cash's response. Until it gets funds from ATSIC the State Government does not believe it has any responsibility to construct roads into Aboriginal communities.

Hon George Cash: I was hoping you were working closely with Mr Robert Ticker when he was Minister for Aboriginal Affairs so that we would get funding.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I made representations on those questions and others in the hope that funds would be made available. However, the Commonwealth responded that the State must face some responsibilities in this field and consider the rights of the citizens of the State. The Court coalition Government has always tried to duckshove its responsibilities to the Commonwealth. Unless the Commonwealth was prepared to produce the funds, the Aboriginal communities had to do without roads, water, houses or anything else.

Hon George Cash: It is a very serious question that only the Commonwealth has the funds to address. It is a very big problem. There is also discrimination against Western Australia and the Northern Territory, which have large Aboriginal populations compared with those in other States. Commonwealth funding is a critical factor.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Presumably the Minister's view of the political landscape is that all will be right now that we have a federal Liberal coalition Government in Canberra. The Minister will have the opportunity over the next 10 months, or perhaps less, to get on with the task of extracting from the Commonwealth the funds necessary to ensure that the two conservative Governments get on with the task of responding to the problems that face the Aboriginal communities as a result of the inactivity of State Governments, including this Government.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Members opposite have been in government for three years.

Several members interjected.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The disorderly interjectors do not recognise that this Government has been in office in excess of three years and has failed in the field of Aboriginal affairs. That is why I am inviting members opposite to tackle these questions, which are their responsibility.

Hon George Cash: I will write to Mr Tickner to see what he thinks.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have already written to some of the new federal Ministers addressing some of the questions on which I was unsuccessful with the previous Labor Administration in this area. I have immediately raised the question of funding for roads in Aboriginal communities. I have made the point that this State Government has shown no capacity or preparedness to respond to the legitimate transport needs of Aboriginal communities, for whom this is a major issue. This is compounding the poverty of those communities. There are large Aboriginal communities on the Dampier Peninsular north of Broome near One Arm Point and Cape Leveque, where there are pearl farms and other commercial operations, and there is a road of some 250 km, most of which is dirt and in a shocking state. That road has not had allocated to it the resources that would give those large communities the prospect of normal communication with their town centre without destroying the community and personal property - their vehicles - that they use to function as Western Australian citizens.

Hon George Cash: For how long has it been in that condition?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That road has been in that bad state for a number of years, and it is getting worse.

Hon George Cash: More than 10 years?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It is getting worse.

Hon George Cash: It has been like that since you were elected the member for that area more than 14 years ago.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I agree that the road was a problem when we were in government, and it continues to be a problem. However, members opposite are now in government and have been for more than three years. I invite Transport Minister Charlton to join me in my representations to his federal colleague to respond positively to the offer made by Hon Eric Charlton that if he could get some commonwealth funding for roads in this State, he would allocate some of those resources towards a major roads program for remote Aboriginal communities.

Hon E.J. Charlton: This morning, at a function in my office, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

congratulated me for the great cooperation that he and I have been able to achieve with regard to Aboriginal communities. I will talk to you later about a number of initiatives with regard to that road, one of which is to upgrade the section from Lombardina to Cape Leveque, and also to have one proper airport there rather than three.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister's time has expired.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am pleased to hear the Minister report some progress in this area, but much more must be done. The Minister must ensure that the funds available to him at the state level are augmented by the commonwealth funds he has sought previously.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Which the Labor Party failed totally to acknowledge.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I want to talk about the future, because presumably all is now right with the world - there is a federal coalition Government and a National Party Minister for Transport, and there will be no more excuses and the Government can get on with delivering these basic and essential services to ordinary citizens, albeit Aboriginal citizens, who live in remote locations. The quote for the day on the desk calendars with which we have all been supplied in this Parliament is by Jean-Paul Sartre and states, "Life begins on the other side of despair." That has been the experience of Aboriginal people with the Court coalition Government in this State, which has continued to play politics with Aboriginal affairs, to be divisive on these questions, and to not advance Aboriginal interests by always duckshoving questions. Adequate funding must be provided to effectively upgrade and maintain roads for the Aboriginal communities in my electorate, because that is a basic right. This Government has failed to respond to that challenge. I sometimes feel that it is because they are Aboriginal communities that their needs are put aside. These communities comprise families whose needs are as great as, if not greater than, those of any section of the Australian community. My heart goes out to those Aboriginal communities when I see the price they have to pay in trying to get on with the job of surviving in the remote locations in which they live.

Hon George Cash: When you were a Minister in the former Government, what representations did you make to your Cabinet colleagues?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Leader of the House will appreciate that the period for which I was a Minister was pretty short.

Hon N.F. Moore: So does everyone else.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am proud of my efforts during that short period; I think it was 10 and a half weeks. I pursued a range of issues to advance the interests of Aboriginal people in my electorate, and I took pleasure in the appointment of Aboriginal people, where appropriate, to some of the agencies that fell within my ambit at the time.

Hon N.F. Moore: What do you mean by "appropriate"?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In the period in which I have been in this Parliament - as an opposition member in the early 1980s, as a government backbencher, as a Parliamentary Secretary, for a short time as a Minister, and now as an opposition backbencher again - I have always recognised that one of my obligations is to pursue the interests of those people who are the most disadvantaged within this community; that is, Aboriginal people. I have invested an enormous amount of time and effort in that pursuit, recognising that there is no great political value in the end in doing that.

Hon N.F. Moore: I have watched you operate on election day. I have seen the political value you attach to it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: While we have Hon Norman Moore on the opposite benches, we will always continue to attract the support of the Aboriginal community. I will continue to advance, in politics and beyond politics, the interests of Aboriginal people, because that section of our community is probably most in need of the support of the wider community.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I invite you to organise ATSIC, and I will deliver the rest.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Minister's federal coalition partners are in government now, so members opposite have no more excuse. Get on with the task and report back to the House.

Hon E.J. Charlton: The Government does not control ATSIC. You may be able to have some influence on it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: This Government has within its ranks Water Resources Minister Foss, who has presided over the destruction of the former Water Authority, which was, under the Labor Administration, endeavouring to improve water supply to remote Aboriginal communities. Its corporate ethos of striving to provide reasonable water supplies for ordinary Western Australians, including Aboriginal Western Australians, has all but disappeared. The former Water Authority undertook extensive programs to improve the water supply needs of remote Aboriginal communities, but as a result of the initiatives of this Government, we are seeing community after community in desperate need of water resources. One matter with which I am dealing at the moment is the plaintive representations of the Kundat Djaru Aboriginal Corporation, which has been begging the Minister for Water Resources for assistance to get its particularly dangerous water supply and sewerage disposal units into some sort of shape. This large Aboriginal

community, formerly known as Ringer Soak, is east of Halls Creek. When I visited the community recently it was pointed out to me that they had a sizable problem with drinking water contaminated by sewerage, which resulted in illness. The insulation of the water supply and sewerage system is ineffective, and it is necessary for doctors to attend the community to respond to the salmonella poisoning - the runny tummies, the bung eyes, the open sores and gastroenteritis which are suffered by the community as a result of the failure of systems to respond to the needs of the Kundat Djaru community.

The title Aboriginal "community" too lightly hides the fact that individuals and families are struggling to maintain a decent lifestyle in the absence of adequate support which they are entitled to expect from the Government because they are citizens of this State and nation. I refer to a song from the Aboriginal musical *Bran Nue Dae*, produced by people in my old home town of Broome. The song was sung by a very talented Aboriginal cast in a raucous and energetic fashion. I suspect that every word is filled with a combination of pride and sarcasm. The words are: "There is nothing that I would rather be than to be an Aborigine." And later: "And watch you take our precious land away."

Hon E.J. Charlton: They're probably talking about you - when you were managing their affairs.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I know where I stand with the Aboriginal community. I take delight in their support and friendship.

Hon E.J. Charlton: So do I.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr Charlton is a Minister of the Crown and has obligations and responsibilities. It is no good the Minister saying that some of his best friends are Aborigines, or that he used to play football with them. When he became a Minister he decided to hide behind the excuse that no funds are available and those people can go hang until he receives some commonwealth funds to fulfil his responsibilities as Minister for Transport -

Hon E.J. Charlton: You would not say that outside this place.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: When the Minister has taken some action in the field he can then throw insults in my direction in this place.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The particular needs of the Aboriginal communities must be addressed with targeted programs. Too easily there is an opportunity for the mood to develop in this nation - as articulated by the newly elected federal member for Oxley - that somehow the Aboriginal community in contemporary Australia has some sort of advantage compared with the rest of us. We all know that not one health or social indicator would justify such a conclusion. Indeed, the Aboriginal health statistics continue to be appalling. The life span of Aborigines continues to be shorter, their incarceration rates higher, and their educational achievements lower. Today's Press reports a recent study that shows domestic violence levels within that community are 45 per cent higher - disputed, I am sure, by the methodology adopted. Nonetheless, I guess there would be agreement that domestic violence within that community is horrific, horrendous, and must be addressed. Alcohol abuse is rampant. The levels of unemployment are woeful. The diseases of the Third World are still common.

Hon E.J. Charlton: It is a shame that Mr Tickner will not be able to do anything about it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In my electorate, leprosy, trachoma, malnutrition and the like continue to be a source of alarm to any decent Australian. As well, anti-Aborigine discrimination is regrettably common.

I have moved this motion three times. The Court Government has responded with silence. The Government has allowed the motion to drop off the end of the Notice Paper, and has not attended to it at the end of each parliamentary session. It was deleted from the Notice Paper at the proroguing of Parliament. That is in contrast to the response of every other Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia where there has been a commitment by governments of all persuasions to ensure Aboriginal reconciliation.

At the beginning of my comments, in response to Hon Ross Lightfoot, I said that this Chamber has the opportunity to support this motion. It requires the Government to put before the House a detailed presentation of what it has done in the area of Aboriginal affairs; to put that record on the Table as an expression of its achievement to this point. It could then present a program of policies that will prove that the current Government is moving away from the divisive and neglectful policies it has pursued in office. Then it would not mean the passage of a glib motion without any real display of a change of heart by the Government.

The motion can be appropriately dealt with if Ministers and government members put in place programs, initiatives and policies to redress quickly the needs of the Aboriginal people of Western Australia. I call on the Government to outline its programs, to unveil any new policies, and to put some runs on the board so that Aboriginal people can find some new hope. We come to this Chamber each day and hear you, Mr President, read a prayer that is in the structure of this place to inspire us to be worthy of the job to which we have been called by virtue of our election. It is a prayer out of the Jewish tradition, incorporated into the Christian tradition and utilised by us all, whether we are believers in it or not. It inspires us to rise to the highest challenges of the human condition, to pursue the goals and best interests of all. That is a very important symbol of our roles and obligations. However, for Parliaments such as this, particularly for

Governments such as this, we probably need fresh and additional symbols to encourage us to not forget the interests and needs of Aboriginal people. I do not mean to suggest a glib use of symbols. Perhaps it would be appropriate to find a way to have some additional Aboriginal art in the Parliament which will become a reminder to the Parliament and the Government of the needs of this community.

