

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 15 September 1983

The SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and read prayers.

ANIMALS: DOG ACT

Review: Petition

MRS BEGGS (Whitford) [10.46 a.m.]: I have a petition from eight residents of Western Australia drawing attention to the fact that the recommendations put to the Minister by the Dog Act review committee in May 1983 are a serious menace to their civil rights, and accordingly request that the Parliament reject the reported recommendations in their entirety. I certify that the petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 25.)

ANIMALS: DOG ACT

Review: Petition

MR GORDON HILL (Helena) [10.47 a.m.]: I present a petition from 123 electors of Helena asking that the recommendations of the Dog Act review committee be rejected in their entirety. I have certified that the petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 26.)

EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

Five-Year-Olds: Petition

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [10.48 a.m.]: I present a petition from 29 residents of Waroona praying that sufficient accommodation be provided for five-year-olds undertaking pre-school education. I have certified that the petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 28.)

ANIMALS: DOG ACT

Review: Petition

MRS WATKINS (Joondalup) [10.49 a.m.]: I present a petition in terms similar to those of the

petition presented by the member for Whitford and the member for Helena. It contains the signatures of 103 of my constituents and asks that the recommendations of the Dog Act review committee be rejected in their entirety. I have certified that the petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No. 27.)

TOBACCO (PROMOTION AND SALE) BILL

Second Reading

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [10.50 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

No more important a Bill could come before this Parliament than the one I am privileged to present today. It is important because it deals directly with children, with the health of our community, and with personal freedom.

Right now, 40 000 Western Australian children under the age of 16 years are already smoking regularly. Of these children, 8 000 started to smoke during the first eight months of this year. By the start of next year, 10 000 more children will have commenced smoking at a rate of 23 a day—if we do not do something now.

The people of this State expect this Government to do something.

Recent independent surveys of public opinion on the matter of a ban on the advertising of tobacco products showed that—

ninety four per cent of Western Australians do not want children to start smoking;

sixty one per cent believe that cigarette advertising influences children to smoke; and

ninety one per cent believe children are influenced by sport, sporting identities, and what they see at sporting events.

But the most telling survey of all was conducted only last week. It showed that no less than 69 per cent of people agree that all cigarette and tobacco advertising should be banned. That weight of public opinion assumes even heavier proportions when I add that only three per cent "strongly disagree" with the banning of tobacco advertising.

The will of the Western Australian people is abundantly clear. The only course of action of any Government laying claim to a social conscience is equally clear.

Around the world, 17 countries have already banned cigarette advertising. More and more will certainly follow their lead. It is not a question of

"whether" we shall ban tobacco promotion, but of "when" we shall ban it. In the presentation of this Bill, we are saying: The time is now. The only question that future generations could ask is: Why did not a Western Australian Government take the step sooner?

We must give children a chance. The people of Western Australia want us, as a Government, to take firm action to give their children a chance. I would now like to tell members why we must.

Members know only too well that tobacco smoking is the greatest single preventable cause of ill health and premature death in Western Australia today. The Commonwealth Department of Health estimates that smoking-related diseases—coronary heart disease, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema, to name but a few—account for the death of 16 000 Australians every year. My own department estimates that, in Western Australia, more than 1 200 people die of smoking-related diseases every year—on average, four people every day.

Now, if we had in our community a maniac killer murdering four people a day, there would be a massive outcry for his apprehension, and rightly so. We would not be seeing full-page newspaper advertisements suggesting that the heartbreak and misery resulting from his murderous toll were simply "trivialities" with which a Government should not be concerned. We would not be seeing thousands upon thousands of dollars being spent to persuade people to believe that the police—in their efforts to apprehend the killer—were a "minority threatening the freedom of every Western Australian". We would certainly not be seeing people sitting around thinking and asking themselves whether efforts to curtail the killer's carnage were really "Best for the West".

We would be witnessing a concerted effort to stop the toll and prevent further death and injury. Every decent Western Australian would be supporting that effort to the full.

But we are not dealing with only a few deaths; we are being confronted with 1 200 premature deaths a year. That is the magnitude of the tobacco problem today. That is the magnitude of today's first and foremost community health issue, one that should be transcending all party politics and sectional interests.

It is not sufficient that we look at our children, those who already smoke and those who might otherwise be pressured into smoking, unless we do something now—unless we give our kids a chance. It is not sufficient that we look at our children growing into young men and women and to know that, of every 1 000 young men who smoke 20 or

more cigarettes a day, six will be killed on the roads, but about 250 will be killed before their time as a result of their smoking; that is, one in every four—one in four who will be losing, not just a few months of life, but 10, 20, even 30 years or more of life. We should also look at so many unfortunate children, and at what they might have been, had somebody given their mothers a chance when they, themselves, were young.

Research by Dr Fiona Stanley, a leading Western Australian medical scientist working in the field of newborn children and their disabilities, shows that smoking by expectant mothers adversely affects their unborn children. She has found that, because the supply of oxygen to the baby is reduced when the mother smokes, a number of detrimental effects are seen. The most marked of these is growth retardation; that is, the baby's weight is less than it should be for the length of pregnancy.

Indeed, this relationship between maternal smoking and reduced birth weight has been shown, clearly and consistently, in worldwide studies. Growth-retarded infants have an increased risk of many more neonatal problems and long-term problems than have normal infants; for example, more die around birth, more are likely to develop respiratory troubles, and more are likely to have intellectual problems later in life.

In Western Australia, where 1 540 low weight babies are born every year, it is estimated that 277 are due to maternal smoking. Thus, if no mother smoked in pregnancy, there would be 277 fewer low birth weight infants. There also would be less emotional strain on the parents and less social cost to the child in later life.

That is another reason this Government is introducing this Bill—not just to give today's children a chance, but to give their children a chance. Prevention is really the only solution to this problem.

Members of this House would, of course, be aware that the diseases and health problems I have referred to are not the only ones caused by cigarette smoking. They will recall that they recently received a letter signed by 17 professors of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Western Australia. Those eminent men pointed out that because of the smoking factor in the cause of so many diseases—vascular diseases and others which they listed at length—they felt compelled to put their names, for the first time together, to a letter on what they regarded as an extraordinarily important public health issue.

On the broader stage, their alarm is shared by the World Health Organisation, the International Union Against Cancer, the International Union Against Tuberculosis, the United States Surgeon-General, the Royal College of Physicians of London, The British Medical Association, The Royal Australian College of Physicians, and the Australian Medical Association. Indeed, there is no health authority, no medical faculty, and no medical association anywhere in the world which denies the overwhelming scientific evidence of health damage caused by smoking.

The great paradox about smoking is that, although it represents a huge health problem, it is a problem which can be prevented. Earlier this century, infectious diseases such as diphtheria, cholera, and tuberculosis, were the main causes of premature death in Western Australia. For instance, in 1908, diphtheria claimed the lives of 111 Western Australians; that is, 43 in every 100 000 citizens. Since then, the epidemic of diphtheria in this State has been conquered. Thanks to concerted health measures, supported by all sections of the community, there has not been a single case of diphtheria reported for 10 years.

By and large, this is the history also of typhoid, cholera, polio, and tuberculosis. Previous Governments took firm action to free the community from the scourge of these epidemics, and they succeeded.

Tragically, the story of lung cancer in this State is quite the opposite, the death rate for lung cancer in the male population having risen from two per 100 000 in 1910 to 48 per 100 000 today. That current rate is five more than that of diphtheria at the height of the 1910 epidemic!

So, let there be no doubt that what we are confronting is a disease of epidemic proportions; nor should there be any doubt that prevention, which was achievable then, is also achievable today, but only if we pursue it vigorously.

Deaths caused by smoking-related diseases take a personal toll in grief and in the loss to families of their breadwinner.

Disabilities caused by these diseases take a national toll in health impairment that prevents people going about their work in a normal fashion. For instance, Australian smokers of 15 or more cigarettes a day have been shown to have, on average, nearly twice as many days off work because of sickness as do non-smokers. In fact, a total of 8.4 million working days were lost in Australia in 1981 through absenteeism due to smoking-caused sickness—an average 4.2 working days per smoker. By comparison, in that same year—the worst year for industrial disputes in re-

cent times—only 4.2 million working days were lost due to strike action.

Those figures tell, more forcefully than any words from me, why we should make up our minds now to give our kids a chance in order that they might have a better opportunity in their working lives.

I will now spend the next few minutes outlining the major provisions of the Bill.

If I were talking to members about a new product—some food line as an example—that was causing illness on a minor scale, let alone death, they would be demanding that the Government do something about it. Members would want it banned—of course they would.

In fact, members will recall the recent banning of tinned mushrooms from an Asian country when it was discovered they had caused three deaths. There was not the slightest doubt about Government action taken to withdraw those mushrooms from sale.

There is not the slightest doubt that if tobacco were introduced as a new product on the market tomorrow, there would be—in the light of what we now know about it—a nationwide feeling of outrage and demands that it be immediately banned from sale.

Unhappily, however, we are talking about a product which has now been on sale here for more than a century, and, even more unhappily, we are talking about a product which is addictive. Because the product is addictive, the Government has adopted a long-term strategy to combat its social consequences.

We have decided to spend on this programme \$2 million a year. As part of this long-term strategy, we have raised the tax on cigarettes; we have introduced a comprehensive programme of education about tobacco in our schools; and we have set aside funds for media promotion and advertising about the harmful potential of this product. But it is abundantly clear that these preventive measures—especially the school education programme—cannot possibly succeed while children and young people continue to be exposed to aggressive tobacco advertising.

This is recognised in the thrust of this legislation which we see as an essential component of an effective endeavour to give kids a chance.

This Bill, repealing the Sale of Tobacco Act 1916-1964, prohibits the publication of material designed to induce smoking or the purchase of tobacco products, and strengthens the laws relating to the sale of such products to juveniles.

It prohibits the offering of a free sample of a tobacco product to any person for the purpose of inducing or promoting the use of a tobacco product—except to persons associated with the tobacco industry or its distribution system.

Under this Bill, retailers will still be able to advertise brand names of cigarettes or other tobacco products at or near the point of sale, but they will be limited in the number, wording, and size of such signs.

This legislation embodies substantial financial penalties for those convicted of an offence against the Bill and makes it clear there is a continuing daily penalty for persons convicted of a continuing offence.

It makes it clear also that it is the decision makers who are guilty of the offence if they caused or took part in that offence—even though they might not be solely or directly concerned.

This Bill makes it an offence also for anyone to publish a statement or implication to the effect that a sporting, cultural, or recreational event was, is being, or will be sponsored, financed, or promoted in any way by a tobacco manufacturer.

Mr Williams: Absolute disgrace!

Mr HODGE: Similarly, the Bill prohibits such a statement or implication for a scholarship, prize, or reward for human endeavour that is funded by a tobacco manufacturer.

I should add, at this point, that there is nothing in this Bill which prevents a tobacco manufacturer sponsoring a sporting or cultural event. It simply prevents that sponsor from advertising the fact.

Furthermore, I would point out that State legislation cannot override the Commonwealth's Broadcasting and Television Act which means, in effect, that we cannot prevent broadcasting permitted under that Act.

Mr Hassell: Who told you that?

Mr HODGE: Therefore the passage of this legislation will not prevent the broadcast of sporting or cultural events which are televised in other States or overseas and transmitted to Western Australia.

Following the repeal of the Sale of Tobacco Act 1916-1964, clause 8 provides that it is illegal to sell tobacco to a minor and the age of a minor has been reduced from 18 to 16 years to make the provision consistent with similar legislation in every other Australian State.

That clause also updates the penalty for the sale of tobacco products to minors from the 40 shillings applying under that Act to a more meaningful maximum of \$200. Again, this is consistent

with the whole intent of this legislation, which is to give children a chance.

The Bill makes it an offence for any person under the age of 16 years to purchase cigarettes from a vending machine, as it does for anyone to purchase tobacco for handing to a young person under 16 years of age.