We are always dragged to this Chamber to the clang and clatter of the electronic bells. They drive me mad. Recently I had the opportunity in Kalgoorlie to join in the celebration of the centenary of the Catholic Church in the goldfields. The playing of the didgeridoo brought the congregation together. It was a poignant display which brought people together for that celebration of the arrival of a new spiritual tradition in the goldfields some 100 years later.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Can you play a didgeridoo?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No. I would love to play it. I have always been moved by it. Perhaps that is the sort of noise that should bring us to the Chamber to get on with our daily work as a reminder of the prior claims of the Aboriginal people upon all of us to get on with the task. It would be a poignant reminder and a delightful Australian symbol of our obligations to the prior occupants of this nation. Perhaps we have an opportunity for this Parliament to have attached to it an Aboriginal advisory process whereby the legislative and other initiatives of government which affect the interests of Aboriginal people can be referred to an appropriate committee so that their interests can be taken into consideration. The Parliament and the Government should take the initiative; then we can get on with the task in a real form.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Now you are talking sense.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: We can get on with the task of pursuing the obligation that we all have to reconcile the interests and aspirations of Aboriginal people; to accommodate their interests and needs; and to make sure that the Australian community can advance together so that all Western Australians - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - are the richer as a result of that reconciling spirit.

[Debate adjourned, pursuant to Standing Order No 195.]

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion

Resumed from 20 March.

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [3.29 pm]: On hearing the Governor's speech I was particularly disappointed with the very small focus on the environmental future of this State. For many reasons this Government should be making a much greater effort to tackle our environmental problems. Unfortunately all indications are that we are going in the other direction. When I was working out what I would say in this Address-in-Reply speech I had in mind something different from what I will say. The speech I am about to make developed as a result of today's headlines in the *The West Australian* - "3.7m in WA by the year 2029". The article says in part -

A new State Government report predicts WA's population could more than double to 3.7 million by 2029, boosted by heavy Asian immigration.

The report outlines two models for WA's growth - "quantum expansion" and "business as usual" - with the conservative option still providing a population of 2.7 million by the bicentenary of British colonisation.

Under the quantum expansion option, WA would integrate closely with Asia's rapidly growing economies. Growth will be nurtured by a booming resources sector, pushing a five-fold growth in WA's economy to \$225 billion annually.

It says further on -

Those not involved in the global economy, such as retirees, the unemployed and others would increasingly move to the regions, particularly the South-West.

The report, titled WA 2029: Stage II - An Indicative Assessment of Two Scenarios for WA to the Year 2029, was commissioned by the Department of Commerce and Trade. It will be released today.

The report was done by a consortium of WA and interstate research organisations led by the Australian Centre for Economic Performance, through Curtin University's Institute for Research into International Competitiveness.

It builds on a similar document released in 1993, titled WA2029: Development Options for WA. The year 2029 was chosen as the target date for the report to coincide with the State's bicentenary.

This scenario horrifies me. Irrespective of whether it is mentioned in the report, it is not mentioned in the newspaper that there are some severe environmental constraints to growth in Western Australia, particularly in attempting to lump all that growth into the south west. It also very much concerned me that the article indicated that those not involved in the global economy, such as retirees and the unemployed, would increasingly move to regional areas, particularly the south west. That is a scenario for both social and environmental disaster.

Coincidentally, not long before this report came out I received a letter from Graham Chittleborough, who wrote saying -

I don't know whether you have had time to read the eight discussion papers issued by the WA Planning Commission in Nov. and Dec. as a prelude to shaping a State Planning Strategy to cover the next thirty years. I found the papers quite appalling: The urban planners have the same old fixed objectives, with no concern for the community's needs and wants -- and they have no grasp of the extent of our environmental debt.

If they are not using the sort of information in the proposals in the paper - without having read the full report, maybe I am jumping the gun - it is no wonder we are seeing such overviews for shaping the State's planning strategy.

Hon N.F. Moore: Do you always believe what you read in the newspaper?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Quite often articles in the paper are press releases sent in by Ministers. That is when I worry about taking them for granted.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is a nasty thing to say. You are very cynical.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The Minister was being cynical.

Hon Kim Chance: It was a very nasty interjection.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Dr Graham Chittleborough, formerly the Environmental Protection Authority's chief research scientist and architect of the State Conservation Strategy for WA in 1987, a person of high qualifications who is well respected in Western Australia in both environmental and planning circles, had this to say in a paper he sent to me -

In the usual reductionist approach of breaking a major issue into its component parts then looking closely but separately at each in turn, the Discussion Papers do summarise a good deal of information on each facet. The data have been drawn from much more detailed earlier reports -- some of which I helped prepare. However, throughout its papers the WA Planning Commission wears rose-coloured glasses, being selective of reports or data supporting the pre-determined direction, glossing over crucial problems and inferring that others at hand.

Two major and glaring deficiencies stand out after reading the set of WAPC Discussion Papers:

- I: The stolid determination to stay on the Growth Path, striding along on the twin legs of continued population growth (inevitable!) and economic growth (unquestionable!) -- wherever they may lead. Never a pause to assess whether that course might be ecologically or socially sustainable through even the next 30 years.
- II: An appalling failure to grasp the enormity of our present environmental crisis and its escalating ramifications. This raises the question whether even our present position along the growth path is sustainable.

Back in 1987 the State Conservation Strategy for WA warned that "Overall, Western Australia has accumulated an environmental debt met by the community *if we are to restore sustainability.*" That warning stemmed from the first State of the Environment Report (1986) citing evidence gleaned from 127 reports and publications. However, the Government of the day declined to accept or publish its own report.

He goes on to say -

With only token gestures towards corrective action, environmental degradation and collapse of ecosystem processes continued to accelerate.

This scenario has not appeared in this 2029 report or either of the state planning strategy papers. He also says -

More and more ecologists are concluding that our present population, living the way it is, has exceeded the capacity of the environment to support us in an ecologically sustainable manner. In fact, there is increasing evidence that the limited supportive capacity of our lands, waters, air and eco systems are now eroding so rapidly that population carrying capacity is declining at an alarming rate.

At the Horizons of Science Forum held in Sydney 1995 scientists such as Dr Denis Saunders (CSIRO) (then of University of New England) CSIRO Prof. Harry Recher (then of University of New England) Prof. Michael Archer warned that we are at a crisis point; unless we change our ways dramatically, a tidal wave of extinction of plant and animal species will sweep across Australia during the coming decades.

The critical situation now reached in Western Australia is underlined by the Environmental Protection Authority's Annual Report 1995 tabled in Parliament on 16 November 1995, expressing serious concern - and even depression - that certain of our environmental problems are reaching unmanageable proportions.

Yet nothing has been put forward by the Government to tackle these serious problems. Dr Chittleborough further says -

These are hardly the conditions under which to frame a 30 year Planning Strategy based on continuing growth of population and consumption.

I agree with him.

The WAPC Discussion Papers have failed to establish that further population growth in WA is inevitable, necessary, desirable, or ecologically sustainable! Why then, are we being pressed towards a State Planning Strategy based upon continued population growth? Surely we should re-think our population policy rather than blindly plan for ever increasing growth?

Hon I.D. MacLean: These people you are quoting are the same people who said there would never be 120 000 people in Wanneroo. There are 220 000 people in Wanneroo now. I can remember when the first development plan was released for that area. These people you are quoting scoffed at them and said that there would never be 120 000 people in Wanneroo.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do not think that Dr Dennis Saunders or Professor Michael Archer said any of those things. Quite frankly, I do not think they were ever asked about Wanneroo. I think that is a pile of old cobbles.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: When you think that Wanneroo is the centre of the universe, you have those delusions.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Dr Chittleborough continues -

What happened to the Precautionary Principle espoused in the WAPC Paper "Environment and Natural Resources" . . .

In setting the target of 2.62 million people in WA by the year 2026, the WAPC did not bother to ask ecologists whether that might be ecologically sustainable. Does the principle of sustainability not apply to population growth?

Members opposite might smile about that, but the fact is that we are biological creatures, and if our environment does not support us biologically, we are dead biological creatures. It does not matter how much a person has in his pocket, it will not do him any good. The paper states further -

Overseas immigration can be cut virtually to zero at the stroke of a pen. Humanitarian obligations can be met partly by accepting a small number of genuine refugees, but more importantly, by contributing much more energetically to overseas aid framed to assist those desperately in need to become self-sufficient where they are.

That is a much more sensible solution

Hon N.F. Moore: Are you advocating a reduction in immigration?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Absolutely. At the moment we have a development driven economy that is based on continuing growth of population in this country.

Hon N.F. Moore: What about natural growth?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Natural growth is one of the ways by which the population increases. Dr Chittleborough points out the exact amounts of each of those growths and the effect they have.

Hon N.F. Moore: Are you going to put forward the Chinese solution of a limited number of children in each family?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do not think the Chinese solution would work in Western Australia. We know that in Australia the natural population growth is not really a growth at all; it is close to zero growth. We have a low level of reproduction of our kind. A real increase is on top of that base level, which is largely from immigration. Dr Chittleborough states further -

The WA Planning Commission seems not to comprehend the fundamental ecological principle that for any species (even humans), numbers grow only to the limits permitted by its environment; then growth must cease or oscillate (wildly, in some instances) as conditions allow. Thus population growth is but a temporary phase, never a permanent feature.

The other facet of growth - economic growth - is promoted within the WAPC Papers as the mainstay of a long-term strategy, as evidenced by the WA Planning Commission's 'Vision':-

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Before question time I was speaking of my concern that neither the Western Australian Planning Commission nor the Department of Resource Development in this State seems to take any account of the ecological sustainability of this State in their forward planning. I was reading from a paper sent to me by Dr Graham Chittleborough, who is highly critical of the WAPC's proposal. Dr Chittleborough quoted from the WAPC's document "Vision", which states -

For Western Australia to attain balance and harmony between economic growth and the conservation of a world in which all life can be sustained and enhanced within its environment.

That sounds very nice. Dr Chittleborough says that this is more than simplistic, that it is quite unrealistic. He states -

We have long passed the visionary point of 'balance and harmony', as attested by the rising rate of extinctions. Also we have to recognise that the 'vision' attempts to impose a continuing process (economic growth) on to an environment (our life support system) of finite - and declining - carrying capacity.

He continues -

Economic growth for whom - the transnational corporations; the State; or for every member of the community? The Discussion Papers admit that with the rapidly increasing internationalisation of the world economy, the influence of government is reduced. In fact governments are having to cut costs by shedding responsibilities for utilities and services.

Western Australia is a very good example of that. We constantly have the responsibilities of government handed over to the private sector with the resultant decline in service. Dr Chittleborough continues -

Yet the Papers extol the rosy benefits of economic growth, bringing "a capacity to invest further in infrastructure and services and by the creation of jobs, it provides for the well-being and quality of life for Western Australians."

Dr Chittleborough asks -

Do ordinary members of the community see today's economic growth in the same rosy light? With mergers from the much vaunted global competition as well as rapid spread of new technologies, job insecurity is shaping up as one of the biggest social upheavals of this century. The oft-repeated claim that all Western Australians gain from increased economic growth no longer carries conviction.

I remind members of the report prepared by Curtin University's Australian Centre for International Competitiveness which states that those not involved in the global economy such as retirees, the unemployed and others will be shunted off to regional centres. Dr Chittleborough went through a number of the points in the Western Australian Planning Commission discussion papers. Those papers say that no direct causal link has yet been established between population numbers and environmental degradation. Dr Chittleborough states -

This admission of confusion is not a denial of any such link. Doing nothing until the relationship is again proven, is about as sensible as refusing to do any sums until it has been proven beyond any doubt that $1+1=2$.