It requires the tobacco retailer to exhibit a notice advising potential customers that the sale or supply of tobacco products to minors is prohibited and warning of the penalty for such an offence.

It requires further that similar notices be displayed on the front of cigarette vending machines.

We appreciate that tobacco retailers will need time to adjust to the new legislation. This Bill, therefore, contains a clause whereby certain provisions will not come into operation until three months after the date of assent, thus giving vendors sufficient time to arrange for the printing and placing of warning signs at the point of retail sale.

Furthermore, 12 months' grace will be allowed after the date of assent before the provisions prohibiting advertising come into operation.

We present this Bill in the knowledge that authoritative medical bodies recommend, unanimously, such legislation, and that it will be supported by the great majority of the Western Australian public.

We see its removing that double standard of ethics by which people are warned of the dangers of smoking, but are still subjected to the massive and aggressive promotion of tobacco products.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to deal with some of the major arguments that the tobacco lobby has mounted against this sort of proposal.

Predictably, the tobacco industry in Australia—which last year spent an estimated \$80 million on advertising and promoting its products—argues that a ban on the advertising of these products will not be effective.

In reality, the industry is well aware of just how effective a ban would be. If it were not, it would not be opposing it so desperately.

The tobacco companies argue that they advertise only to an adult audience. In so doing, they are, somehow, suggesting that only adults read newspapers and attend sporting fixtures.

In reality, their audience comprises people of all age groups, including children.

The tobacco industry, while declaring that a ban on advertising would not be effective, is, at the same time, voicing fears about job losses resulting from such a ban. In voicing these fears, it

is making a clear admission that an advertising ban would be effective in reducing cigarette sales. But let us have a closer look at this!

Economists say it is difficult to predict the net effects on employment of a reduction in tobacco consumption. It is not difficult, however, to reason that a greater number of jobs would be created in Australia if the money spent on tobacco was applied to jobs in other fields. I say this because cigarette manufacture is capital-intensive, not people-intensive, and because it is controlled by non-Australian companies.

In brief, the vigorous opposition of the tobacco lobby to this Bill can be taken only as the strongest possible acceptance of the fact that it will be effective; but let us do more than project the success of this Bill. Let us look at the actual experience of one country, Norway, which in 1975 banned all forms of tobacco advertising.

I refer to Norway because the chairman of the Norwegian national council on smoking and health (Dr Kjell Bjartveit) was one of four of the world's leading authorities on smoking control who recently visited this State to attend an international symposium at the invitation of the Government. Dr Bjartveit gave me figures which leave no doubt whatsoever about the success of the ban on tobacco advertising in his country. Prior to the ban, there was a steady rise in the smoking rate among school students, particularly among girls. A survey taken in 1980, however, showed declining rates for both sexes, the most pronounced being that for girls.

Following the introduction of the Norwegian Tobacco Act in July 1975, a survey of all smokers showed an immediate effect—the number of male daily smokers fell from 52 per cent in June to 49 per cent in September of that year. In December 1977, another significant drop in the percentage of male daily smokers was registered—from 49 per cent the previous year to 44 per cent. In December last year, the percentage of male daily smokers had fallen by another four per cent from the 1977 level, while the percentage of female daily smokers was down to 34 per cent.

Studies show that had Norway's upward trend in tobacco consumption for the 1950s and 1960s continued into the 1970s and 1980s, that country would today have a *per capita* consumption about 30 per cent higher than it is!

In Norway, the banning of tobacco advertising has worked. I have not the slightest doubt it will work here.

The tobacco industry argues that the introduction of a ban on the advertising of its products would constitute an infringement of free-

dom. Freedom is something we all cherish; but when freedoms conflict, our community must choose the greater good. It is a simple question of balance. The greatest limitation of freedom is when the actions of one person or group threaten the freedom of the majority. In this case, we must therefore compare the freedom of the tobacco industry to advertise with the freedom of our children to grow up free from the pressures to smoke. We must compare the freedom of the tobacco manufacturer to promote a known cause of disease, disability, and premature death with the freedom of our society to implement sensible measures to protect our public health. What we want most of all is freedom for our children. This legislation provides it!

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr HODGE: The issue of tobacco industry sponsorship of sport—and how this would be affected by this legislation—has been the subject of much emotive and misleading tobacco industry propaganda. For some time now, it has been illegal to advertise cigarettes directly on television. Clearly the tobacco industry has used sport to circumvent these regulations, and circumvent its own undertakings which restrain it from advertising directly in this way. It has used sport to project cigarette brand advertising to huge television audiences; and it has used sport to promote the sale of a lethal product by associating cigarettes with the glamour and approval of sport and its heroes as perceived by young people, particularly school children.

What the industry contributes to sport is minimal—a mere \$500 000 or so per year in this State. It has been claimed that the future of Western Australian sport will be in jeopardy if this Bill is passed. That, quite simply, is not true.

It is true, however, that the Government is greatly concerned about the future of sport in this State, and that it does intend to make sure that sporting bodies are not seriously disadvantaged by this ban.

The Government is confident that, if tobacco sponsorship is lost to sport, alternative sponsors will be found. However, if this should prove not to be the case, we are prepared to consider sympathetically on its merits any individual application for assistance.

In conclusion, I stress that this Bill is not an extreme measure, but is a reasoned response based on international experience and embodying the recommendations of the world's leading medical authorities. Above all, it looks to the protection of children from exposure to the advertising and promotion of a product that can cause them only

harm. Around the world, the tobacco industry is progressively losing its licence to advertise as Governments, expressing the will of the people, appreciate more and more the human and national costs of smoking, and the need for action.

Today, we have an opportunity to write a new chapter in the history of public health in this country. By voting for this legislation, we can set an example for the other States—and other nations—to follow. By voting for this legislation, we can give our kids a chance—a chance to grow up free from a habit which eight out of 10 Western Australian smokers would like to give up and which nine out of 10 want their children never to start at all.

I conclude with the words of a former British Minister of Health (Sir George Young)—

The solution to many of today's medical problems will not be found in the research laboratories of our hospitals, but in our Parliaments.

For the prospective patient, the answer may not be cure by incision at the operating table but prevention by decision at the Cabinet table.

I believe that in our hearts, all of us, on both sides of the House, accept the truth of that statement. We have the facts; we have the responsibility; and we must act now.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Williams.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL

Second Reading

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Employment and Administrative Services) [11.18 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In October 1974, daylight saving was introduced on a trial basis, and a referendum was subsequently held in March 1975. In that referendum, 250 644 electors voted in favour of daylight saving and 290 179 voted against the proposal. As a result, daylight saving was not continued.

Since that time, there has been support from sections of the business community for its reintroduction, and, in particular, from companies doing business with the Eastern States. Some members of the public are also in favour of greater use of daylight hours for leisure. As it is eight years since the public last experienced daylight saving, the Government has agreed to a proposal for a trial period of daylight saving com-

mencing this year. The Bill before the House provides that the trial period of daylight saving shall commence on 30 October 1983 and finish on 4 March 1984.

During that period, the clock will be advanced by one hour throughout the State and be known as Western Australian summer time.

The electors of the State will be asked in a referendum to vote as to whether they are in favour or not in favour of daylight saving.

Clause 5 of the Bill provides that the question shall be put to the electors in accordance with the Referendums Act 1983.

If a majority of electors are in favour of daylight saving, Western Australian summer time will be observed accordingly throughout the State from the last Sunday in October in each year until the first Sunday in the following March.

Should the "No" vote of electors exceed the "Yes" vote, clause 6 of the Bill which provides for the advancing of the clock by one hour during summer will not come into effect.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Ministerial Statement

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [11.21 a.m.]: There is little need for comment in connection with the explanation made by the Premier on 14 September. His comments were mainly in connection with QANGOs and we all know there is a great number of them. I do not have any objection, nor do members on this side of the House, to the reduction in the number of QANGOs.

The Premier referred to the number of QANGOs which have proliferated over the last few years. I suggest that, if the Premier continues to appoint the number of inquiries he is setting up each week, they will far outweigh the number of QANGOs in the near future. The Government has set up dozens and dozens of inquiries so that it does not have to make decisions on various issues.

Mr Pearce: They don't cost much though, do they?

Mr O'CONNOR: Millions of dollars will be spent on inquiries, including the inquiry into education which, on its own, will cost \$250 000. It may be all very well for members opposite to throw away \$250 000 of the people's money, saying that it is nothing; but dozens and dozens of inquiries have been appointed. Each time the

Government has to make a decision, it appoints an inquiry.

Mr Pearce: Don't you want the people to have a say on things like education?

Mr O'CONNOR: I want the Government to have a say on matters such as education, too.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: We have really touched members opposite on the raw. It is obvious the Government is concerned about the number of inquiries it has set up. If it were not, members opposite would not react so strongly.

We should watch closely the expenditure of large sums of money in this manner, because if the Government continues to throw away the finances of this State in this way, it is obvious the public will have to pay more in the long term.

There is little one can say in relation to this statement. The Government has broken another election promise in connection with sunset clauses. That is a pity, but it was a decision the Government made and I have no further comment on the issue.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: TENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 14 September.

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth) [11.24 a.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply, I shall refer to the failure of the Government to make adequate provision for the added pressure the introduction of Medicare will place on Government hospitals in this State.

However, before I turn to that issue, I shall touch on one other matter. The other day, I had occasion to watch "Nationwide" and I heard the Minister for Health make an astonishing statement. Subsequently I obtained a transcript of that statement and the part which astonished me reads as follows—

But, as I say, about \$700 million out of a \$2 000 billion Budget is the position at the moment.

The Minister is talking there about expenditure on hospitals in Western Australia. He went on to say—

I suppose it is probably not realistic of me to expect to get a much greater slice of the Budget than that.

I shall repeat that statement in order that members might appreciate its significance. The Minister is saying that health in Western Australia receives over one-third of the total Budget of this State. The Minister said—

But, as I say, about \$700 million out of a \$2 000 billion Budget is the position at the moment. I suppose it is probably not realistic of me to expect to get a much greater slice of the Budget than that.

Many people watch "Nationwide" and, hearing those words, they would get the impression that a tremendous amount of money is being spent on hospitals in Western Australia and, indeed, they would think the hospital system was certainly obtaining its fair share of Budget expenditure.

A statement like that would be calculated to quell the sort of criticism we have heard recently in relation to the public hospital system.

I was astonished that the Minister said public health was receiving \$700 million a year, because, according to the last estimates of revenue and expenditure for the year ending June 1983, the amount budgeted for the portfolio of the Minister for Health was \$503 036 000. The figure was not \$700 million, but approximately \$503 million which is considerably less than a quarter of the total Budget revenue of \$2 335 500 000.

Therefore, I took the opportunity to ask the Minister some questions in respect of that matter, because I am sure anyone would be perplexed on hearing a statement of that nature and checking it against the Budget. I asked the Minister which items comprise the figure of \$700 million which he stated was spent on health in Western Australia last year. Yesterday the Minister replied—

Public Health
Hospital and Allied Services
Mental Health Services
WA Alcohol and Drug Authority
Nurses Board of Western Australia.

Those areas are exactly the ones provided for in the Budget. The estimates of revenue and expenditure listed Public Health, Hospital and Allied Services, Mental Health Services, WA Alcohol and Drug Authority, and the Nurses Board of WA. Therefore, we are talking about the same things.

I then asked the Minister the expenditure on each of the items, and yesterday he replied as follows—

	\$
Public Health	65 million
Hospital and Allied Services	544 million
Mental Health Services	77 million
WA Alcohol and Drug Authority	4 million
Nurses Board of WA	93 000.

Those are the figures given to me by the Minister yesterday and they total \$690.2 million. The

reason I raised the matter and the significant aspect of it is that that figure is exactly \$187.2 million over the Budget for the Health portfolio.

Here we have one Government department which has exceeded its budget by \$187.2 million in a single year. As a consequence, questions arise. Those questions are: Firstly, how did this overrun occur? Secondly, why did it occur? Thirdly, when did it occur?

Initially, I thought the Minister must have made a mistake and given me the wrong figures. As members might recall, I asked the Minister how he would justify the use of the figure of \$700 million. Of course, the figures given to me by the Minister total just under \$700 million.

As a consequence of this massive overrun, questions arise. We must ask how the overrun occurred, why it occurred, and when it occurred. It is obvious the overrun did occur.

Mr Pearce: Are you going to hold up this speech until question time?

Mr GRAYDEN: The Minister has made a specific statement.

The Minister said the other day, and repeated it later, that his department had spent \$700 million last year from a \$2 billion Budget. There is no mistaking the figure of \$690.2 million. If it is a fact, and quite obviously it is, that his department has overspent its budget to the extent of \$187.2 million, a very big question mark indeed hangs over the administration of the Health portfolio in Western Australia.

Just this morning, we heard of a situation in the Eastern States where the Sutherland Hospital Board overspent its budget by \$500 000.

Mr Davies: There is a bit of hanky-panky there.

Mr GRAYDEN: The New South Wales Minister for Health sacked the board of directors of the hospital for that overrun of \$500 000. In the case of the portfolio of our Minister for Health, we have an overrun of \$187.2 million. The mind boggles at a figure of that kind—almost 40 per cent. In terms of the overall State Budget of \$2 335 billion, 40 per cent is over \$900 000 000, approaching \$1 thousand million.

Mr Evans: He could not have done all this just since he has been Minister.

Mr GRAYDEN: I am most anxious to hear the Minister's explanation. Intelligence has been defined as the ability to recognise a problem, the ability to devise a solution, and the ability then to implement the solution. Quite obviously the Minister has a problem.

Mr Evans: You had nine years to come up with the solution.

Mr GRAYDEN: The Minister has a problem of great magnitude. We want to hear from the Minister what he is doing about it, and when we will see some action. We are not dealing here with what might have happened in the past, but rather with how the Minister's budget has blown out in a relatively short time. I would like to hear from the Minister how, why, and when all this occurred. As far as I can determine, no action has been taken by the Minister to rectify the problem. Of course, the Minister will get the opportunity later to present his argument, but I can certainly see no action that he has taken.

The Minister cannot talk in terms of a staff replacement policy, because he has not implemented this policy, and he has said so himself; he has said that the policy has not been implemented in his department, so that cannot be put forward as an excuse.

We want a statement from the Minister indicating first of all that he realises he has a problem. We want to know what his solution is and when he will do something about the problem, otherwise we must ask the question: Where are we heading in Western Australia in the health field?

The Commonwealth Government is dismantling the wage pause. I understand there have been 40 or 50 breaches of the wage pause in Western Australia. We can but wonder what sort of Budget will be presented at the end of the month or early next month if these sorts of things are happening in Government departments.

Irrespective of the explanation the Minister gives—and I am most anxious to hear it—the statement by the Minister the other day on the "Nationwide" programme, a statement which has been repeated elsewhere, is inexcusable for a number of reasons. One reason is that it gives an impression to the people of Western Australia that this was a contrived overrun, that it was done intentionally to give the Health portfolio \$700 million out of a \$2 billion Budget.

In fact, it was done with the object of quelling criticism. However, the Minister has sought to give the impression that it was done out of the goodness of his heart. I raise this point because it is an extraordinary thing that we should have learnt in this way what is happening in the public health sector.

What I really intend to talk about is the failure of the Government to take adequate steps to provide protection against the additional pressure that Medicare will undoubtedly cause on the health system in Western Australia. The failure of the State Government to take such action has

been made very clear by the position which exists in virtually every Government hospital in Western Australia. It has also been made abundantly clear by the Minister's answers to parliamentary questions. The Government, instead of taking any action to anticipate the additional pressure Medicare will place on our hospital system, has relied on a relatively nebulous assurance from the Commonwealth Government, and it is leaving it at that.

Only this morning, we heard from a most authoritative source that the levy to be imposed for the Medicare scheme will collect only one-eighth of the amount it will cost to run Medicare. In those circumstances, I can say only that if the Government is relying on the Commonwealth's coming to the party, that is simply not good enough. It is not sufficient for the Commonwealth Government to come to the party months or years after the event has taken place. Before the introduction of a system such as Medicare, the State Government should anticipate the pressures likely to occur and make provisions to meet them. With this Government, the reverse is the case.

I would like to deal now with the pressure being placed on public hospitals in Western Australia. I realise it is not sufficient for me just to say that this pressure exists, so I shall refer to statements made that will show beyond any possible doubt that this pressure does exist. I shall refer briefly to statements made by Sir George Bedbrook, who, as everyone will know, is a consultant to the Spinal Unit at the Royal Perth Hospital Rehabilitation Centre at Shenton Park, which, incidentally, he founded. He is a man with an international reputation in the treatment of paraplegia and quadriplegia; in fact, he is the current President of the International Medical Society for Paraplegia.

Sir George said recently that the outlook for patients and staff in Western Australia's teaching hospitals is grim, and that soon Western Australians can expect only a second-rate service. He has said that for the first time in the 30 years he has been associated with RPH, he has had to tell a patient that he could not guarantee that the services the hospital could offer would be satisfactory for her.

Sir George said that he had to say to a member of the staff, who had been repeatedly overworking herself to keep the system going, that she would have to stop because her work was interfering with her own health. He went on to say that hospital workers' morale was extremely low and that everyone was uptight and talking about the excessive demands placed on them to provide services when they did not have the facilities to do

so. He stressed that what was happening to his unit at RPH was only a symptom of the medical care breakdown beginning in all hospital departments of Western Australia.

He went on to make a series of allegations against the State Government. He said that it was preventing the hospitals from offering good or excellent hospital care, which was the real issue, and that the hospital staffs had to stand up and be counted. He said also that the public had to be made aware that the staffs were at breaking point. He said that Ministers and Government officials were pushing doctors and other health professionals to deliver services, but were not providing the facilities or the wherewithal for the provision of those services. He made further comments, but I will not continue with them. I merely make the point that this top surgeon, a surgeon with an international reputation in the treatment of paraplegics and quadraplegics, has made statements of this kind.

Earlier and at equal length, the Administrator of Royal Perth Hospital made similar comments. He said that the hospital at that time was running at a critical level of bed occupancy, and that often there were not enough beds to go around. These comments have not been confined to medical officers. They have been made by administrators of hospitals, unions, and the nurses' federation. For instance, the Secretary of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, WA Branch (Miss Wilma Gardiner), said that hospitals were losing valuable and qualified staff because the stress related to current conditions had become too much. She warned that, if staff cutbacks continued, some hospital wards would have to be closed, and that nurses and health care staff could not be stretched any further. She said also that any more reductions in staffing would be unsafe. The President of the WA Branch of the Australian Orthopaedic Association (Mr Don Webb) said that the association backed Sir George Bedbrook completely.

Another union of employees has made comments, but I do not know whether it is the union with which the Minister was associated when he was a union secretary. The Vice President of the Hospital Services and Miscellaneous Workers' Union expressed his fears that WA was moving towards the British tradition of strikes by hospital workers. He said that when workers were being repeatedly urged to take on an increasing load they eventually reached breaking point.

Mr Hardie, the vice president of that union, supported Sir George Bedbrook's comments that excessive demands were being made on hospital

staffs and that WA was moving towards a second-rate hospital service.

Mr O'Connor: It shows that the Minister is out of touch.

Mr GRAYDEN: Something serious is afoot in the portfolio of Health. Mr Hardie went on to say that the union had been monitoring the situation in hospitals for a long time and had been trying to bring to the attention of hospital managements the problems that existed. One of the big problems, he said, was that no-one could be appointed to a vacancy unless the Government approved of it, and, by the time approvals had gone through the system, a month could elapse. He said that the hospitals had been cutting back even during the Liberal Government and that the staffs had been continuously taking on extra workloads and getting to a situation where they would fall apart.

He said, "People can pick up only so much extra work", and went on to criticise the Minister for Health. He said that the Minister was speaking only half-truths when he said that only 27 applications for replacement staff had not been filled, and that the Minister was overlooking the fact that people were not replaced when they went on annual, long service, or sick leave.

Many other statements have been made. A parents' group was formed recently at Princess Margaret Hospital. According to the spokesman for the group, called "Parents who Care", the situation had become so critical that there were no nurses to answer an alarm when a baby stopped breathing.

Statements associated with health in Western Australia have been made by the WA branch of the AMA and many others. I will not continue with those statements. I have made reference at some length to these remarks to establish beyond all doubt that we have a tremendous problem in the Western Australian hospital system. Criticism is coming in from medical officers, hospital administrators, unions, and the nurses' federation.

Having been confronted with that sort of situation, we must ask: What is the Minister's answer to the existing situation in the hospitals of WA? He did two things. Firstly, he rejected the comments quite out of hand. I will not go through his comments in that regard, but I will refer to his remarks in respect of the Administrator of Royal Perth Hospital. He said that he failed to see how any sensible person could say the Government was playing Russian roulette with hospital standards. He said that Sir George Bedbrook's statement was inaccurate and an emotional overreaction, and was part of the pre-Budget manoeuvring occurring at that time of the year.

The Minister made other statements, but that is what he said in respect of Sir George Bedbrook.

The Minister's first reaction was to reject the statements, and his second was to place a gag on all hospital staff—the second prong of his solution to the problems.

Members might have read an item in the *Daily News* of 5 August 1983, titled, "Hospitals apply gag on media". It states—

All public hospital officials have been banned from talking to reporters about the State Government's policy on running WA hospitals.

From now, all comments about hospital business will have to come from the Chairman of the Board of Management of each hospital.

The Minister for Health, Mr Hodge, confirmed this today after a meeting at the Department of Hospital and Allied Services.

The meeting was well attended, some of those present being the Minister for Health, the Premier (Mr Burke), the Commissioner of Hospitals, administrators, medical superintendents, and representatives from the boards of management of each of Western Australia's five teaching hospitals. As well, the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the assistant director of that department attended—it was a top-level meeting. I asked the Minister simply whether it was a fact that a decision was announced after the meeting that all hospital staff with the exception of the chairman of the board of management of each hospital were banned from talking to reporters on the State Government's policy on running Western Australian hospitals. He replied—

It is correct that hospitals were advised that the preferred spokesman on policy matters would be the chairman of the board of the hospital.

A wink is as good as a nod when employers are talking to employees. When the Minister told the top level meeting what he expected, it was interpreted as a complete ban, notwithstanding that the Minister subsequently denied it. It has been confirmed by a number of people associated with hospitals who, although they have not given their names, have had their comments printed in the Press. Many have referred to this ban. If members want to find out whether the ban exists, they should ring a hospital and try to elicit some information.

That was the Minister's answer to the present pressure in the hospital system. We know the

Minister's attitude; what was the Government's contribution to the situation? It set in motion a staff reduction policy despite the fact that it was confronted with this pressure in the hospitals. The policy was that only 50 per cent of employees who resigned or retired would be replaced. All sorts of difficulties have arisen as a consequence of that policy. The Administrator of Royal Perth Hospital made some comments about it. He is reported as follows in an article in the *Daily News* which was headed, "Hospital cuts like 'Russian roulette'" —

The State Government has been accused of playing Russian roulette with public hospital staff.

The administrator of Royal Perth Hospital, Mr Vic Driscoll, said that the Government's plan to replace only half those who retire or resign from the public service was not a sensible way of cutting hospital costs.

"We assume that the plan is to reduce costs by cutting staff, otherwise there is no reason for the move," Mr Driscoll said.

"If that is the case we should approach the task in a sensible fashion.

"We should decide what services we can do without, then get rid of that function and disperse staff through natural wastage and relocation.