The total demand on a resource, or pressure from its use, is represented by two variables; per capita consumption multiplied by total population. The first reflects the way we live: That may vary with time or differ greatly from one community to another. But for a particular consumption rate, doubling the population will double the pressure on that facet of the environment.

That is obvious. Dr Chittleborough continues -

As evidence of a lack of any link between population numbers and environmental problems, the WAPC Papers assert that the most serious land degradation problems are in the country (low population) rather than in crowded cities. The example is irrational because the consumers tucked away in cities are themselves an integral part of the pressures on distant pastoral lands.

This reflects a curious attitude of the urban planners writing the WAPC Discussion Papers. Since most Western Australians choose to live in Perth and further population growth no doubt would make the same choice, all the planners need do is to fit the extra people into Perth tidily and comfortably. If that can be done without causing any more environmental or social problems within the metropolis, then all will be well. Such blinkered vision cannot see that Perth's population is dependent on, and impacts upon, the whole of Western Australia. As Dr Tim Flannery expressed so clearly in "The Future Eaters"; Australia's six major cities "act as vast nutrient and energy sinks for the surrounding countryside". We don't just plan for Perth's future, but rather for the State as a whole entity.

This absolutely illogical base to the WAPC planning papers is repeated in a range of areas. Dr Chittleborough has looked at each and every one of them and cannot quite a few of them because they do not make sense.

Dr Chittleborough refers later to greenhouse gases. No attempt has been made in this State to cut back on greenhouse gases in the way in which we are responsible under international agreements. The most recent studies show that we are far exceeding the targets we are supposed to meet. Dr Chittleborough wrote that the Western Australian Planning Commission reported -

Since attempts at local climate modelling have been inconclusive, we need not bother about climate change for the next 30 years.

He continued -

But the WAPC logic is again faulty. Local climate modelling is in its infancy so the inconclusive

results to date merely reflect difficulties in the technique, saying nothing about when the impacts of climate change will be felt locally. An international gathering of scientists has just agreed that global warming from greenhouse gas emissions is now discernible. From now on, each decade will add a touch more pressure from climate change, onto local ecosystems already severely stressed from our accumulated environmental debt.

He later continued -

The sooner we adopt a serious strategy to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the better our prospects of avoiding a runaway catastrophe - let's not waste time arguing whether that might happen in 2026 or 2056! If we wait until the climate modellers fully understand the system, it may be too late to act. Once again, the Precautionary Principle should take precedence.

Instead, the WAPC Discussion Papers -

This is extremely worrying to me -

- suggest no targets for cutting greenhouse emissions. On the contrary, the Paper on The Economy glowingly forecasts great potential for WA to increase the export of fossil fuel energy, as well as to accelerate its use locally for downstream processing of minerals through the next 30 years. This is quite consistent with the report issued in November 1989 by the WA Energy Policy & Planning Bureau, forecasting that by the year 2000, fossil fuel consumption within Western Australia will be 56% higher than in 1988.

No serious effort has been made to reduce energy use in this State. Huge economic savings are also involved. This Government is being remiss not only environmentally but also economically in not looking seriously at energy saving in this State.

Hon Max Evans: We are saving very much on energy. We are not putting air conditioning in this House. That is a big saving.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There is no doubt that this is one place where there is a saving. This place is hardly designed on a model suited to make the most of our climate. Dr Chittleborough continued -

The weakening Ozone Shield in the lower stratosphere rates barely a paragraph in the Discussion Papers. As this problem is "primarily chlorofluorocarbons" which are being phased out, we can presumably dismiss it. What about the catalytic breakdown of ozone by nitrous oxide - which is efficiently produced in the catalytic converters of modern cars? And the more recent finding that both methane and hydrogen (the fuel of the future) leaking to the lower stratosphere also break down ozone.

Yet the paper Environment & Natural Resources blandly states "there will need to be a continuous improvement to the state of the ozone layer".

There is a complete ignorance of the facts. We are being lead towards environmental disaster in this State. Quite frankly, I do not think the people who have prepared these reports have talked to ecologists or climate specialists. They are always concerned with economics in a small, narrow minded way. If economics were viewed in a wider aspect they would see that the real costs of environmental degradation are mounting for ordinary people in this State with the thinning and destruction of the ozone layer and the increasing incidence of skin cancers and other radiation caused diseases. As everyone will be aware, the hole in the ozone layer is rapidly expanding. That is a very worrying aspect for people who have children, grandchildren or any concern for the future.

In the last paragraph from Dr Chittleborough's paper which is under the heading of "Accent development rather than growth" he wrote -

A planning strategy based on sustainability and quality of life needs to be very selective of types of developments to be fostered, rather than simply favouring those claiming highest economic returns. We need a fresh set of criteria to be applied in assessing each new development proposal. These criteria should be framed on the real needs of the community and in ensuring a better quality of life through the community as a whole.

I heartily agree with that. Nothing in the planning papers we have had put together so far in this State shows that we have even looked at the environment in that way. It was rather interesting that the same week that this report came out, in the newspaper section "Earth 2000" published on 18 March was an article about traffic problems, not just here but worldwide, including the problem of the increase in the number of motor vehicles, which I have mentioned previously in this House. I had a vague understanding of the possible results. The article comments -

In China, there are 1.8 million passenger cars - one for every 670 people. In 10 years, there may be twice as many and by 2010 that number is projected to rise to 20 million.

Such a scenario seems likely to be repeated in most parts of the developing world.

The potential effects of this car explosion - on the quality of human life and the sustainability of all life - are staggering.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: That is considerably fewer than the cars in America.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is over the next 10 years.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: It is only about one-fifth of the cars on the roads in the United States.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I have no problem with recognising that the United States has more automobiles than any other country in the world.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: The United Kingdom has more per square mile than the United States.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The article comments further -

The vast majority of that market will be in Asia and Latin American and in formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe, which are now bent on catching up with their affluent neighbours to the west,

Yet consumers, industrialists and economic planners are all neglecting the prodigious strains that the car expansion places on human and environmental health.

Motor vehicle transport accounts for half of the world's total oil consumption, generates nearly a fifth of all greenhouse gas emissions and has pervasive impacts on land use and air quality.

Tailpipe exhaust is now the single biggest source of air pollution - surpassing wood fires, coal-burning power plants and chemical manufacturing - in nearly half the cities of the world.

And cities everywhere are choking on the sheer numbers of motor vehicles and the roads that attempt to accommodate them. The result is declining quality of life in car-dominated cities worldwide.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: We could rectify that by having nuclear powered cars.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: While we have one person vehicles we will still have clogged roads and huge highways that are incredibly wasteful of energy in whatever form. According to a study by the Washington DC-based World Resources Institute, the cost of driving, which motorists do not pay directly, comes to \$395b.

The cost to the community is estimated to be just over \$1b, which is nearly \$600 for every person in Western Australia. Of this, fatalities are estimated to cost Western Australia \$137.6m, while hospitalisation costs \$280.7m. The combined cost of these serious crashes and injuries represents 41 per cent of the total cost to the community of road crashes.

Even in a lowly populated State such as Western Australia \$1b is the direct cost of these car accidents.

Hon Max Evans: How do you work that out? We have only one million cars on the road.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I thought the Government worked it out. These are State Government figures, not mine. The Minister will have to check the information with Mr Falconer.

Hon Max Evans: I will.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: These estimates include many other costs that people do not acknowledge, such as increased land use, fire brigade facilities and the cost of air pollution. The "Earth 2000" lift-out in *The West Australian* states -

The costs of vehicular air pollution are hard to assess because they include such illusive damages as lung and heart disease, premature death, loss of productivity and reduced crop yields.

The World Resources Institute low estimate is \$13b per year in the United States alone. Those costs can be added to the total. The article goes on to state -

To address the conflict simply by looking for the most politically negotiable middle ground may be a losing strategy.

The real problem now is that a transportation system based heavily on cars is not viable for sustainable living in either the developed or developing countries.

Fresh approaches will be required not just to the technology of the car transport but more importantly to the design of communities.

This is the crux of the issue in Western Australia. We have a totally irresponsible approach to planning our urban areas; we are allowing urban sprawl to get completely out of control; we seem to have a development driven plan. Throughout the metropolitan area we see huge areas where urban infill would be possible and desirable. Areas in North Fremantle and Mosman Park, along the railway line, could accommodate populations in medium to high density. The residents would be close to the railway line and would not need to use their cars very much. Instead of that we are building more roads and highways.

We are discussing the western suburbs highway, which the Minister for Transport says does not exist but the Minister for Planning says does - he says that it has been on the books for 30 years.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: That is what people want. They do not want rail travel, and if they do they want a choice.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I will deal with that in a moment because I have a paper here which deals with exactly that issue.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I have some empathy with what you are saying, but people want freedom of choice; we cannot dictate to them.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There is no freedom of choice for people who do not have cars - whether they be too young or too infirm. They find it very difficult to get across these crowded roads if they are in wheelchairs or for any other reason.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: They can use taxis.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There are other choices to be considered. People cannot choose whether they breathe the fumes or get asthma or any of the other respiratory diseases caused by the overuse of cars in this city. Many choices must be made and balances reached. The reality is that Perth is going very much in the wrong direction and the balance is totally out of control. The Northbridge tunnel is a joke and is recognised as such by planners.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: By whom? What a lot of rubbish. I said I am empathetic with you and I thought you would be rational.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Dr Peter Newman is probably the most prominent planner in Perth - he has been published worldwide and is recognised for his views on planning. Hon Max Evans may laugh, but that is a reality. Dr Newman thinks the tunnel is an incredible waste of money and he has put forward far better alternatives to propel us into the future.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I would imagine that you could buy a lot of push-bikes for \$400m.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes. In some places authorities have looked at using push-bikes more widely. There is a number of examples of that around the world. In fact, reference is made in the "Earth 2000" article to the Dutch town of Groningen, which banned cars from the city centre last year and where now 60 per cent of all journeys are made on bicycles. The article states -

Business is booming, countering the fears of town planners and shopkeepers, and daily life continues but without the pollution, noise and congestion of the car-dominated days.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in the city of Curitiba, Brazil, a revolutionary public transport system serves a population of close to two million people.

This system is a result of a 20-year effort at integrated land use -

Which I have always urged this Government to consider rather than the construction of more roads -

- and transportation planning, and involved the designation of a hierarchy of roads.

The result is an efficient, rapid, affordable and modern public transport system involving express busways, circular inter-district bus routes and tubes that allow rapid bus passengers to board more quickly, making cars unnecessary (or relatively expensive or inconvenient) for daily transport needs.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I challenge you to introduce a private member's Bill to introduce push-bikes in the city and to ban motorcars. You can ride a push-bike to work every day.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I wish I could, but I do not think I am fit enough. Unfortunately, because of very poor planning we cannot do that. This is the very point I am making: The planning must ensure that people do not have to travel huge distances, otherwise it becomes impossible to use bicycles. However, if we continue to extend Perth - and we are looking at filling in Amarillo and areas of Port Kennedy - we will have 170 kilometres of coastal development. That is absolutely ridiculous.