"As it is now I have to sit in total uncertainty from day to day not knowing who is going to resign today or if I can replace them.

"I can't make any plans or long-term arrangements."

"It's like Russian roulette."

Then Sir George Bedbrook and many other people commented on the same issue.

I asked the Minister some questions to find out his attitude to the staff reduction policy he had imposed. I asked the following question—

How does the Government reconcile its 50 per cent staff replacement policy, and its application, in the manner explained by him, to Government hospitals, with the increased public demand on these hospitals which is expected to occur when Medicare is introduced?

He replied as follows—

Adequate hospital services will be maintained if there is increased public demand.

I am sorry, I have referred to the wrong question, but it covers one aspect of the point anyway. A

more relevant question that I asked was in the following terms—

When did the Government's new policy of replacing only half of those employees who retire or resign, commence operating?

The Minister replied—

On 1 July, 1983.

I then asked—

Has the policy been applied to hospital or health services?

The Minister replied—

There are no exceptions to the Government's general policy, but in the health field the policy is being administered in such a manner as to ensure that there is no reduction in the standard of care and attention available to patients.

The following day I asked the Minister this question—

Does he consider the Government's plan to replace only half those who retire or resign from the Public Service a sensible and effective way of cutting hospital costs?

The Minister replied as follows—

I support the Government's policy regarding staff replacement.

So the Minister supports the policy which is operating throughout Government hospitals. The Minister has explained that he is monitoring the situation in hospitals and that every case will be decided on its merits. Nevertheless, the staff reduction policy is being undertaken at a time when hospitals are under tremendous pressure.

That is serious enough, but it becomes more so when one realises that Medicare, with the support of this Government, is shortly to be introduced. Taxpayers throughout Australia will have to pay a one per cent levy at the commencement of the scheme; it may increase later on. Taxpayers will have the impression that all they have to do is go to a public hospital and they will get a bed and treatment. Even the Minister has admitted that the Commonwealth anticipates the pressure on public hospitals will increase by 10 per cent as a consequence of Medicare's introduction. That 10 per cent increase will be on top of the present pressure situation.

Hospitals are under extreme pressure; the Government's staff reduction policy is in place; and Medicare will be introduced shortly. No provision of any kind is being made by this Government to meet that anticipated pressure. In response to a question I asked, the Minister said that adequate hospital services would be main-

tained if public demand increased. He said this has been covered in the arrangements agreed with the Commonwealth Government over the introduction of Medicare. The Minister has that nebulous assurance, yet he cannot provide Government hospital accommodation for Western Australians at present.

Elective surgery has been cancelled at Royal Perth Hospital. King Edward Memorial Hospital no longer is taking private obstetric patients, and patients are being turned away daily from various hospitals. Shortly that pressure will increase by 10 per cent, and that is only an estimate put forward by the Commonwealth Government.

We face a grim situation in the hospital system and the Government is doing absolutely nothing to anticipate the problem. That is proven by the fact that the Government is engaging in a staff reduction policy in the face of intense pressure on all Government hospitals.

I have pointed out what will happen when Medicare is introduced. For these reasons I propose to move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply to deal with the matter. In the brief time available to me, I have had to skip over many other important points and I have touched on only a few aspects of the Government's administration of the hospital system. No matter where one turns in Western Australia, one finds that people associated with medical care are in a state of concern.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are 400 doctors in the area, the Minister has decided to appoint centrally paid and salaried doctors at Wanneroo Hospital and Osborne Park Hospital. One can imagine the consternation that is causing.

If one visits the private hospitals, without exception one finds that the people working there are urgently concerned at impending regulations that will affect their future.

Mr Pearce: The Minister can do it at Armadale, too, and I and the people out that way will be eternally grateful.

Mr GRAYDEN: If one talks to the people who are working in nursing homes in Western Australia, one finds without exception that they are concerned about the forthcoming regulations which will affect them.

If one talks to dentists in Western Australia, one finds that they are up in arms about the suggestion by the Minister that the Government will legislate to introduce provisions to allow dental technicians to deal directly with the public. The Minister has told us that the legislation will contain a grandfather clause, so this will allow

people without any training at all to deal with the public. We will not allow people without the required training to build homes, and yet we will allow dental technicians to deal directly with the public.

If one talks to doctors throughout Western Australia, one finds them most alarmed about the introduction of Medicare because its introduction will result in a reduced standard of medical care. If one talks to chemists, one finds they are similarly perturbed.

So, right across the spectrum, everyone associated with health care in Western Australia is horrified at what is happening at the present time. It is for that reason that I propose to move an amendment to the Address-in-Reply. However, before I do that, I would again ask the Minister to visit some of our hospitals to see for himself the pressure there before he speaks to media representatives refuting the comments made about the tragedy in our hospitals. I ask him to realise the pressure that does exist and I hope that he will sit down with his colleagues and devise immediately some sort of solution. If he does not do that, the people of Western Australia will be the poorer.

Amendment to Motion

I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion—

However we regret to advise Your Excellency that the Government's medical care administration and in particular its failure to make adequate provision for the additional pressure which Medicare will place on Government hospitals, as is evident from the staff reduction policy which it continues to pursue in Government hospitals even though some hospitals are already under enormous pressure and the Commonwealth Government itself estimates that this pressure will increase by 10 per cent with the introduction of Medicare, are reprehensible in that they are causing consternation among hospital staff and medical authorities and must inevitably result in a reduced standard of medical care in WA.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Have you signed that?

DR DADOUR (Subiaco) [12.05 p.m.]: I second the amendment.

I find myself in a little of a dilemma in regard to some of the points that have been brought forward. The presentation of the case by the member for South Perth was excellent.

Mr Tonkin: How are you voting on the tobacco Bill? That is what I want to know.

Dr DADOUR: The same as the Minister.

Mr Tonkin: And the member for South Perth?

Mr O'Connor: At least he will be voting—he will be here.

Mr Tonkin: Oh good.

Dr DADOUR: I believe the present Minister for Health has inherited probably one of the greatest problems we have ever had before this Parliament.

Mr Tonkin: The best Minister for Health we have seen in this State.

Dr DADOUR: It remains to be seen how good the Minister is. I feel really sorry for him because of the problem he has inherited.

Mr Tonkin: He has an enormous appetite for work—incredible.

Dr DADOUR: The Minister before the present Minister for Health inherited the same problem, although it was not quite as great. The Minister before him inherited the same problem, and so it has been an ongoing problem which has never been checked. An attempt was made last year to check it when the Commonwealth Government said, "You will have to institute a cut of \$37 million because you are overspending your health budget by \$120 million a year". That cut was spread across the board, and it was attempted to cut spending for health by \$9 million. Many of the hospitals, and especially the teaching hospitals that bore the brunt of it, were thrown into confusion.

Let us look at the establishment of these hospitals and how they were permitted to grow—this is where the evil began. Successive Ministers told me that I did not know what I was talking about, and then, about five years ago, many members from both sides of the House came to me and said that I had been speaking the truth.

Mr Tonkin: Is this in line with the comments of the member for South Perth?

Dr DADOUR: No it is not.

Mr Tonkin: But you are seconding the amendment.

Dr DADOUR: Yes, I am seconding the amendment—

Mr Tonkin: As long as we are clear.

Dr DADOUR: —in particular on the introduction of Medicare, which is included in the amendment.

Mr J. F. Taylor: Will you bulkbill your patients?

Dr DADOUR: I already bulkbill some of my patients—the pensioners, the socially disadvantaged, and the unemployed.

Mr Tonkin: Good on you—that is great.

Dr DADOUR: The Minister will find most doctors do that.

Mr Tonkin: A lot of doctors do, yes.

Dr DADOUR: There are the exceptions, but there are exceptions everywhere as members opposite know.

Mr Tonkin: That is right—even in this House there are a few exceptions.

Dr DADOUR: There are a few at times—the Minister is not letting me get on with my speech.

Mr Tonkin: I am sorry.

Dr DADOUR: As the member for South Perth so rightly stated, there are a great number of problems. The only thing the Minister has done so far is he has reduced staff replacements by 50 per cent. I do not know whether that policy has been implemented, but the problem is that those within the hospital scene who have the authority to implement it will ensure that, if cuts are to be made, they will be made in an area that is so emotive it will have a very great impact.

The answer to the problem goes much deeper than the administrators of the hospital being given the authority to make the cuts that are necessary to save these X million number of dollars. That is not good enough because the administrators will use their guile to make the cuts where they hurt most.

What we must do is to compare the figures from one of our teaching hospitals with the figures from a comparative hospital in one of the other States of Australia. We must choose a hospital which does the same type of work and which is similar in many respects. We can then see whether the staffing of our hospitals is out of kilter with the staffing of the hospitals in the Eastern States. We must find out the truth because we are spending \$120 million more on our hospital system than are our sister States. Something is terribly wrong, and this is where the Minister's problem starts. This is what he inherited. We expect emotive issues to be raised at the time of the Budget each year, and we cannot dismiss them lightly. We must analyse them and learn exactly what is happening.

Although the proposed health expenditure in the Budget shows an estimate of X million number of dollars, when the total is given we always find that about \$100 million or more has been spent on health as a special grant. This has been inherited from the Medibank era. It is a

special grant which is not included in the Budget. In the Minister's answer to the member for South Perth, he quoted the sum of \$187 million more than the Budget had anticipated.

Mr Hodge: I will explain that.

Dr DADOUR: I would like it explained. Successive Ministers for Health have always tried to deceive me and keep away from that.

Mr Hodge: You know I will not try to do that.

Dr DADOUR: The Ministers have never adequately explained that, as far as I am concerned.

The member for South Perth is rightly concerned about the introduction of Medicare, which will not increase the workload on the public hospitals by 10 per cent; more than likely, it will be 20 per cent in the first instance.

Mr Gordon Hill: You dealt with this yesterday.

Dr DADOUR: I realise that; but this amendment could not have been moved yesterday.

Mr Gordon Hill: Is this tedious repetition?

Dr DADOUR: I do not think so. If I apply it to the point, we will come up with the answer.

Medicare will inflict upon our public hospital system an increase of 20 per cent in work.

Mr MacKinnon: Minimum.

Dr DADOUR: That is in the first instance. In the second instance, it will increase quite dramatically. The reason I say it will be more than the 10 per cent anticipated by the Commonwealth Government is that the 15 per cent gap between what the Commonwealth Government will repay under Medicare and the actual scheduled fee cannot be insured against. Private coverage will mean simply the right to go and be treated in a public hospital by the doctor of one's choice, if that doctor has access to the hospital. One would be able to be treated in a private hospital; but the medical gap could not be insured against. Because of that, and because 50 per cent of the people with private health insurance are covered for 100 per cent of the medical fee, many people will drop out of private insurance. The main reason people belong to a medical scheme is to obtain the 100 per cent benefit. That will be wiped out when Medicare is introduced.

That means that more than double the number of people whom the Commonwealth Government expects to apply will drop private insurance and opt for Medicare. That will place a much greater strain on the hospitals—not 10 per cent, but something like 20 per cent.

A 10 per cent increase in the workload of the public hospital system will mean we will have to find an extra 120 beds per day, which will have to

be funded by Medicare. If the increase is 20 per cent, 240 beds will have to be found. We will be scraping! We will have to use the luxurious passageways down at Sir Charles Gairdner as wards. It has been anticipated that in the event of a calamity or catastrophe, those passageways will be converted into wards. Maybe that would be a good idea, because the cost of building the hospitals is outrageous, to say the least. The sheer luxury of our hospitals is beyond belief.

The Minister should deal with this problem quickly. He should ensure that adequate staff are available to service the extra beds. He should ensure adequate staff are available for the extra outpatient workload, which will increase in exactly the same proportion as the inpatient load. Money and staff will have to be found.

The Minister will be confronted with another dilemma if more than 10 per cent of the people drop out of private insurance. He will find that some of the private hospitals are forced to close. If they close, the extra beds they were providing for private patients will have to be replaced by the public system. The same would apply if the private schools were to be closed. The State schools could not cope with the extra numbers. The Minister would find that if the private hospitals were closed, the public hospitals would not be able to cope with the extra patients.

We have a problem on our hands. Maybe it would be a good thing, in one sense. The Government would have more people using the health system under Medicare; but then it would be confronted with the problem that the one per cent Medicare levy would not be adequate. The one per cent levy will cover health costs that are not already covered by the Government. The cost of the extra 10 per cent or 20 per cent would be placed on the public system.

It has been estimated that the one per cent levy will be adequate if only 10 per cent of patients leave the health funds. However, I believe the figure will be more than 10 per cent—as I said, 20 per cent or more—by the time Medicare is brought in.

I impress upon the Minister that he has an onerous task. He should try to keep the numbers working within the hospital system at a reasonable level.

Mr Wilson: That is an understatement.

Dr DADOUR: I know it is an understatement. The Minister has that task; and he can thank the previous Ministers for Health for leaving him with that task. I hope he will be good enough to deal with the problem.

Mr Parker: Do you think he will be able to satisfy your views and those of the member for South Perth at the same time?

Dr DADOUR: The member for South Perth presented his case, and I agree with many of his points.

Mr Hodge: You obviously disagree with a lot of them.

Dr DADOUR: No. I am being absolutely fair by saying that the Minister has inherited this problem. All he has done is accepted the Government's policy of 50 per cent replacement of staff.

Mr Hodge: You obviously approve of that?

Dr DADOUR: In my own heart, I approve of it in one way. However, the Minister should take advice from the people in the areas that will become redundant.

Mr Hodge: That is how it is working.

Dr DADOUR: That is the only way in which it can be done. It should not be left with the hospital staff—the administration—to do this. Members saw what happened in respect of the cleaners' situation at Princess Margaret Hospital. King Edward Hospital closed down 60 beds. This is a very emotive area.

The Minister has my sympathy, not my condemnation. Last year, I warned him that, if he became Minister for Health, he would have my sympathy. However, the Minister will be condemned by me if he fails to deal with the problem.

I support the amendment moved by the member for South Perth, and the comments he made. The Minister and the Government have a big problem; it is a problem which might perhaps be bigger than we are. I only hope the Minister can get together with the Commonwealth Minister for Health who is one of those "funny" doctors. He is not a medico. To my horror, I learnt that the Commonwealth Minister for Health was a doctor of philosophy in political science. It is rather like Dr Forbes, who was a doctor of philosophy in some field. I think of the Commonwealth Minister for Health as being a "funny" doctor as against a medico; that is a saying we have in the profession.

Mr Laurance: If there is a shortfall in Medicare, as you have been saying, who will meet it?

Dr DADOUR: The taxpayers will meet it.

Mr Laurance: Will that be done through the States?

Dr DADOUR: No, it will be done federally, unless, of course, the Federal Government puts in the boots. Last year, the Federal Government said

it would cut down on grants by \$37.5 million a year for three years to make up the shortfall of \$100 million. If the Commonwealth Government puts in the boots, the States will be in dire straits. There has been a stay of the reduction of \$37.5 million in grants this year, so that is one thing the State Government can count on and the cuts which we predicted would occur as a result of that reduction will not be necessary.

Mr Laurance: But if you go down that track, someone will have to pay.

Dr DADOUR: Our hospitals will cost more and that is happening in our sister States. I am certain the Federal Government will put in the boots. It will make cuts and the States will have to pay the extra costs involved. That will only add to the burden on the Minister.

Mr Tonkin: He is the greatest Minister for Health we have ever had.

Dr DADOUR: I do not doubt that. I am waiting to see what happens. At the moment I am confident the Minister for Health will do his best and I only hope his best is good enough.

With those words, I support the amendment.

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [12.24 p.m.]: The member for South Perth has demonstrated two things very clearly—

Mr MacKinnon: He is the best shadow Minister for Health we have ever had.

Mr HODGE: Firstly, he has demonstrated he is an avid purchaser and reader of newspapers. Most of his research was done through the *Daily News*. Secondly, he demonstrated that, although he has been the shadow Minister for Health for six months, he has not yet really come to grips with the Health portfolio or even the basic fundamentals of the manner in which it is financed and delivered to the public. The member did not even know the departments which fall under that portfolio. He kept confusing the Public Health Department with the Hospital and Allied Services Department. The member made fundamental errors of that nature.

The member for South Perth also had two bob each way in his argument. In the first part of his argument, he criticised me for allegedly being \$180 million over budget and, in the second part of his argument, he criticised me for not spending enough and failing to provide additional staff.

Mr Grayden: You are spending the money in the wrong directions.

Mr HODGE: However, that disparity in the member for South Perth's argument paled into insignificance when we listened to the argument of the seconder of the amendment, which argument was completely different.

The member for South Perth argued along the line that we were running a second-rate hospital system that was understaffed and had been downgraded. The member for Subiaco argued on the Rolls Royce hospital theory to the effect that we were spending too much; that we should spend less; and that we should trim the public hospitals and bring them back into line. It is difficult to know which argument I should answer—whether I should answer the argument advanced by the member for South Perth which was divided into two parts, or whether I should answer the argument of the member for Subiaco.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: The argument advanced by the member for South Perth was very disjointed and convoluted in places, and somewhat rambling. I guess we can expect that from the member for South Perth.

Mr Clarko: He can speak a lot better than you can.

Several members interjected.

Mr HODGE: The member for South Perth is all right on the tobacco issue; I shall give him that!

I made some notes and I shall try to answer some of the main points the member made. Firstly, he failed to understand that we have three health departments in Western Australia; they are the Public Health Department, the Hospital and Allied Services Department, and the Mental Health Service Department.

Mr Grayden: You know I am aware of that. Get on with the point.

Mr HODGE: Obviously the member for South Perth was not aware of that, because he kept confusing the Public Health Department with the Hospital and Allied Services Department.

Even though the member for South Perth was a Minister for some years, he cannot read Budget papers. He advised the House that, in his opinion, we overspent by \$180 million in the area of hospitals. He also attributed the \$700 million figure with which I provided him almost entirely to expenditure on hospitals. In fact, the figure of \$700 million which I used was for the entire Health portfolio.

The member for South Perth made a fundamental error. He failed to understand that, in the \$700 million allocated by the State to the Health portfolio, and all of which he attributed to recurrent expenditure under the CRF, account must be taken of the fact that a large portion is

allocated to capital works; that is, money spent on building new hospitals or extending or renovating existing hospitals.

Mr Grayden: You have misled Parliament. You referred to a figure of \$700 million out of a total Budget of \$2 billion.

Mr HODGE: The member for South Perth does not understand how the Budget works.

Mr Grayden: You obviously don't!

Mr HODGE: I am now trying to explain to the member what I said.

Mr Grayden: You misled the Parliament.

Mr HODGE: It must be borne in mind also that the amount of \$700 million is a gross figure. The member for South Perth has failed to realise a considerable amount of money is raised in the form of revenue by the hospitals, and he failed to take that into account as well.

Mr Grayden: Your statement was completely untrue.

Mr HODGE: The member's claim that expenditure on hospitals was \$180 million over budget is, of course, a monumental blunder and demonstrates clearly he does not understand the basics of how the Budget is put together.

Mr Grayden: Your statement is untrue. You have misled the Parliament.

Mr HODGE: The Hospital and Allied Services Department did an excellent job in coming within \$40 000 of its budget. In a massive budget of \$544 million, it came within \$40 000.

I take the opportunity to publicly congratulate the department and the Commissioner of Hospital and Allied Services for, under difficult circumstances, managing that enormous budget and ending up so close to balancing it. They did an excellent job.

Mr Grayden: Are you going to correct that statement you made on "Nationwide"?

Mr HODGE: The member for South Perth wanted to have two bob each way. Firstly, he criticised the Government for spending \$180 million too much—that was a figment of his imagination—and, secondly, he castigated us for not spending more; that is, he suggested we should be employing more staff in the hospitals. Of course, that was at variance with the argument put forward by his colleague, the member for Subiaco, who said he was delighted last year when the Federal Government cut the expenditure on hospitals and trimmed the wings of the teaching hospitals.

Mr Grayden: If the money is required you should be spending it.

Mr HODGE: The member for South Perth made many highly irrelevant and misleading statements about Medicare. It is obvious he has failed to understand how Medicare will be introduced, but I shall give him a brief lesson.

The member for South Perth made statements about nebulous assurances. Assurances are as nebulous as written agreements and Acts of Parliament. If the member for South Perth thinks that agreements which are enshrined in Acts of Parliament and are in writing are nebulous, I should like to know what he thinks a concrete agreement is.

Mr Grayden: You can't cope with the pressure on the hospitals at the present time.

Mr HODGE: A fundamental part of the Medicare arrangements is that the State will be compensated for any increase in inpatient or outpatient activity in our hospitals. Any loss of revenue will be automatically compensated for.

Mr Grayden: Where?

Mr HODGE: That is built into Medicare; a formula is built in. There is no way that the State can fail to be compensated for any increased expenditure or any loss of revenue brought about by the introduction of Medicare.

The member for South Perth claims to be very worried about the lack of hospital bed capacity. If he is genuinely concerned, and not just acting as an apologist for private hospital owners and private health funds, I can assure him he does not need to worry any further. When the increased activity occurs if it occurs, in the hospitals, we will get extra funds for extra staff.

Mr Grayden interjected.

Mr HODGE: I did not interject when the member was speaking, so he should give me a chance to reply.

Extra staff will be made available should there be extra activity in the hospitals. The funding for the extra staff will come direct from the Commonwealth Government to the State.

Mr Laurance: From the taxpayers.

Mr HODGE: If we have a need for extra beds, they can be provided from within the existing system, when we have the extra staff to service those beds. The public health system in the metropolitan area has the capacity to provide at least 200 more beds. Most of our non-teaching Government hospitals are running at only 75 per cent bed occupancy rate, and they can comfortably be taken up to 85 per cent. Most country hospitals have ample room for expansion.

Mr Rushton: They are turning people away.

Mr HODGE: There is no need for the member for South Perth to worry about a lack of staff or a lack of beds owing to the introduction of Medicare.

The member for South Perth referred to remarks made by Sir George Bedbrook. He said that Sir George had said he could not guarantee the safety of a patient at RPH Rehabilitation Hospital. I was very concerned when I read that statement and so I endeavoured to contact Sir George. I was unable to reach him because he was overseas. He is not expected back until the middle of October. I had the Commissioner of Hospitals contact the hospital urgently to speak with the medical superintendent and the administrator in order to try to get the full details of the patient involved and the area concerned so that the danger, which Sir George indicated meant he could not guarantee the safety of the patient, could be identified in order that I might do something immediately to rectify it. Neither officer was aware of any problem; Sir George had not communicated any particular problem to them.

I have since written to Sir George asking him to give me the full details. I have asked for the name of the patient, the date of the incident, the ward, etc., so that I can have the whole matter investigated to see what action can be taken to ensure that this dangerous situation does not arise again.

The member for South Perth had a lot to say about staff replacements, so I will briefly touch on this subject, although it has been gone over fairly thoroughly already. Since the Government's new staff replacement policy was introduced, a policy which the member for Subiaco thoroughly endorses, we have had requests from teaching hospitals for 206.63 positions to be filled. That figure represents the conversion back to full-time equivalent positions, which is the easiest way to talk about this matter. Obviously many hospital workers are part time or casual, so the only sensible way to talk about the subject of staff vacancies is to convert them back to full-time equivalents. Each position is reviewed not solely by the hospital administrator—as was suggested by the member of Subiaco—and the other executives at the hospitals; these officers review the positions and put forward their arguments to the department, which then passes on the applications to me with an opinion of why a position should or should not be filled.

Dr Dadour: I was talking about before your day.