This article in *The West Australian* refers to people at Bunbury being in another centre. Bunbury will not be another centre because Perth will join up with it, and Bunbury will become part of Perth. The most sensible thing we can do is to ensure that we limit the size of Perth. We must put a stop to its expansion. We must have the imagination and courage to do something that will ensure that we do not end up with the same problems as those experienced in Los Angeles, and those problems are already beginning to emerge here. Hon Ross Lightfoot has claimed that people will not get out of cars. Another article entitled "Towards a just, sustainable and participatory transport policy" by Dr Newman and Greg Zhukov states -

Roads department bureaucrats are fond of asserting that people 'prefer' to use cars but even the most casual examination of the issue proves this to be a self-serving distortion. Sydney and Melbourne offer excellent tests. In the inner areas of these cities - served by the relatively extensive public transport networks which grew up before the 1950s - over 40 per cent of all workers walk or catch public transport to work. These suburbs are amongst the most popular (and therefore expensive) places to live. Here the residents own fewer cars and they use them less often. This is reflected in petrol use per person for personal travel (including by public transport). Average consumption in inner Sydney is only 60 per cent of that in outer Sydney. The figures for Melbourne are even better: inner neighbourhoods use just 41 per cent of the outer Melbourne consumption, a figure reflecting the extensive provision of light rail, the mode removed from Sydney in the 1950s . . .

In Perth the new Northern Suburbs rail line attracted 40 per cent more patronage than the previous bus system and 25 per cent of the patrons gave up their cars for the new system.

These facts totally discredit the line that 'people won't get out of their cars'. In fact, people are only too ready to give up the expense, stress and environmental degradation of car dependency if reasonable alternatives are available to them.

Therein lies the problem with the town planner's story that he needs to continue to push for more roads. Hon Eric Charlton talked about the Dalkeith bypass, which was formerly known as the western suburbs highway before it was diverted from Dalkeith to preserve the Premier's area in 1982. The western suburbs highway was not planned 30 years ago. It used to join with Stephenson Highway, down Davies Road in Claremont, through Dalkeith, across the river at Point Resolution to join Stock Road -

Hon Max Evans: Imagine going across the river! Forget about going through Dalkeith. Imagine the engineering required to cross the river. Perhaps it would be by pontoon!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I have the documentation. However, someone lived in Dalkeith! A lot of pressure was brought to bear because we could not have the people of Dalkeith subjected to those traffic pressures - being so much more sensitive than other people in other parts of the city. Therefore, it is now called the Dalkeith bypass. Attempts are being made to put it onto the people of Cottesloe, Mosman Park, Swanbourne, Fremantle, North Fremantle and Cockburn. That is the Dalkeith bypass, and it is opposed by everyone along the route. Of the 1 026 submissions from the northern suburbs, six were in favour of the route. The rest opposed it. The Government listened to the six. The Government talks about consultation but it likes to cater for minorities.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Was it the present Government that decided that?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes.

Hon Max Evans: The bypass to go past the Cottesloe golf course was proposed by a previous Government. It was the start of the Servetus Street extension.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The route was changed in 1982. It does not matter to me who did it, it was wrong. I suggest that it was a previous Liberal Party Government.

The Government has continually failed to tackle environmental problems in a sensible way, knowing full well that the use of the private motor car is a huge waste of a precious resource, using the last of our liquid hydrocarbons, at a time when we need that fuel for agriculture production, shipping, and all the trade areas. However, we allow this resource to be used in the most inefficient and polluting way. It is crazy. Also, we are pushing up the price of urban land and killing many of our young people. Those that we do not kill we make sick. It is not sensible planning, especially when we have such very good alternatives.

I turn now to energy use. At the time I was elected to Parliament we had an opportunity in this State to consider closely the Collie power station. I recall that the tender process was not very productive. Therefore, the new Government had time to reconsider the situation in Collie. It is a disgrace that the coal fired power station at Collie has gone ahead.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Do you suggest that we should have a nuclear power station?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do not. If the member reads my adjournment debate speech on nuclear energy, which followed his chat on that matter, he will see part of the reason why I do not suggest that.

We could have just turned the switch to gas at Kwinana A and C stations. It can be coal or gas at the stations, and if it were turned to gas we could get an extra 260 MW.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Where would we get the gas from?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It is already available -

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: But not in sufficient quantities. The pipeline from the Pilbara is at optimum capacity.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: According to my information, that is not the case.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I do not know where you got your information from.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I got it from the man who carried out research in the area, and published volumes about it. He went into it rather more thoroughly than Hon Ross Lightfoot.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Is it the Harman report?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes. He knows very well what the capacities are. We could have had almost all the capacity of the Collie power station with the flick of a switch -

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Rubbish. You simplify things for your own benefit.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It is simple. What is not simple is the fact that government members continue their bad buying exercises which began at the time that the North West Shelf was being developed. At that time the Government promised to buy, I think, 90 per cent of the gas, whether it was used or not. That would have bankrupted the State -

Hon Max Evans: Was that for State Energy Commission purposes?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I thought the SEC was a state government body.

Hon N.F. Moore: It did not bankrupt the State. It got the project off the ground.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It did, but at the same time the Government made promises to buy coal. People in the coal industry jumped up and down to convince the Government to buy coal. Big piles of coal were mounting up in Collie, and people down there were very upset. The Government had to look after them. Extremely wasteful and polluting energy policies were followed. When the Collie power station was being planned, wonderful promises were made about its environmental features; it would be more environmentally friendly than previous coal fired stations. When I asked how this would come about, I was told that some extra bricks would be placed on the top of the chimney. I can show the member the answer that I received, if he likes.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: You should ask someone responsible, not the apprentice.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I think Hon George Cash gave me that answer; the member should check with him.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: That does not sound like Hon George Cash.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That was the answer. I can show Mr Lightfoot a copy, if he likes. Those are the great new environmental savings for Western Australia - a few more bricks on the top of the chimney!

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: You give me the copy.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I shall do that. It even made "Inside Cover".

What upsets me most about this stupid push to use coal in that manner and uranium for nuclear energy is that we are on the verge of real breakthroughs in the solar energy industry. Already in Australia people are talking about solar energy costing 4¢ a unit. The *New Scientist* reports that sheets of wafer-thin plastic film being developed in the US could provide a cheap and convenient form of solar energy. The idea is that the film, which conducts electricity, can be rolled up like wallpaper so that it can be easily carried, but when laid flat in the sunlight will trap solar energy and convert it to electrical energy. Alvin Marks of Advanced Research Development Inc, a company based at Athol in Massachusetts, says that it could provide the cheapest source of energy known. He says that the materials used are extremely cheap and could provide power at 1¢ per watt.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: That is not amortising the cost of the unit. Do you not understand that?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: He says that the cheapest form of power costs about \$1.05 per watt.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Do you not understand that there is not a lot of sunshine when the sun goes down?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do. Energy in that fashion can be used during the day and beyond because it can be stored.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Get some lead-acid batteries!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It can heat homes in cold climates during the night by warming up water. There are many ways it can be used.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: We can eat raw meat too!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Very capable people live in Australia, whose intelligence is being lost because we are not developing those potentials.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: We are talking about intelligence lost.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It may be lost on Mr Lightfoot, but others may look to have a rather more advanced -

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: There is no way in the world you can introduce solar power on a significant basis in this State or any other industrialised society.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The United States Information Service disagrees with Mr Lightfoot. It sees it as the fastest growing form of energy in the future.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: It is about 0.01 -

Hon J.A. SCOTT: It is higher than that. It more than doubles the proposed increase in nuclear energy. I can show Mr Lightfoot the figures.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Nuclear energy is about 17 per cent of the entire supply.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The experts are talking about the future supplies of world energy and more than double the projected growth in renewable energy. Nuclear energy is seen as a dead industry by the US Information Service.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot interjected.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: In referring to the Government's appalling attention to environmental matters I cannot help but mention the dreaded forest situation. The conservation movement continually addresses the fact that the Government does not acknowledge that forests are being destroyed because they are being over harvested and the current sustainable level is impossible to maintain. A 55 year rotation is in place for the karri trees and somewhere between a 66 and 77 year cycle for jarrah. That will mean that the oldest trees outside conservation reserves will be jarrah trees around 77 years old. Less than one-third of conservation reserves is old growth forest. Much of it is not even called forest. We are creating a situation where any large hollow dwelling birds will be wiped out; they will have nowhere to nest.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has in place fire regimes which are wiping out plant species despite CALM's protestation that logging does not cause any loss of species. The ecologists have a different point of view. I mentioned before that I attended a seminar on fire and flora off the south coast. That seminar attracted an attendance of 100 people, including many of the State's foremost botanists and ecologists. The post seminar review reported that the use of prescribed burns moderate in scale, sensitively planned and implemented as part of a wider ranging set of fire management policies, was not in question at the seminar. It said, however, that the heath/sandplain, low woodland, moist gully and wetland communities distributed throughout the region are subject to systematic, broadscale, short rotation prescribed burning. Those communities are commonly recognised as having a high conservation value in species richness, and the occurrence of threatened species and endemic taxa of limited distribution.

Some of the statements of those ecologists and botanists were alarming. An article appeared in a newspaper recently and a question was asked in this House about one of the most highly respected scientists in this State, Grant Wardell-Johnson, who has left CALM. The answer to that question was not forthcoming yesterday. I understand he left in disgust because CALM insisted on burning tingle forests near Denmark. At that seminar, while discussing locally endemic eucalypts in the Walpole-Nornalup area, he concluded -

On an evolutionary time scale, lower biomass accumulation, greater seasonality and greater frequency of fires are likely in the future. This process is exacerbated by increasing the frequency of fire in the shorter term. Under a regime of more frequent fires *E.calophylla*, *E.marginata* and *E.guilfoylei* are likely to become more dominant while *E.jacksonii* and *E.brevistylis* are likely to become less so. Regeneration success of *E.jacksonii*, *E.ficifolia* and *E.brevistylis* is problematical and will require further investigation. Early establishment of these species is especially worthy of consideration. The distribution patterns of these species reflects patterns in distribution of other relictual species. A decline in *E.jacksonii* and *E.brevistylis* has implications of survival of associated diverse Gondwana fauna.

He saw that Gondwana fauna was in danger from the present burning practice and as a result he left CALM. That is symptomatic of the attitude of most scientists in this State.

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [5.20 pm]: I thought I would offer a few words on the Governor's gracious speech, although Hon Ross Lightfoot referred to it as an Address-in-Reply. The speech opening this fourth session of the thirty-fourth Parliament was of some note. One of my parliamentary colleagues described it as crap. I say that at the very least it should have contained a disclaimer: Written and authorised by Richard Court; contributed to by a dozen or so muddling Ministers. The speech refers to some who have fallen in the cause. This was the first thing mentioned. Unfortunately it did not include all those who had fallen in the cause. I mean of course Hon Cheryl Edwardes, who ceased to be Attorney General and was divorced from the legal fraternity to the relief of the Government; Hon Norman Moore, who was partially divorced from the education fraternity to the relief of teachers, parents and the Government; Hon Graham Kierath, who was relieved of the Health portfolio following the nurses' strikes, privatisation and increasing government nervousness; and Hon Roger Nicholls, who was divorced from community services and all the support he had been winning for the Government. These changes are worthy of observation. Likewise, other matters such as the ennoblement of the Hon Marquis da Foss QC should have been mentioned in His Excellency's gracious speech as something of note. The Governor must be embarrassed by some of the key things he was given to speak about.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Why don't you limit your speech to people who can fight back?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Hon Ross Lightfoot seems to be going quite well. Reference is made in the speech to rising employment trends in Western Australia. Unfortunately there was no comment on this Government's negative contribution, particularly through the dismissal of its own employees.