Mr HODGE: I personally examine each application, and I am pleased to advise the House, and

the member for Subiaco particularly, that I have agreed to fill the equivalent of 195.87 positions. This means we have a sum total of 10.76 positions in the teaching hospitals which have not been filled. Of those positions, seven were deleted by the hospitals themselves.

Mr Grayden: You are clogging up the whole hospital system in Western Australia by making the hospitals submit applications for no reason at all.

Mr HODGE: If the member for South Perth were to listen to his colleague, he would find the reason for this policy is very simple. We wish to scrutinise very closely the hospital system to keep a check on the expenditure of these enormous amounts of money.

Mr Grayden: It is a very ineffective way of doing it.

Mr HODGE: It is a very effective way.

In addition to that staff replacement policy, and as I said last night in reply to a question, we have implemented a new roster arrangement for nurses, a roster which the Royal Australian Nursing Federation had been trying for years to have accepted, but which the member's Government refused to accept. I have authorised the implementation of that roster system as well as the employment of the full-time equivalent of 155 additional nurses in this State. This new roster system will improve the working conditions for nurses.

Mr Grayden: Will you tell us exactly what you meant when you said you were spending \$700 million out of a Budget of \$2 000 million?

Mr HODGE: I have already covered that point. The member is embarrassed by the fact that he made a major blunder, but he will just have to live with the embarrassment.

While talking about the welfare of nurses, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to them. I believe the staff in our hospitals, particularly the nurses, work extremely hard. My view differs from that of the member for Subiaco, because last night he accused the doctors in Government hospitals of not working hard. I believe they do.

Mr MacKinnon: He didn't say that.

Mr HODGE: He did; I have just finished reading his speech. The staff in our Government hospitals are very dedicated. In the main, they are highly trained, professional, and competent. I have never said that the staff in our teaching hospitals are not working hard. They work extremely hard, and I place it on record that the Government appreciates their hard work, their dedication, and their loyalty.

The member for South Perth also trotted out the old argument he has been carrying for a few weeks about how I have banned all the hospital spokesmen from making public statements. I have said before that he seems to be an avid reader of the newspapers, but he seems to be very selective in what he reads, because over recent times he should have seen statements from the Administrator of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, the Medical Superintendent at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, the Director of Nursing at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, the Director of Nursing at Royal Perth Hospital, and the Chairman of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. All these articles have appeared in our local Press; however, the member did not mention this fact, yet he must have read those newspapers.

The member for South Perth also raised the point about the new facilities at Wanneroo and Osborne Park Hospitals. We are about to introduce a new and innovative scheme at those hospitals to provide an excellent service to the people of those districts serviced by those hospitals. The people there will receive top-class, 24-hours, seven days-a-week medical service from those hospitals. This service will be very efficient and economic.

We have been under considerable pressure from doctors, the shires, local members, and members of the public to introduce this system. It was an election undertaking which is now about to be met. We are keeping all our election undertakings, as members will have observed. This service will be a wonderful success.

The member also raised the matter of dental technicians, although I do not know how he managed to introduce them into this debate. I ask him: Is he opposed to the registration of dental technicians? Is he opposed to actions that will give pensioners and other members of the public cheaper dentures by their being able to deal with registered dental technicians?

Mr Grayden: You will allow untrained people to deal directly with the public, and I am definitely opposed to that.

Mr HODGE: Our scheme will result in cheaper and better dentures being available to members of the public by enabling them to deal directly with registered dental technicians. The scheme has been operating in most Australian States for some time. Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia have such a scheme, and Tasmania has had a similar scheme for 20 years. This State has dragged its feet, but I am pleased to say this Government will rectify the situation.

The member for South Perth intimated that I should visit the hospitals more often. I assure him I am a regular visitor to the major teaching hospitals. I try to visit as many hospitals and other health institutions as I possibly can. I venture to say I have probably visited more such institutions in the time I have been the Minister for Health than has any other Minister for Health in a comparable period. Many of the members of statutory boards have told me that they have not had a visit from a Minister since Mr Davies was the Minister for Health 10 years ago. I am pleased to say I have renewed those acquaintances, and I will continue to visit regularly all the boards and hospitals within my portfolio.

I find it difficult indeed to argue a great deal with the member for Subiaco. He made a lot of sense because his arguments were diametrically opposed to those of the member for South Perth. The member for Subiaco argued that in this State we run a Rolls Royce hospital system, and he referred to the statement by the Grants Commission that we spend \$120 million too much on our hospitals. I am not sure that we overspend to that extent, but we certainly have one of the best hospital systems in Australia, and we spend more proportionately on our hospital system than does any other State. We will not allow our system to be dragged down to the standard of health care in some other States.

The member for Subiaco concluded his speech by saying that he would not condemn me, but that he had only sympathy for me. I noticed, however, he seconded the amendment, which is a heavy condemnation of the Government. His comments were hard to understand in that context.

The arguments advanced by the two Opposition spokesmen were completely misleading. The remarks of the member for South Perth demonstrated that in his first six months as a shadow Minister he has not achieved a basic understanding of how a hospital system works or of how it is funded. The deputy shadow Minister responsible for health, the member for Subiaco, has a slightly better understanding of health care matters, but he did agree with the mover of the amendment.

The Government does not accept the amendment; it is a most unworthy amendment.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [12.43 p.m.]: I will support the amendment moved by the member for South Perth. The Government has failed to make adequate provision for the additional pressure Medicare will place on Government Hospitals. The short-term results of the introduction of Medicare will not be that bad; for instance, the lowering of the CPI,

which will put the Government in a good light. Wage earners' pay packets will be affected immediately, and, in the short term, Medicare will seem to be quite good because more money will go into the community by way of a little more spending. However, I am concerned about Medicare's long-term results, such as the lowering of health care standards. We now enjoy a high standard of health care, but Medicare in the long term will lower those standards.

The effects on private hospitals will be quite dramatic. The people in that industry now wonder what their future will be. This Government has talked about increasing employment, but in the short term with Medicare private hospitals will suffer unemployment. No funding will be provided to private hospitals in order that they might maintain their budgets and, therefore, their hospitals. More pressure will be applied to Government hospitals, which will result in more employment in that area. But why should private hospital employees be jeopardised or have to consider employment at Government hospitals? The status quo would be quite adequate for private hospitals, although that is not quite so in regard to Government hospitals, which are under a lot of pressure in regard to funding and staffing levels. The introduction of Medicare will result in a 20 per cent increase in demands placed on hospitals, as the member for Subiaco mentioned, rather than the estimated 10 per cent increase.

The paper war that will occur as a result of Medicare will impose further pressures on hospitals. Under the Medibank system I know that the Harvey Hospital had to employ another office secretary to help cope with the extra paper work that developed. All that the staff seemed to finish up doing was filling in forms and sending them off. If that increase in work is multiplied by the number of hospitals throughout Australia, the extra cost to taxpayers can be estimated as being incredibly high.

Another long-term result of Medicare will be the nationalisation of doctors, and, with that nationalisation, a deterioration of health care. The AMA opposes bulkbilling, the effects of which will be quite dramatic for doctors. Patients will go to doctors who bulkbill, so doctors will be pressured to bulkbill. People with frivolous complaints will go to doctors who bulkbill, and this will cause a dramatic rise in the number of patients requiring care. In turn, this situation will lead to higher health costs which will have to be borne by the taxpayer.

The one per cent levy that is said will adequately cover the cost of Medicare, will, in fact, be inadequate. This has been borne out by some

of the material I have recently read on the subject. This levy will not service the debt of Medicare, and eventually a higher levy will be imposed on taxpayers. In fact, I cannot see that level remaining for long.

The bulkbilling system will be forced upon doctors, but I say patients should operate under a fee-for-service system. Under that system, a patient knows how much he is charged for the service and is, therefore, more careful about how often he goes to the doctor. This would help to contain prices all round.

Medicare will lead to "medifraud". As the member for Subiaco said last night, the Federal Government has talked about \$8 million needed to control "medifraud", but a fee-for-service system would obviate the necessity for that control.

If a patient has to keep a check on his costs instead of merely signing a piece of paper, he will be more aware of how much a doctor is charging. Most people tend not to worry about an account if they merely have to sign for it.

If a doctor feels he does not have enough patients he can quite easily ask his patients to come back on other occasions. He could even go to the home of elderly people more often than he needs to. Obviously, a little old lady living alone would think a doctor was a great guy if he went to see her quite regularly, and all she had to do was sign a piece of paper as he was leaving. She would not know that her signing that paper was imposing a debt on the State. All that bulkbilling will do is cause an added cost in the long run to taxpayers.

Mr Bertram: The doctor would have to be a crook.

Mr BRADSHAW: It has been proven that a few of them are around.

Mr Bertram: You don't throw the baby out with the bath water, do you?

Mr BRADSHAW: No, but the predicament can be avoided through the fee-for-service system.

I refer now to the health insurance funds. Previously, this Government supposedly was dedicated to employment; now it is going to throw many people on the scrap heap. The health insurance funds probably are wondering what is their future. Most of us are pessimists, and I am sure the funds' employees are wondering when they will be retrenched, and not whether they will be retrenched. The Medicare system should be spread evenly among the funds. The private health funds should handle it as well as Medibank Private. That fund is the sole insurer, and, in the

short term, that will be good for the taxpayer inasmuch as it will lower the cost of his medical services. However, monopolies tend to become overserved with people, and lax in performance.

An article in *The Medical Letter* of 7 July, 1983 states—

Bulkbilling in itself generates a lot of work for practice staff, especially if one tries to keep track of the claim perpetually rejected by the Medibank computer, often for no valid reason. Increased bulkbilling therefore will result in a decrease in fee income and an increase in overheads and interest-free loans to Medibank in the form of long delayed payments of claims.

Medibank appears to be inefficient already, and will become more so. Why should Medibank Private be the sole insurer? If the private health funds competed with Medibank Private we could judge and compare the performance of each. Pressure could be maintained on Medibank Private and the private funds to control prices and to make sure they did not have a monopoly and become inefficient.

The proposed introduction of Medicare is quite ludicrous when one considers that other countries have found such a system to be quite inefficient and, in general, they are attempting to move away from it. Britain, for example, is involving the private sector more. Over the years, the health service in Britain has been proved to be inefficient; there are long waiting times to enter hospital for any surgery. At least now Britain is attempting to be a little more sane and to return to the private sector system. It has been shown that private health services run at a lower cost.

Another aspect which came out of the Medibank system frightens me. Prior to the introduction of Medibank, when ambulances were used to transfer a patient from one hospital to another, the onus was on the patient to pay the cost. After Medibank's introduction, the ambulance services were paid large sums of money to transfer patients between hospitals. Many ambulance sub-branches throughout this State and Australia were never so financial as when that operated. That system has since cut out, but I am worried that this type of situation could occur again; fees are paid when they are not incurred and are not necessary. When one multiplies Australia-wide the amount received by the Harvey St. John Ambulance branch one sees that it amounts to many millions of dollars. That comes from the taxpayer, and the poor old wage earner is hit again.

Mr Bertram: He bears his burden of the tax and the others do their best to dodge it. Your

party in Canberra recently let them off the hook to the tune of many hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mr BRADSHAW: Retrospective legislation is another story.

The attitude of this Labor Government towards health services is typical of the attitude of Labor Governments throughout Australia; it is vindictive. In *The Medical Letter* of 4 October 1982, it was reported that a serious clash was taking place between the AMA and the New South Wales and Victorian Labor Governments. This seems to be occurring here with this Minister for Health. I refer to *The Sunday Times* of 28 August 1983 which contains an article headed, "Doctors, nurses in outrage over cuts". The Minister told us last night and today how good he has been to the hospitals in increasing nursing staff by 155.

Mr Bertram: Hear, hear!

Mr BRADSHAW: I agree; it is tremendous. On the other hand, the Minister is putting pressure on the Government hospital system, and he has the audacity to say that public hospitals are getting a fair share. *The Sunday Times* carried the following article—

The attack on conditions in WA public hospitals has intensified.