Hon N.F. Moore: Who has been dismissed?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I forgot that the Government likes to use the terms "redundancy" and "severance", but never "dismissal". However, the Government points to its record in employment growth.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! I suggest that Hon John Cowdell has the call. He is the only one entitled to speak.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Comments are made once again in the Governor's speech that wages have continued to grow strongly. That is not due to the efforts of this Government, certainly in terms of its legislation on workplace agreements or to the discretion of Minister Kierath in determining the minimum rate of pay. Then of course we come to public sector finances where the major contribution to the improvement in the situation is the sale of BankWest. The government bench remains a little silent. In the federal campaign the federal coalition was continuously on about selling the family silverware to improve the budgetary situation federally, but the State Government claims credit at a local level for a similar exercise in selling the silverware to improve the budgetary situation in this State.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Stainless steel is good enough for us Mr Cowdell, but not for you.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: As noted in the Governor's speech, the Government has improved its fiscal situation with its \$50 motor vehicle surcharge, the 4¢ a litre fuel excise, the increase in tobacco and alcohol

charges, and the increase in transport, water and electricity expenses. The Governor's speech ranges to a number of interesting subjects, such as the planned new health campuses in Bunbury, Joondalup and the Peel region, although they are mainly of a private nature. Heaven knows how much the local punters will have to pay for those in the end. As Hon Norman Moore will know, the expenditures on TAFE facilities are mentioned. Once again the Government has claimed complete credit for these, despite the funds coming from the Australian National Training Authority.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: How does ANTA generate funds?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: It generates funds in the same way this Government generates funds. I will refer to some things that are not in the Governor's speech with which His Excellency probably needs to be acquainted. His Excellency needs to know of the farce that is the committee system in this Chamber and the urgent need for reform. I have touched on this topic on a number of occasions. I will give one immediate instance on this occasion. This morning as I understand it the Standing Committee on Legislation of this Chamber met and determined to show its contempt for this House and the processes of Parliament.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: You weren't at the meeting. You abrogated your responsibility and did not attend.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: As I was about to say, I was not in attendance at this morning's meeting. The meeting was called at less than 24 hours' notice. I was advised that the purpose of the meeting was to elect a chairman of the committee. When contacted by telephone yesterday, Wednesday, 20 March -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: When yesterday were you contacted by telephone?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: It was just before lunchtime. I indicated that I was willing to make myself available for a meeting yesterday in a recess time, as we had done previously, or at the committee's convenience on Friday, 22 March. The chairman, however, apparently determined that the meeting would proceed at 10.00 am today.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: There was no chairman until the meeting reconvened this morning.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: In that case, some mysterious person determined that the committee would meet at 10.00 am today. It was not the next ordinary specified meeting time of the committee as previously confirmed by the committee. Normally, I have no objection to the timing of the committee meetings. It is regrettable that this is either the first or second meeting I have been unable to attend in the whole of my three years on the committee, but nevertheless these things do happen.

However, I was concerned to hear this afternoon from a number of sources - I must say by none of my parliamentary colleagues or the committee staff, but, among others, the Assistant Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council - that the committee had determined to send back to this Chamber a specific term of reference without comment.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): Order! Before the member proceeds I refer him to Standing Order No 356 which reads -

Proceedings of a committee are not noticed by the Council until reported.

Therefore, the member cannot speak about the deliberations of the committee.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I was not going to speak about the deliberations of the committee. I could not do that because I was not at the meeting and thus am not in a position to understand the deliberations. I received a call of concern that the committee was withdrawing its invitation, which it issued on 3 January, to the Trades and Labor Council to appear before the committee. That was a concern which was expressed to me by the Trades and Labor Council.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Which committee withdrew its invitation?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I am indicating the concerns which were expressed to me this afternoon.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Which committee?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: The Legislation Committee.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: When?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: That is the question I am posing.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You did not ask a question; you made a statement.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I said that concerns had been expressed that this happened. It is on the public record that the committee has sought public submissions. Indeed, it has bent over backwards to accommodate, for example, the Minister for Labour Relations. Members would be aware from the media that the committee has amended its timetable on no fewer than three occasions to facilitate the attendance of the Minister and to meet his conditions that the hearing be held in camera and after the federal election. I would be disturbed, given that situation, if the committee were to now withdraw the opportunity for the Minister, the shadow Minister, who received a specific invitation, and the Trades and Labor Council to appear before the committee.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Why would the shadow Minister not attend?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I understand the shadow Minister indicated she would make herself available to attend on the day of the hearings with the Minister and others.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: At what time?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I am sure the member, who was chairman of the committee, has the records. My colleague the shadow Minister for Labour Relations was told she would probably not have an opportunity to attend and the Trades and Labor Council was told that it need not attend. It is a matter of concern in the operation of the committee system if this has happened or is contemplated. I do not know what is the situation, but I express the concern. It would be unfortunate if the committee had determined to collapse the whole referral process, to piss off the witnesses and deny the public a hearing.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The member used unparliamentary language.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: In that case, to uninvite the witnesses who had previously been invited. It would be unfortunate if the committee system were so fragile that the absence of one member led to a reversal of its previous determinations and to an overthrow of the principles of this House. The committee system has many failings. It is completely in the hands of one side of this House. That side, the government side, appoints the chairs of the committees and they provide themselves with automatic majorities and use those majorities ruthlessly on many occasions.

Hon N.F. Moore: That is a joke.

Hon Kim Chance: If this is true, it is a breach of trust in what the Parliament asked the committee to do.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon N.F. Moore: Has that happened?

Hon Kim Chance: If it is true it is a breach of trust.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: The concerns expressed in this instance by my parliamentary colleagues and members of the public who have been told that their invitations have been revoked, is a matter of concern. It further reflects on our already tarnished committee system. It is a committee system which is tarnished by its partisan nature, the paucity of resources which are allocated to it and the lack of adequate times allocated to committees within the parliamentary schedule.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: The committee is not omnipotent; it is an adjunct to this House. This House remains the strength in this Parliament. The legislation may come back to this place - I will not develop it any further than that - and this is the right place for it to come.

Hon John Halden: Why have the committee?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Our committee system has been tarnished in the past. On many occasions, committees have presented unanimous reports to this Chamber, and of course this Chamber does not have to accept those reports, but when members of a committee vote and put their signature to a unanimous report and then come into this Chamber within hours and vote it down, it must lead to some lack of confidence in the committee system and in the worth of putting time and effort into that system. I hope this Chamber is not witnessing the further gross abuse of the committee system by virtue of the sudden collapsing of a term of reference.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: If you had any thought that the committee was important you would have attended this morning. I had the same notice as you and I managed to come in from a farm this morning to attend the meeting.

Hon Kim Chance: You probably had more notice.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: I had exactly the same notice.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I will not turn to the attendance records of the committee and compare my absence on one occasion with the attendance record of other members, because that is not the relevant point. The relevant point is the proper functioning of this committee, whether three, four or five people are present.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: The proper functioning is three or more.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: There can be three or more, but whether that determines the proper functioning depends upon what the committee of three or more does.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Have you considered that if the committee with the totality of numbers that you are talking about had made the decision that you claim has been made we would be debating the report of the committee now?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I look forward to members of the public who have been told that they will no longer have an opportunity to present their views to the committee being disabused of that view - a view which they have gained from the committee.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: If I were Tony Cooke, I would rap your knuckles for not attending this morning. I would take the harshest steps that I could against you for your non-attendance this morning. You have got a lot to make up.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: If that were the case, Hon Ross Lightfoot would have suffered about 20 disciplinary procedures from his party.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: That is completely wrong.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! It is getting out of hand when about eight other members want to contribute to the debate; they cannot. Only the member on his feet can contribute.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Having acquainted the Governor of the flaws in the proper functioning of the committee system, I turn to the deafening silence in the Governor's speech about the Commission on Government. The Commission on Government has been funded by the Government of this State to the tune of millions of dollars, yet the Government cannot bear to even mention the Commission on Government by name.

Hon N.F. Moore: Is that the report that says that members of Parliament who resign without good reason should pay for their by-election? Is that what it says, and did your leader say that was a good idea?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: The Government delayed the setting up of the Commission on Government for two years, initially on the ground that it did not like the 1992 Bill because it had many things wrong with it. However, the 1993 Bill was exactly the same as the 1992 Bill, so there could not have been too much wrong with it! It then became the 1994 Bill. This was obviously because the Government did not want the committee to meet in time for some of its recommendations to be implemented; it could not have that. Of course, the important difference, as Hon Ross Lightfoot has reminded me, between the 1992 and 1993-1994 legislation was the Government's attempt to nobble the commission by restrictive terms of reference with regard to corrupt and improper conduct. Fortunately, the commission ignored those restrictive terms of reference.

I turn now to the situation before us. There is, most notably by the National Party, a roasting of most of the commission's findings; and if it is not a roasting, the commission is overcome by faint praise or deathly silence from the government ranks. I suggest there is complete mortification on the government side that it has created a monster, a Frankenstein that is out of control. I suggest that the Government has no confidence in the chairman of the commission, Mr Jack Gregor, and his team, and this has been patently indicated to all who can read the Government's responses to date. It is obvious that the Government intends to pigeonhole most of the recommendations.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: You are not suggesting that we are bound by all of the recommendations, are you?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Indeed not, but they deserve a decent hearing and consideration. Part 4 of the Commission on Government Act 1994 deals with the parliamentary committee. I am not trailblazing on this issue; I understand a National member in another place did that quite effectively last night in dealing with the complete contempt that has been shown to the Commission on Government. Section 23(b) states that the parliamentary committee is to report at its earliest opportunity to both Houses of Parliament. Subsection (c) states that it is to examine the report or reports of the commission delivered under section 8 and report at its earliest opportunity to both Houses of Parliament. The parliamentary committee is in breach of the Act. It has not reported at the earliest opportunity. This is echoed by National Party members as well. The parliamentary committee has gone only halfway through the first report. The second report has not even been touched by the parliamentary committee that is required by the Act to report promptly. Within two weeks we will have a third report to the parliamentary committee.

Hon P.R. Lightfoot: Are you going to stop filibustering in this Chamber so that we can consider those reports?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: The committee is used as a warehousing device by the Government so that things are not reported. The committee is the repository; that is where the reports arrive and they are being deliberately held up in the committee so that no further consideration can take place. That is an excuse that has been used on a number of occasions.

Hon John Halden: Surely this committee meets regularly.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Indeed it does. I must say, the record of the Legislation Committee is exemplary in terms of the number of times it meets, the frequency with which it meets and the number of matters that it has discharged properly to date that it has had referred to it. Of course the Joint Standing Committee on the Commission on Government last met about four months ago, expeditiously dealing with matters! It has reported in one way or another on only half the items in the first report of August last year. The Governor's speech contains glaring omissions on the Commission on Government, although it has not been completely ignored. A couple of things are mentioned - two out of about 200. There is, of course, the reference to the Official Corruption Commission, although if we go by what the Governor's speech says, the Government will go against the specific recommendations of the Commission on Government. Then the speech has a minor section on the accountability of members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown. It is about as slim an effort as was put into the effort on the Official Corruption Commission. Where are the other 200 items? Where is the mention of the commission? I looked, for example, for the disclosure legislation. Where is it? It is missing in action. This is legislation that has been promised by the Premier three times.

Hon N.F. Moore: And it shall arrive.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: We actually have a 1992 Act on the books that could be proclaimed. It needs amendment, but it could be proclaimed and amended. That is the simplest way. It would take a week, or even a day.

The Government is now in receipt, by virtue of the second report, of a set of detailed recommendations by the Commission on Government on disclosure legislation. The Commission on Government has gone to some length to look at possible state legislation compared with existing commonwealth legislation to make sure it is appropriate. We have detailed recommendations from the Commission on Government. However, I suppose the Government does not feel the need to move on this.

I must apologise if I have misled the House in this regard. We do have disclosure legislation on the books. We passed it last year. It dealt with all the standard things, such as name and address, amounts over \$1 500, details lodged and so on. The trouble is, it is lodged with the Industrial Relations Commission and it applies only to trade unions! So we have a form of disclosure legislation. It does not apply to individuals or companies, but it does apply to trade unions.

Hon N.F. Moore: I told you there will be legislation this year.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: We were looking for some indication in the Governor's speech.

Hon N.F. Moore: Commonwealth legislation already in place applies to all political parties in Australia.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: As I was saying, the Government probably even recognises that the existing disclosure legislation is inadequate. I am sure it will move to amend it because it does not cover all Labor Party donors; it covers only trade unions! Therefore, the Government may extend it to that degree. Of course, we know the necessity for this legislation. The Minister has been referring to commonwealth legislation by interjection. He is correct in referring to the commonwealth legislation; it covers a reasonable area of donations. However, it does not cover all donations. For example, in 1994-95, the Liberal Party received \$1 751 097.71m. The commonwealth legislation does provide for an indication of where half a million dollars of that money came from but not \$1.2m of that amount. It does not get down to any contributions that are made to the private accounts of any individual member of Parliament and they can be used for the same purpose.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why did your colleagues in Canberra not fix it?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Because it may be difficult to specify under the commonwealth Act accounts of state members of Parliament used for state purposes.

I conclude this evening with reference to this second glaring omission; that is, any reference to disclosure legislation. That omission in the Governor's speech is a serious deficiency. However, it is only one of 199 other matters in the Commission on Government report that were ignored by the Government.

[Debate adjourned, pursuant to Standing Order No 61(b).]

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

HON E.J. CHARLTON (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [6.00 pm]: I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Adjournment Debate - Enterprise Bargaining, Treatment of Electorate Officers

HON A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (East Metropolitan) [6.00 pm]: I am a little disappointed that the President is not here to preside over this occasion because the comments I have to make need to be made to the President.

My concern arises over the lack of enterprise bargaining that has been undertaken with the electorate staff of members of this place. Through their union, electorate officers approached the President in November 1995. They requested that the Presiding Officers, as the employers of the electorate officers, commence negotiation on enterprise bargaining in the context of the framework agreement that had been set down by the State Government for the public sector. Three weeks later a reply was received that they would be prepared to enter into some sort of negotiation, but since then it has been the most sorry story of delay. I know this intimately because my electorate officer is one involved in the negotiation. I see her each week as she comes back from yet another unfruitful meeting very disappointed and dejected.

Hon E.J. Charlton: I think she should be paid double having to work for you.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: She should. The Minister has recognised that I am one of the hardest working members, certainly compared with the Minister for Transport.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That is an additional reason.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Not all of us have the private funds that the dope farmer from Tammin tells us he has access to.

Several members interjected.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: To clarify that, I was not referring to the horticultural practices of the Minister for Transport.

This is a very serious matter. I ask all members to listen very carefully because today we have received notice that a letter has been conveyed to the President notifying him that the union and the electorate officers are in formal dispute with the Presiding Officers. That is a very distressing circumstance. It should be of great concern to all of us that the management of this place has been conducted in such a way that without any consultation with the members of this place our electorate staff feel so frustrated by the way they have been treated in their endeavours to obtain some enterprise bargaining pay increase they have had to institute a formal dispute procedure. I understand they contemplate a meeting next week. If substantial progress has not been made we may all be affected by the industrial action they will seek to take.

We listen day after day to the insincere pontifications from ministers about their commitment to enterprise bargaining. I know from the letters that have been received by the union from some government members that they feel as strongly as the Opposition does about the treatment of our electorate officers. Many have been supportive -

Several members interjected.

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Unfortunately, some members in this House may not recognise the value of their electorate officers.

Hon E.J. Charlton: That is an immature statement by someone who is totally outlawed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Some 35 submissions have been received by the Civil Service Association from members in this place and the Legislative Assembly giving great support to the modest claims by our electorate staff for a pay increase. The fundamentals of their claim include a 7 per cent pay increase, recognising past productivity since their last pay increase in 1991. They are seeking a reclassification of one or two levels to take effect from, I think, 1 January 1997. Some claims have been made regarding redundancy and redeployment provisions. On balance, all the claims are very modest. We are all aware that over the last five years the workload of electorate officers has increased substantially as people become more aware of the role of the electorate office, and people have generally become more politically aware. People now use the offices of parliamentary members not just as a last resort but often as the first base for a range of government services and inquiries. An increasing number of agencies have been established, both government and non-government, and electorate officers need to keep abreast of developments within government, both federal and state, because the average punter turning up at an electorate office does not have great knowledge of the separation of responsibilities between Federal and State Governments. They expect, and by and large receive, a service whether they raise a federal or state matter.

We know also that our electorate staff often work under trying circumstances. Virtually every submission recognises that the workload required of them is well in excess of what can be handled by one person. It is not true, as has been said on some occasions to our electorate officers, that their role is one merely of a typist-receptionist. That is a massive misconception of the role that electorate officers play in the life of this Parliament. They are the much needed front-line troops, particularly for backbenchers, who have no other staff. They are our only resource. Not only do they carry out all the electorate work but they also provide secretarial and research services for members. My electorate officer has a degree. An increasing number of university graduates take on the job and do the job at that level.

A very clear case has been made for the productivity increase for our electorate officers. One of the reasons I raise the matter today is that this whole process of negotiation has stalled so badly that the union and its members feel that they have no alternative but to declare a formal dispute, and that this has happened without consultation or any notice of the substantial submissions that were made by members in this place and the Legislative Assembly. I hope that you, Mr Deputy President (Hon Barry House), can convey to the President our very grave concern about this state of affairs. We need to address this matter promptly. It is a matter that affects not only our electorate staff, because if industrial action is taken we will all be affected, as will our constituents. This situation cannot continue without any reference to members of this House or to the Joint House Committee.

Adjournment Debate - Port Kennedy Development

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [6.10 pm]: I raise a very serious matter: It has come to my notice that the developers of the Port Kennedy project with the compliance, if not the collusion, of the Government, have sought to avoid carrying out a commitment made to this House of Parliament. I am talking about a commitment of which those in the present Government, when in opposition, were fully supportive. I will read from *Hansard* to give members the background of this issue. This exchange occurred during the Committee debate of the Port Kennedy Development Bill, for which Hon John Halden had the carriage -

Hon REG DAVIES: What is the situation regarding the structures presently being used by the LCDC and the sea rescue group? I am not sure that they are unauthorised structures, but they appear to come under this clause.

Hon JOHN HALDEN: An arrangement has been reached between the proponents and the people who use those "unauthorised" structures for them to continue to use them for some time until they decide upon a new structure to be built and used for the same purpose.

Hon REG DAVIES: If that is the case, these valuable community services will be moved. Who will pay for the removal and the new headquarters - the proponents or the LCDC and the sea rescue service?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: They will have to pay rent. The sea rescue group will have a new facility built for it and the LCDC will be able to use facilities to be built in the town centre.

Hon Reg Davies: Paid for by whom?

Hon JOHN HALDEN: The proponents.

I asked Hon John Halden where that commitment came from, and he said that the developers and their adviser were in the Chamber at that time and he referred all those questions to them; the commitment had come from the developers.

Hon N.F. Moore: I do not think the developers were in the Chamber.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: After refusals by the Minister for Planning to table or give me copies of any of the minutes of the Port Kennedy board, when I was trying to find out about some misleading statements which he had made in a press statement in which he said that the Port Kennedy management board had given the project unanimous approval -

Hon B.K. Donaldson: The previous Government got it from them. Is that what you are talking about?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I am trying to tell members that this House was in total agreement. Nobody objected and, when in opposition, those on the other side were in favour of it and were great proponents of the land conservation district committee and the sea rescue group. I have even heard Hon Bruce Donaldson say some very kind words about those people.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: We also established the scientific park.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is not so. Its boundaries have not been set yet. That is nonsense.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Obviously you have not seen the pieces of paper I have seen.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Those opposite did make the commitment. I have asked questions and I keep finding out that no boundaries have been set and the park has not been formally put in place; it is only in someone's imagination. The creation of Australia's first scientific park was certainly one of the promises of those opposite, as was the setting aside of 100 per cent of stage 2. That promise was not kept; neither was the promise about protecting all wetlands in the high dunes. They are not being protected; they are being destroyed. The promise about the boundaries of the scientific park being based on scientific assessments by Dr B. Semeniuk has not occurred. Other promises that have not been kept include the construction within two years of the coalition coming to office of a vermin proof fence to keep out feral animals, and ensuring the golf courses are not built over wetland. Those opposite should not talk to me about what the Government has done and has not done.

Several members interjected.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The Government has completely turned around in this project. It is in compliance with the developer to bring about throwing the Port Kennedy Landcare Conservation District Committee and the sea rescue group off that area. I refer to the minutes of the Port Kennedy board when the Port Kennedy sea search and rescue group was discussed. The minutes state -

Mr Palmer indicated to the Board that a number of Rockingham residents had expressed concern to him over the ability of the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group to carry out the duties it had volunteered to take on. There was additional concern over the motives of the Group. As a result of these concerns, he proposed that a motion be put forward. He requested that the Board note that the motion did not mirror his views and was a reflection of community concern.

He failed to say which members of the community. It goes on -

Mr Sheehan -

The developer who had promised to construct a building for this group -

- expressed doubts about the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group and gave his support to the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group . . .

Mr Lukin recommended that as the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group does not appear to have any tangible assets that a branch of the Rockingham Sea Rescue Group come in and look after the area.

That item was moved by Mr Palmer and seconded by Mr Lukin. In effect, Mr Lukin is voting to save himself money.

Hon E.J. Charlton: Is he a tuna fisherman from South Australia - a weightlifter?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: He is a much better fisherman, one who has caught a lot of idiots in this place.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: He caught you.

Hon E.J. Charlton: What did he use for bait?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The minutes go on to say that, having received letters from the Rockingham sea rescue group, a meeting was held on 21 October 1994 and, according to the minutes, the following interesting exchanges occurred -

Mr Sheehan wished it to be noted that it was he who had initiated contact with the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group on the recommendation of professional boaters in the area who regarded it as a very well organised group.

Mr Hitchen queried why the Port Kennedy Management Board has become so embroiled in the sea rescue issue, with Dr Jennings adding that the appropriate authorities should deal with the matter. Mr Millan replied that the Board had become involved due to Mr Anderton's affiliation with both the LCDC and the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group.