Doctors, nurses and politicians have slammed the State Government's staffing cutbacks in hospitals, adding fuel to the controversy which flared this week.

The Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian Nursing Federation have voiced strong support for senior Perth surgeon, Sir George Bedbrook, who this week spoke out about the rundown of services in public hospitals.

They were joined by the Opposition and others in the medical profession who are 'fed up' with staff ceilings imposed by the State Government in June.

He is not out of character with the other Labor States in being vindictive towards the health system.

Mr Laurance: Particularly towards a man of Sir George Bedbrook's standing in the community.

Mr BRADSHAW: That is right.

Mr Bertram: Sir George Bedbrook is a very staunch supporter of the antismoking campaign. I trust your brethren will take heed of that.

Mr BRADSHAW: Another matter which I find abhorrent and for which I cannot see the justification, is that approval of appointments is in

the hands of the Premier. Recently, the Harvey District Hospital Matron was appointed to a position in Busselton, but had to wait nearly two months for approval. In the meantime, Harvey District Hospital was unable to advertise her position until she resigned and the matron had disruption and torment inflicted on her for no reason at all. When the matter was investigated to find out why approval had not been given, the advice was that it took time, but that everyone else's appointment had been approved and the matron's should be as well. What a great system! Everyone's appointment has to be approved, yet everyone is appointed. It is disrupting people's lives. When people get jobs, they want to start straightaway. They do not want to have to wait months for approval to take up their new position.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr BRADSHAW: As I was saying previously, the Government has vindictively attacked the people who provide health services in Western Australia. Earlier this year, the Minister for Consumer Affairs commenced to pick on the pharmacists. These dedicated people provide a good service throughout the city and the State, but the Minister was threatening them with the prices freeze legislation. As members have seen from the previous attempt to use that legislation, it has been a debacle. The Pharmacy Guild was asked for a submission to justify pharmacists' costs. The submission went in, but when there was no reply after many weeks, the guild wrote to the Premier about the bad deal it was receiving from the Minister for Consumer Affairs. The reply to that letter chastised the guild for picking on the Minister. The guild had been trying to point out that it was the pharmacists who were being picked on and degraded by the Minister.

I add my support to the amendment moved by the member for South Perth.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [2.17 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by the member for South Perth. It provides a most welcome opportunity to attack this Government's whole administration and also its Minister for Health. Hardly a day went by in the last parliamentary session that we did not hear bellyaching from the then shadow Minister for Health about the health system in this State. We heard carping criticism from him day after day about what was wrong with the system. We now have a classic case of the biter being bit—his comments have come back to haunt him. It is the people in that very system who are now criticising the Minister, and rightly so. When we look at the calibre of the people who are criticising this Minister, we realise the trouble he is in.

Mr Carr: Dr Dadour?

Mr LAURANCE: I am not referring to Dr Dadour. The foremost surgeon in this State, (Sir George Bedbrook), saw fit to attack this Minister for Health.

Mr Hodge: He attacked my predecessor as well.

Mr LAURANCE: Let us look at the Minister's reaction, because it was interesting. Like most of the other members of this new Government, he is very arrogant, so he decided he would counterattack. He went quite onto the offensive—offence for defence. He thought that was the way to handle Sir George Bedbrook. He slipped right into him and he spoke about pre-Budget manoeuvring. He did not know what he was tackling. This was the same system which had been the subject of all his criticism just a few months previously.

What happened? The Minister for Health found that he ran into a brick wall. I do not know whether the Premier rang him up one night or got the message through in some other way, but somebody told him to back off. He was told that he was on a loser because Sir George has far more following in the community than has the Minister for Health. So he suddenly had to back down.

First of all the Minister thought that he had better write to Sir George Bedbrook to ask his opinion—to ask him why he was making this claim. Then the Minister was more embarrassed when the parents of the patients at Princess Margaret Hospital came in to support Sir George's claims. The parents said, "We have to go into the hospital and help". The Minister then thought he had better change his tactic and he attempted to excuse this Government. He used the same excuse that the Government had used for the past seven months and he said, "We will hold an inquiry".

Mr Hodge: The inquiry is at PMH, you mug.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister announced the setting up of that inquiry because he was under pressure from the public as a result of the criticism raised by Sir George Bedbrook.

Mr Hodge: It was nothing to do with Sir George.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister is ducking for cover. It is amazing how the worm has turned. Here he is ducking for cover in regard to the very system he has been talking about so loudly and for so long.

Mr Hodge: And so effectively.

Mr LAURANCE: Let us just look at the sort of thing he has been saying. In addition to running into all sorts of trouble over the

administration of hospitals in this State, he has also run himself into trouble about the figures, and I attack him on this point. When a valid criticism about the figures was raised by the mover of the amendment, the member for South Perth, that this Minister could not add up and that he was as inept as other members of the Government, and responsible for bad management, he counterattacked and said that the member for South Perth did not know what he was talking about and that his figures were all wrong.

Mr Hodge: That is correct.

Mr LAURANCE: That is not correct. I want to bring to the attention of the House, in defence of my colleague, the member for South Perth, the fact that this Minister would not know what he is talking about. He should apologise to the people of this State and to the Parliament. It was claimed the Minister for Health said that the hospital services in this State were taking \$700 million out of a total Budget of \$2 000 million.

Mr Hodge: I said that health services would cost \$700 million.

Mr LAURANCE: I shall read what the Minister said. I am about to read a transcript of a "Nationwide" interview with the Minister for Health on 29 August. It reads, in part, as follows—

But, as I say, about \$700 million out of a \$2 000 million Budget is the position at the moment. I suppose it is probably not realistic of me to expect to get a much greater slice of the Budget than that.

Mr Hodge: That is correct.

Mr LAURANCE: That is what the Minister said.

Mr Hodge: Will you apologise for saying that I said \$700 million would be spent on the hospital services of this State?

Mr LAURANCE: No, I will not.

Mr Hodge: Show me where I said that, then?

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister should read the *Hansard* report of what he said. When he was told his figure was wrong by \$187 million or thereabouts, he said \$700 million out of a total Budget of \$2 000 million was spent on hospital services. He went on to say that the member for South Perth was referring to the Consolidated Revenue Fund as being \$2 000 million, out of which \$700 million had been spent on hospital services.

Mr Hodge: Tell me where I said \$700 million had been spent on hospitals?

Mr LAURANCE: If that is not the case, what was the Minister referring to?

Mr Hodge: I said that \$700 million had been spent on health.

Mr LAURANCE: What does the \$2 000 million represent, if it does not refer to the Budget?

Mr Hodge: It is the State Budget.

Mr LAURANCE: The Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr Hodge: Not exactly; it is the State Budget.

Mr LAURANCE: I ask the Minister to be fair in this matter. It is our right to attack this Government and we will do that. The Minister counterattacked the member for South Perth; he was wrong and he should apologise.

Mr O'Connor: That is par for the course over there.

Mr Clarko: He should resign.

Mr LAURANCE: Even better, the Minister should resign. Had the Minister wanted to be dinkum, honest, and straightforward, he would have said, "In the heat of the moment in front of the television cameras in the glare of the lights and with the public of Western Australia watching me, I made a mistake". The Minister could have apologised for that and said the figure was \$500 million out of a total Budget of \$2 000 million, and that would have been accepted. Anybody can make a slip in front of the television cameras. A slip of \$200 million is very substantial, members must admit, but the Minister could have said, "I said \$700 million out of a total Budget of \$2 000 million, but I meant \$500 million, and I made a mistake".

Members on this side of the House are fair. We are firm and tough, but we are fair. The Minister for Health could have apologised and said, "I was wrong, in the heat of the moment, in front of the television interviewer, and I made a slip of the tongue". Had the Minister owned up to the situation, the incident would have been forgotten; but he did not do so. When the matter was brought to his attention by the member for South Perth, he decided to try to denigrate that member and duck for cover, so he said, "I included the General Loan Fund Budget as well". That does not come to \$2 000 million. The Minister was talking about the CRF Budget and he knows it. If members look at the General Loan Fund Estimates—I am being very kind to the Minister now—and take this part of the Budget into account as well, they will find something less than \$40 million was allocated to buildings, etc.

That indicates how the Minister tried to cover up this business of the \$700 million in which he was wrong by \$187 million, and I am being kind to him here. The figure is closer to \$200 million.

I turn now to the other situation which was mentioned by way of an answer to question 993. The Minister provided a breakdown of the various categories of expenditure when the member for South Perth asked him how the figure of \$700 million was arrived at. As laid down in the answer to the question, the items which made up that expenditure totalled \$690.2 million, which is close enough to \$700 million. Nowhere in that answer does the Minister say he included the internal revenue which is generated by the hospitals. His figuring was all wrong.

Mr Hodge: It is the gross expenditure on health.

Mr LAURANCE: However, that is all included in the \$2 000 million Budget to which the Minister referred.

Mr Hodge: I said that we spent \$700 million on health.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister has been caught out and he can do two things. He can apologise to the member for South Perth and say he was wrong—

Mr Clarko: Let him resign. There would be two gaps then.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister for Health should follow the Minister for Transport down to Bunbury in a hurry, or something of that nature, to hide his embarrassment. He should get out of the Parliament or relinquish his position as Minister for Health. Alternatively, the Minister could do the honourable thing. He could tell the public of this State and the Parliament that he was wrong, and he could apologise to the member for South Perth for trying to denigrate him.

Last year, during the previous session of Parliament, we heard carping criticism every day from the Minister for Health when he was the Opposition spokesman on health matters. He took every opportunity to attack the Government of the day and now he must wear it. He is being attacked now, and he is not prepared to be honourable and tell the member for South Perth that he was wrong and that he should not have tried to denigrate him when he brought forward a legitimate mistake made by the Minister. I shall give the Minister the opportunity to do that.

Mr O'Connor: Was it a mistake, or was it an attempt to mislead?

Mr LAURANCE: I am trying to be kind to the Minister.

Mr O'Connor: There are too many instances of this occurring.

Mr LAURANCE: This represents gross mismanagement.

Mr Bryce: Did you fellows rehearse this two-act play?

Mr LAURANCE: Did the Government rehearse its inept stance yesterday with its voting? If it did, it was extremely well rehearsed.

Mr Bryce: An excellent PR stunt!

Mr LAURANCE: This State is governed by a very immature, inept, bungling Government. We had proof of that yesterday, and we have had more proof of it today from the Minister for Health. I shall pause and give the Minister an opportunity in this debate—he has spoken already and cannot speak again, although I am sure he will have other opportunities to speak—to apologise to the member for South Perth and to do the reasonable and honourable thing to get out of the dilemma he has caused for himself.

The Minister is deep in his papers. He is reading the letter he wrote to Sir George Bedbrook to make sure it is right. We have seen ineptitude on the part of the Minister and it will not do to tell the public of this State he is spending more than one-third of the Budget on hospital services when he is not.

Whether this was an honest mistake, or whether the Minister was trying to mislead the public, I do not know and I do not care. The Minister should explain whether he deliberately misled the public or whether it was accidental. It is too late for him to claim it was accidental, because he has already tried to get out of it by denigrating a member of this House.

Mr Blaikie: The ALP has great trouble adding figures correctly, and the Minister is following suit.

Mr LAURANCE: He must have worked out how much the new tobacco tax would raise!

Several members interjected.

Mr LAURANCE: Let the Minister take note of this: He may duck for cover and run away from this incident, but it will not be forgotten. It is a very major slur on his record as a Minister and he will be reminded of this many times in the months to come.

Even if he got up and made it now, I for one would be prepared to accept the Minister's comment that he was quoting from the transcript of a television interview and anybody could make a mistake in those circumstances. However, that is not where he went wrong. He tried to juggle the figures to prove that he was not wrong when he

knew in his heart he was wrong. He tried to denigrate the member who raised this matter in the House. So much for the Minister for Health!