Mr Smith explained to the Committee that the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group was passionate about the issue, due mainly to the lack of consultation over the accreditation of new groups, such as the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group. He cited the confusion as to which group had authority with regard to patrolling the Port Kennedy area and waters down to Mandurah . . . He added that his group had had difficulties in communicating with the Port Kennedy Volunteer Sea Rescue Group.

Ms Hyde queried Mr Smith on the necessity of having an on site base at Port Kennedy once the development is completed, or whether it could be located elsewhere.

This is extremely convenient. This man promised to construct a building. He is then on a board and is able to put or second the motions and to take part in a debate which could result in his not carrying out his promise, a promise that those opposite really wanted to be honoured. To their disgrace those opposite have allowed this continual erosion of these groups and the ruining of the names of several people by a whole range of unsavoury practices. Those practices include police officers telephoning people, supposedly investigating the land care and sea rescue groups, and slandering people on the telephone. The police have telephoned me and slandered people as well.

Hon W.N. Stretch: Did you ring Mr Wiese?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I certainly did, and he was to get back to me, although he has not yet. This is an urgent situation. The Government is allowing this push-out. The sea rescue group and the LCDC are being shoved right out of the area now. That rather goes against the things that were said when government members were in opposition. When Mr Pandal was a spokesman on this matter he said -

That is the background against which the Opposition for several long months was prepared to work with the LCDC and say two things: Firstly, "No, we did not believe its role ought to be shunted to one side and, notwithstanding those assurances given by the Parliamentary Secretary tonight that that would not have occurred or that this is not necessary, we do not accept that." Secondly, we say that it is important - and we will reiterate that at a later stage during the Committee debate - that the LCDC's work is not only restored, which it will be under this clause, but also its influence will be extended by giving it a seat on the management authority.

It has now been chucked off that board because, unfortunately, Mr Hitchen died and has not been replaced with another member from that group. This board is corrupt and it needs to be looked at rather more seriously than people on the other side are doing. How can someone who has given a commitment to this Parliament that he will provide buildings as part of the agreement for the project now renege on it in this fashion?

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.20 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RED MUD IN THE PEEL-HARVEY CATCHMENT TO REDUCE PHOSPHORUS POLLUTION - ACCOUNTS, AUDITING PROVISIONS

57. **Hon J.A. COWDELL** to the Minister representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

- (1) With reference to question 3918 of 1995 in the other place in which the Minister for Primary Industry said that all the accounts for the project evaluating the use of red mud in the Peel-Harvey catchment had been audited, why is the Agriculture Western Australia catchment coordinator in Pinjarra now saying that the claims will be investigated by an independent consultant and auditor?
- (2) Was the Minister's answer correct?
- (3) If not, why did he not follow up the issue?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Primary Industry has provided the following response -

- (1) I am informed that comments attributed to the district leader of the Pinjarra Community Catchment Centre by *The West Australian* were not represented accurately. The district leader was describing the proposal to conduct an audit of monitoring data on traces of heavy metals and was not referring to any financial audit.
- (2) Yes. This is a continuing project and auditing provisions will still apply.
- (3) Not applicable.

NINGALOO MARINE PARK - APACHE ENERGY DRILLING INTEREST

58. **Hon P.H. LOCKYER** to the Minister for Mines:

Is the Minister aware of a press report this morning that Apache Energy has indicated its interest in drilling for oil in Ningaloo Marine Park? I remind the Minister of the undertaking given by this Government that no drilling will take place within that park. Will the Minister give an undertaking that no drilling will take place in that park or adjacent to that park?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I read an article in *The West Australian* this morning which suggested that Apache Energy was contemplating drilling in the vicinity of Ningaloo Marine Park. My office made some inquiries this morning, and I am advised that no application has been made to the Department of Minerals and Energy or my office. I understand that the only question being raised by the company was whether any action should be taken against the Government for its earlier policy which banned drilling in that area. I am further advised by my office that the company has indicated that it is not contemplating taking any action against the Government. However, that is a matter for the company.

Hon P.H. Lockyer: Do you anticipate any change to that policy?

Hon GEORGE CASH: No. I question where the report came from and why that particular inflection was put in that article.

FLEET WEST - ASSETS SALE VALUE

59. **Hon JOHN HALDEN** to the Minister for Finance:

The projected budget surplus of \$79.5m is based entirely on the sale of Fleet West.

- (1) What is the value of Fleet West asset sales so far this year?
- (2) What is the current projected value of asset sales for the whole of the budget year?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The projected budget surplus is not based entirely on the sale of Fleet West. The sale of Fleet West is one of a number of transactions which comprise the projected budget result for 1995-96. No single item is entirely responsible for the estimated outcome.

- (1) Apart from the normal turnover and replacement of vehicles, no Fleet West assets have been sold so far this year.
- (2) Negotiations are still in train for the sale of Fleet West.

METROBUS - DRIVERS, COLLECTING FARES BAN; RECOUPING LOSSES

60. **Hon P.R. LIGHTFOOT** to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister considering recouping from the Public Transport Union the loss to Western Australians, estimated to be between \$100 000 and \$150 000, that is due to MetroBus drivers refusing to collect fares?

- (2) Is the Minister considering recouping the loss direct from MetroBus drivers?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1)-(2) I understand that the amount is approximately \$110 000. I have just received a report that the Industrial Relations Commission has made a decision that the bans on collecting fares be lifted and that the drivers proceed from 4.00 pm to operate in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment. MetroBus is required to operate the service, and part of the employment conditions of its personnel is to collect fares.

I expect that MetroBus, which put forward its budgetary requirements on the basis of the number of passengers moved and the amount of fares collected, will have to incorporate that loss within its operations. The blame for this action must be taken not by the drivers but by the Public Transport Union, because I do not think the drivers are responsible; so much misinformation has been given to them by the union over the last few weeks that we cannot blame them for any action they take. MetroBus will have to incorporate that loss, and that will jeopardise its ability to be competitive in a competitive world.

PORT KENNEDY SEA RESCUE GROUP - ACCOMMODATION

- 61. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services:**

- (1) Is the Minister responsible for the Port Kennedy Sea Rescue Group?
- (2) Has the Minister approached the Minister for Lands in regard to accommodation for the sea rescue group?
- (3) Has the Minister for Lands responded to the Minister's approach?
- (4) Has the Minister for Lands sought to provide accommodation for the sea rescue group?
- (5) If yes, what arrangements have been made?
- (6) If no, what further action will the Minister for Emergency Services take?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Emergency Services has provided me with some input to this answer.

- (1) Volunteer sea search and rescue matters fall within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Emergency Services. Every assistance is given to these volunteers wherever possible. In addition, the Government provides funds annually as a contribution toward their operating costs.
- (2) Yes.
- (3)-(5) As Minister for Lands I have raised the issue with the Chief Executive of LandCorp, who is pursuing the matter. I will inform the Minister for Emergency Services of the outcome of investigations in due course.
- (6) The Minister for Emergency Services has written to the Minister for Lands and the Minister for the Environment on behalf of the Port Kennedy Sea Rescue Group seeking their assistance in providing accommodation.

CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - VERBAL ADVICE OBTAINED BY EXECUTIVE OFFICER FROM SOLICITOR

- 62. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Fair Trading:**

Further to the answer the Minister gave to question without notice 34 -

- (1) Who was the solicitor from whom verbal advice was obtained by the Executive Officer of the Charitable Collections Advisory Committee?
- (2) On what date was the advice given?
- (3) Who was the executive officer who received such advice?
- (4) Was a file note of that advice made by the executive officer?
- (5) Did the executive officer communicate this advice to the Charitable Collections Advisory Committee?
- (6) If so, is that advice recorded in the minutes of the committee, and will the Minister table those minutes?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Fair Trading has provided the following reply -

The information is presently being collated and will be provided to the member as soon as it is available.

**ROAD FUNDING - ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS FROM CONSOLIDATED FUND
FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE OR CONSTRUCTION**

63. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:

What additional allocations have been made from the consolidated fund, excluding any allocations made from commonwealth grants and from the transport trust fund, for either road maintenance or road construction in the term of the current Government?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I have not been able to get the final advice on this matter but I will ensure that a full and accurate answer to the member's question is provided on Tuesday, 26 March.

PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT OFFICE - STATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNIT
Common Digital Network, CDN, Available to all School and Education Systems

64. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister assisting the Minister for Public Sector Management:

Does the Minister have an answer to the question without notice I asked yesterday?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

Yes. However, for the benefit of the House, it is proper that I read the question so that the answer will appear in *Hansard* with the question. Hon Tom Stephens asked -

I understand that the state telecommunications unit of the Public Sector Management Office is coordinating the establishment of a corporate data network for government and that the Education Department will be a major user, providing services including Internet to both learning and administration environments for government schools. Will the Minister take the necessary steps to ensure that the CDN is, at the same time, made available to the non-government school sector and other community groups wishing to gain access to the Internet?

The following information has been provided by the Minister for Public Sector Management -

In November 1995, the Information Policy Council approved a strategy for a statewide common digital network which supports the current and future business objectives of government and public sector agencies. The network will be available to all school and education systems. Local councils have been invited to participate via the Western Australian Municipal Association to provide access to the library systems which would also allow community access to government information at libraries. The network will improve the delivery of government services to regional areas of the State and will also support a range of intra-public sector services such as electronic mail.

**PORT KENNEDY - SCIENTIFIC PARK WITH VERMIN PROOF FENCE,
ESTABLISHMENT PROMISE**

65. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Did the coalition Government promise to establish a scientific park with a vermin proof fence at Port Kennedy to keep out feral animals within two years of coming to office?
- (2) Have the boundaries of the scientific park-conservation zone been set?
- (3) If yes, where are they and are they those nominated by the Semenek research group?
- (4) Has an approved total feral proof fence yet been built?
- (5) If yes, where is this fence?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

The Minister for the Environment represents the Minister for Planning in this place and is unavailable at the moment.

**STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION - ASSESSMENT PURSUANT
TO SECTION 3T OF MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT FOR PREMIUM
REQUIREMENTS; DEFICIT**

66. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Finance:

Some notice of the question has been given. In making the assessment pursuant to section 3T of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act, what is or was the expected actuarial deficit of the State Government Insurance Commission and on what date was that assessment made?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. Assessment pursuant to section 3T of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act for 1995-96 premium requirements was completed on 9 May 1995. At that time - that is, using nine months past claims data - the deficit, as at 30 June 1995, was

projected to be \$211.4m. The need to project to 30 June 1995 was due to the fact that any premium variation would be effective from 1 July 1995. The actual deficit, after an additional three months' claims experience, to 30 June 1995, was \$191.7m, as reported in the State Government Insurance Commission's 1995 annual report.

CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - NEW COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT 1993

67. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Fair Trading:

Some notice of the question has been given. In making appointments to the Charitable Collections Advisory Committee in June 1993, why did the then Attorney General, now the Minister for Fair Trading, depart from earlier practice and not reappoint a single existing member of the committee, so as to provide some continuity of experience, especially when she was aware that a major review of the Charitable Collections Act was to commence?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

The Minister for Fair Trading has provided the following reply -

The term of office for the previous members of the Charitable Advisory Committee expired on 30 June 1993. By this time it had become apparent that the draft Public Collections Bill did not address many problematic areas relating to the fundraising industry and required, at the very least, substantial amendment. Given this situation it was deemed preferable to appoint a new committee to bring a fresh perspective to the issue.

RABBIT CALICIVIRUS DISEASE - LEGAL POSITION IF RELEASED

68. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister able to provide an answer to the question I asked him yesterday as the representative of the Minister for Primary Industry?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The member should elucidate on what the question was.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes, indeed, Mr President. The problem is that one goes close to exceeding the powers we have under the standing orders in terms of asking the same question twice.

The PRESIDENT: I know. I am watching that. In two examples today, Ministers were not in a position to answer questions. The member is advising the House that that question is still alive. When the Leader of the House answered a question a moment ago, in order to make the *Hansard* look a bit intelligent, he had to read the question. I think in circumstances like this, the member should do the same.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am pleased to inform the Minister that the question I am referring to concerned the legal position of people propagating rabbit calicivirus in the event that they do not have the legal protection of the Biological Control Act if that rabbit calicivirus is found to be of such nature that it does not qualify as a biological control agent under that Act?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I think that is a very clear and precise summary of the question yesterday. I thank the member for notice of it yesterday. The Minister for Primary Industry has provided me with the following information -

The discovery of the antibodies in an animal does not necessarily indicate that infection has occurred. Further investigations have not supported the view that kiwis are susceptible to the disease. If the release would be of advantage in the control of rabbits and it was considered that there would be no adverse effects, then with the unanimous agreement of the Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand the disease could be released. In this case, the Biological Control Act would limit any litigation. The Western Australian Minister for Primary Industry is requesting the federal Minister to schedule a meeting of ARMCANZ Ministers as soon as possible so that all issues involved in a possible release are fully discussed and a final decision made.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT - MANUAL ARTS TEACHERS, SHORTAGE

69. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Employment and Training:

Some notice of the question has been given. Is the Minister aware of the current shortage of manual arts teachers in Western Australia and what steps will he take to ensure that efforts are made immediately to ensure the education and training of people to teach manual arts and industrial design programs in WA schools?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

This question should be addressed to the responsible Minister, the Minister for Education.

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - NOT REPRESENTING MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

70. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Employment and Training:

Some notice of the question has been given. Does the Minister represent the Minister for Education?

Hon N.F. Moore: No.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Therefore, is the Minister going to give me the same answer as the one he just gave me?

Hon N.F. Moore: Yes.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I thank the Minister for his helpfulness.

6PR - SALE TO SOUTHERN CROSS PTY LTD

71. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Finance:

When the radio station 6PR was sold, Southern Cross Pty Ltd guaranteed that it would maintain employment levels in Western Australia. Recent media reports indicate that the company has not honoured that commitment. What are the Minister and the Government doing to ensure that the company honours its commitment?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

When the proposal to sell 6PR was going backwards and forwards, the ante kept being lifted, particularly by the local people, in relation to how many freebies they would give away to the advertising department to the benefit of the Government. That went to and fro. Then Southern Cross lifted the cash amount by another half a million dollars and the ante for the free advertising was different.

A letter to the Minister referred to the benefit being \$6.2m. That figure is a bit ridiculous; it was nowhere near that. That value was far greater than for the whole of the radio station. When this matter was put to the Totalisator Agency Board, it received legal advice that it could not sue anybody because there was no commercial transaction between it and the other party. It merely paid the price for the business. Where the matter has gone from there, I do not know. The response to me from the TAB is that it could not sue for that amount because it was not part of the deal. It was paid the money for the business; banked it; and got on air with 6PR.

MARGARET & SHANE FOUNDATION INC - 1994-95 RETURN LODGED UNDER CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ACT

72. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Fair Trading:

On what date did the Margaret and Shane Foundation lodge its 1994-95 return under the Charitable Collections Act and is the Minister prepared to table the return?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Fair Trading has provided the following reply: The return was lodged on 20 February 1996. Before giving any commitment to table the return, the Minister will await the advice of the Charitable Collections Advisory Committee.

NATIVE TITLE ACT - MINISTER FOR MINES REPRESENTATIONS TO FEDERAL MINISTERS

73. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Mines:

The Minister was quoted in *The Australian* of 7 March as indicating that he proposed to go to Canberra to make representations to the newly elected Federal Government about the Native Title Act. Did he go to Canberra on that date and, if so, what was the result of his representations to the Federal Government?

Hon GEORGE CASH replied:

I indicated that I would be travelling to Canberra as soon as possible to make representations to the newly appointed Ministers. My office made contact with the office of one of the Ministers on the day he was appointed, and it was suggested that I not pursue the matter as expeditiously as I intended. However, my principal private secretary went to Canberra last week and stayed for part of this week. I understand he was successful in seeing at least one Minister and a number of the other principal private secretaries who have responsibilities in the area of native title, mines and related matters. When I have an opportunity to discuss the matter with him - he returned only this morning - I will endeavour to ascertain the progress that was made. As to the federal Minister with the responsibility for native title, I understand Senator Minchin will be in Perth next Thursday. It is hoped that we will have some contact with him, but whether I am able to do so remains to be seen. However, the Premier and other senior Ministers no doubt will have an opportunity to discuss the matter with him.

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL - COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

74. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In the past two years has compensation been paid to any landowners, lessees or any other interest holders in respect of land acquired or resumed or businesses or residences that will be disrupted as a result of the construction of the Northbridge tunnel?
- (2) Will the Minister name the persons compensated and the amount of the compensation paid?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

- (1) Land is held by government agencies for the purpose of constructing the northern city bypass, which includes the tunnel. This land has been taken up over many years with government properties being leased over that time. Vacant possession is now required on those properties. Negotiations are taking place for the acquisition of the remaining properties required for the northern city bypass project.
- (2) The purchase price of properties is available from the Titles Office or the Valuer General's Office. Other information is of a commercially sensitive nature and, as such, is not available for public information.

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL - COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

75. Hon A.J.G. MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Transport:

Is the Minister saying that he is not prepared to disclose the amount of the compensation paid to various landholders and lessees relating to the Northbridge tunnel?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I am not aware of the specific amounts of compensation. I will certainly check out the detail about that. The member's question talked about providing specific amounts of compensation. As I said, a whole range of land is held by government agencies, particularly the State Planning Commission, some of which it has held for up to 30 years. During that time the properties in the area through which the alignment will go have been leased. I am not aware today of any compensation that has been paid. I am not saying there has not been any; all I am saying is that leases are in place and when the time for call up arrives, those properties must be made available to, in the case of the present operation, Main Roads Western Australia to construct the tunnel. I am not aware of compensation payments. However, if there are any, I will find out in due course.

In my previous answer I said that the value being paid for those properties is a matter between the government agencies and the owner.

Hon A.J.G. MacTiernan: This is our money. This is taxpayers' money. This is ridiculous.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: The agencies have not given that detail to me. As such, I am advised that it is available in the same way as applies to other properties -

Hon Mark Nevill: Main Roads publishes that.

Hon E.J. CHARLTON: It may do. The first question was about compensation. I am not aware of compensation paid. In answer to the first question I did not give any specifics because the member was talking about compensation in relation to ownership and leasing of the properties. I took the view that the question was really about some people who do not want to get out of their properties who have made a whole range of misleading statements about where they are now carrying on their business. Some have even gone to the extent of putting in place structures during the past few weeks so that they will get compensation as a consequence of the damage done by their having to leave - and that should be dealt with very seriously.

Hon John Halden: Life must be complicated in Tammin!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am trying to give the call to Hon Kim Chance.

Hon Kim Chance: They always do this to me.

SCHOOLS - ESPERANCE SENIOR HIGH *Upgrading Funds; Meeting with P & C Association*

76. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Did the Minister cancel an appointment with the Parents and Citizens' Association of the Esperance Senior High School made to discuss the need for upgrading of buildings and facilities at the school?
- (2) Has the Minister since met with the P & C association?
- (3) Are any funds allocated in the forthcoming Budget to allow for the long overdue upgrading at the Esperance Senior High School?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am advised by the Minister for Education in the following terms -

- (1) The Minister for Education has advised that a formal request to meet was not received from the P & C association. However, the Minister did meet with the president of the P & C association, and the Esperance Senior High School upgrade committee on 29 February 1996.

- (2) No.
- (3) Details of the proposed capital works expenditure at schools will be announced later this year in the context of the state budget.

**WYATT, CEDRIC - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT, REINSTATEMENT**

- 77. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:**
- (1) Has Mr Cedric Wyatt, the defeated Liberal Party candidate in the federal seat of Kalgoorlie, been reinstated as the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australian Aboriginal Affairs Department?
- (2) If yes, on what date did Mr Wyatt resume his duties?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

Mr President, I seek your guidance on this question. Notice has been given of a question containing three parts and the question was asked in only two parts. I presume I simply answer the two parts of the question asked in the House.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Yes, the Minister should answer the questions asked in the House.

Hon N.F. MOORE: The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) On 18 March 1996, and I am sure Mr Campbell will be pleased about the member's speculation regarding his future.

FUEL LEVY - REVENUE

- 78. Hon JOHN HALDEN to the Minister for Transport:**

What is the total revenue raised by the 4¢ a litre fuel levy since its introduction?

Hon E.J. CHARLTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. Total revenue received to end of February 1996 is \$77.7m, comprising \$29.1m collected in 1994-95 and \$48.6m collected in 1995-96. As a consequence, increased roadworks so desperately needed are now being carried out to the benefit of the community.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE - MINISTERIAL ATTENDANCE
Question Out of Order

- 79. Hon SAM PIANTADOSI to the Leader of the House:**

- (1) Why are not all Ministers present?
- (2) Will the Leader assure the House that he will inform the Opposition of the absence of any Minister for questions without notice?
- (3) As Mr Foss gave an assurance that he would be present for question time, what action, if any, will the Leader undertake to ensure there is not a repeat performance by Mr Foss?

The PRESIDENT: Order! That question is out of order. The Leader of the House is not responsible for the attendance of anybody else in this place. If the Leader of the House, by way of a ministerial statement, has an explanation I am happy about it; however, it should not be a response to the question.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Foss, Hon Peter, Engagement with ABC Run Over

HON GEORGE CASH (North Metropolitan - Leader of the House) [4.32 pm]: I advise the House that Hon Peter Foss had a previous engagement with the ABC and had hoped to conclude what I understand is a statewide recording by four o'clock. If that appointment has run over there is not a lot I can do about it.

Hon Tom Stephens: Hon Peter Foss has been talking too much again.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I indicated earlier by way of interjection that it had been anticipated that the Minister would be here by four o'clock.

Hon John Halden: There is no truth to the rumour he has resigned.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I took the opportunity last night to advise the manager of opposition business in this House that Mr Foss would not be here before four o'clock.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: There are Independents here too.

Hon GEORGE CASH: But not Hon Sam Piantadosi. I indicated before question time started today that it

was still my anticipation that Mr Foss would be here by four o'clock. As to what action I can take, let me say that I have no control whatever over the operations of the ABC. I do not know what action I could take to have the ABC do anything. However, I understand that it is important that Ministers where it is practically possible attend the Parliament, and in particular in question time.

Hon Sam Piantadosi: All my questions are directed to Mr Foss.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I cannot help that. I can give only the answer that I have, and it is given in good faith. I am sure Mr Foss will reiterate that when he returns. He may have a reason for the ABC running over time.