The member for South Perth took the opportunity to bring this matter forward in the Parliament. The Minister will have to lift his game considerably because I do not think the hospital services in this State can cope with this Minister who bungles so much. He is inept.

We need a better hospital service, but the Minister merely attacked one of Australia's most outstanding and foremost surgeons. The Minister perpetrated a scurrilous attack through his ministerial office and in this Parliament. When he realised that there was a tremendous weight of support in the community for Sir George Bedbrook, he backed off, but that was not good enough.

If he cannot get his sums right in the early days of his portfolio, what can the people of this State expect in the three-year term of this Government? The people must be worried indeed about where this Government is going. The Government has made one bungle after another, and I am sure the public of this State are concerned about the Government they voted in, and I worry about the Government they are getting.

The other part of this amendment relates to the pressure that will be placed on our hospital system after 1 February when Medicare is introduced. Mr Speaker, you know in your heart, as do many members on the other side of the House, that Medicare will be a disaster.

In not one country in the world that such a health scheme has been adopted, has it been successful. These schemes have bogged down the whole medical system in every country in which they have been introduced, and have cost an enormous amount in terms of social anxiety.

We had the disastrous experiment of Medibank. One of the biggest criticisms I had of the Fraser Government was that it did not emasculate Medibank from day one of its term in office, but instead wore it down over the years.

Mr Bryce: They promised not to touch it.

Mr LAURANCE: The Fraser Government made the silly mistake of not saying to the public of this country that it would stop Medibank from day one. I am pleased that the present Federal Opposition spokesman on health matters has said that the minute another private enterprise Government gets into power in Canberra it will stop Medicare—from day one. Medicare will not be stopped over seven years, it will be stopped from day one.

Medicare will be introduced to the eternal shame of ALP politicians in this country. I remind members that they made us wear things introduced by the Federal Liberal Government, and we will make them wear Medicare.

The one per cent levy to be introduced on 1 February will not be enough to cover the expenses of Medicare, which members opposite have supported. Medicare will jam up the whole health system, and a greater cost will be inflicted on the people of Australia.

We have estimated that the average family in this country has had to bear an extra \$50 a week as a result of the policies of the Labor Governments elected earlier this year. The Federal Government introduced its mini-Budget and the Burke Government increased its charges. We have had also the Federal Budget introduced a fortnight or so ago. All these measures have increased family expenditure by \$50 a week, and soon the State Budget will be introduced, in which we are told there are horrendous extra charges on families.

Many members, including myself, have been notified, and I am sure many people in the general public have been notified, that the cost of private health insurance will increase. That will represent another slug on families as a result of the policies of this Government.

The member who spoke before me referred to the number of jobs to be lost in private health insurance, but I will refer to the increased cost to be borne by the average family. These families will stagger to the end of this terrible year, and on 1 February 1984 they will have imposed upon them a one per cent levy for Medicare.

We have been told the levy will raise \$1 billion, and yesterday it was said in the Federal Parliament that Medicare will eventually cost \$8 billion a year. Does that mean, if members opposite can tell us, that we will eventually have an eight per cent levy on all the taxpayers of this country? Medicare is doomed to failure.

The introduction of such a scheme is part of the Labor Party philosophy to look after the down-trodden. The pay-for-use system was wonderful because people had an idea of how much they paid. People were able to get back most of the money they paid, but did not go to doctors willy-nilly; they realised they had to have some reason to go to a doctor. They paid their bills and were reimbursed under the pay-for-use system, and those who could not afford to pay did not.

Members opposite would know as well as I do that people who could not afford to pay did not. Certainly in my area the local hospital did not

continue to follow up the people who could not pay. The money owing was written off as a bad debt. The pay-for-use system we have is one of the best in the world, but what will happen under Medicare? The whole health system will bog down, and nearly every person will have a one per cent levy imposed upon his taxable income. That will apply until we are accustomed to it, and then it will increase.

What help will be given to those who cannot pay? The great majority of people in this country will be burdened with the cost of Medicare. *The West Australian* of 7 September carried an article headed, "The poor won't pay the Medicare levy". The people whom members opposite have gone all out to protect, the people for whom members opposite will send our health care system down the drain, will not pay for the system. They did not pay under the pay-for-use system if they could not afford to, so why will we have Medicare?

It is alarming and despicable that this State Government and the Federal Government will adopt the Medicare system, a system similar to that which took us 10 years to get rid of. I am very much opposed to it.

The Minister for Health stands sanctioned over his bungling of his portfolio, and ALP Governments, State and Federal, stand censured over their introduction of Medicare.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [2.37 p.m.]: Mr Speaker—

Mr Hassell: He must be getting worried, he is actually going to defend one of his Ministers again.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I was not waiting to collect my thoughts, I was waiting for members opposite to finish their interjections.

Mr Blaikie: Thank goodness someone will help the Minister for Health.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I wanted to contribute to the debate to place on record my estimation of the task the Minister for Health has completed to date in a relatively short period as Minister for Health. I do not think anyone is under a misapprehension as to the complexity of the job he faces. It is perhaps the most difficult area of Government, and certainly amongst the most sensitive, as has been implied by some of the contributions of Opposition members.

Mr O'Connor: That doesn't excuse him for falsifying figures.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is obvious to anyone who was a member of the previous Parliament that the previous Government, the now Oppo-

sition, had tremendous difficulties in this area. It acknowledged the sensitivity of the area and the difficulties it encountered. The way in which it failed to handle those problems properly was a significant reason for its defeat. There is no doubt about that, as there is no doubt that we have an excellent health and hospital system manned by professionals doing their very best to deliver health care of a standard the community believes is appropriate. There is no doubt also about the Government's position in respect of this part of our Government's service; that is, come hell or high water the hospital system will be accountable for the expenditure necessary to maintain the service it seeks to demonstrate as appropriate. This Government is not about to retreat in the face of that sensitive and difficult area of administration from its demand upon the hospital and health system that it be accountable.

The Government teaching hospitals can no longer, as they did under the previous Government, see themselves as sovereign entities, and not part of a hospital network. There is no room within the health system for rivalry between hospitals that costs the taxpayers a fierce amount of money, and that results in the inefficient duplication of services.

That is what this Minister has been trying repeatedly to stress upon those parts of the hospital system with which he has been dealing in these most sensitive matters. I suggest to members of the Opposition that it is in their interests, as it is in ours and in the interests of the public, to ensure that within the hospital system, as in the education system, some attempt is made to monitor the value for the dollars expended from taxpayers' funds. If the Opposition wants to attack us for doing that, it should also explain how it neglects to see the need for that accountability.

It simply is not good enough to say any Government in 1983 has an open-ended cheque book with which to provide funds to hospital administrators so those administrators can provide whatever services they believe to be appropriate. The previous Government recognised the problem.

Mr Blaikie: During the election campaign, you made what have turned out to be wild commitments—completely unfounded commitments. What you are saying now is entirely different from what you said on the hustings.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The previous Government recognised the problem, and, to give the Government its due, it attempted to do something about it. It failed, firstly, to recognise the real nature of the difficulty, and, secondly, to sensibly frame policies that would pretend to the solution

to difficult problems. Nevertheless, it appreciated the difficulty. One compelling reason exists that is the foundation for its appreciation.

Simply put, it is that the Grants Commission in its assessment of this State's performance, decided we were expending in excess of \$100 million a year to provide services in an area that was being compared with services provided in that area in other States. That is the sum total of the most compelling reason for the previous Government's recognising the problem. It failed to deal with the problem, I suggest, firstly, because it was not resolute and, secondly, because it was hamfisted in the way it set about trying to find the solution.

Mr Blaikie: Rubbish!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We are firmly resolved to combat this major problem touching upon the accountability of the health care and hospital system. That relates specifically to the question of teaching hospitals. We appreciate the commitment and ability of professionals who work in that area, and we understand that, married to that ability and commitment, is not always an appreciation of the financial circumstances in which the State will find itself from time to time. All of us know of the way in which professionals are committed and worthy people seeking to satisfy identifiable needs in the community, while sometimes not taking fully into account the financial realities of their and our situations. That is the truth of the matter.

Mr Clarko: That is your opinion.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Government is resolute and determined in its intention to rationalise and, as far as possible, to ensure the hospital system is as efficient as it possibly can be.

Mr Clarko: You are going to cut back allocations in real terms.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have heard all sorts of disparaging remarks about the Minister's performance. Look, compared with his predecessor in the last Government, this Minister is a country mile ahead.

Mr Clarko: Give precise examples.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In terms of intelligent commitment to his responsibilities, he makes his predecessor in the Health portfolio, and most of his predecessors in other portfolios in the same Cabinet, look absolutely deficient.

Mr Clarko: Give one example.

Mr Barnett: The member for Karrinyup!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That is what is annoying the Opposition so much. The Opposition thought that the election of a new Government would cre-

ate an opportunity to seize upon the inexperience of newly-selected and elected Cabinet Ministers and to cause them discomfort and embarrassment. It has been unsuccessful in its prosecution of that tactic.

Mr Clarko: What about yesterday? The Minister made an honest mistake! What is a dishonest mistake?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: That tactic has been unsuccessful in the case of the Minister for Health because he has very succinctly answered the queries put to him, and efficiently and intelligently explained in general to the public, and specifically to this House, exactly the nature of the policies he is pursuing. It may be strange to Opposition members to know that in large part these policies reflect some of the things the member for Subiaco has been saying in this place for a number of years.

We pay tribute to him for some of the positions he has taken because it is true he was the first in this place to recognise that there needs to walk beside an efficient and appropriate hospital system some concept of financial accountability. In other words, if we are going to allow competing major hospitals to expand according to an uncoordinated and disjointed policy that does not view the provision of facilities and does not avoid duplication, we will not be doing our job properly.

Let me make it clear that this Minister for Health will in times to come be regarded as one of the very best to occupy that position.

Mr Clarko: You are fooling yourself. It is like your members making their maiden speeches and saying what a great leader you are. They had been here only two minutes. I have never heard maiden speeches which praised a leader so much. Did you instruct them?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The comparison is vivid because it is true to say that while I do not need to look behind me at any time, on the opposite side of this Chamber sits a group of people who exhibit very little loyalty to each other, and from our observations scant loyalty to their leader.

Several members interjected.

Mr Clarko: You are the biggest backstabber here. You are the ace!

Mr Laurance: I heard that a number of your members went to a Chinese restaurant last night for dinner. I do not know which restaurant, but that is ominous for you.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Were I to be in the position of the Leader of the Opposition, I do not think I would sit in that position only to be confronted consistently by the sort of disloyal tactics

that are obvious even to members on this side of the House. We see the little cliques running around the precincts of Parliament undermining each other and those people perceived to be leadership threats in the Opposition ranks; it is absolutely appalling.

Mr Clarko: Who is going to stab you in the back? The member for Fremantle will be the first.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I conclude by recapping some of the points I have made. Threaded through all the policies we are implementing in respect of this important and sensitive area of health care, is the fundamental belief that every part of government should be financially accountable to this Parliament through the Executive. Secondly, in so far as the Minister for Health is concerned, I can understand the aggravation felt by the Opposition because he very effectively destroyed the last Minister for Health. He contributed efficiently and effectively to the downfall of the previous Government; but that is politics. What we are talking about now is the way in which he has done the job, discharged his responsibilities, explaining to the public as he goes, and fulfilled those responsibilities to the satisfaction not only of his colleagues in Parliament and in Cabinet, but also of the public.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [2.50 p.m.]: The Premier has just stated that the medical and health service in this State will be allowed to maintain the service it seeks. I disagree with that statement. In fact, I think the Premier disagreed with it himself when he suggested the health services should be more accountable.

When I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee in 1974-5, a report was prepared on the level of funding and accountability of hospital services in this State, and the deliberations of the committee at that time were reflected in report No. 10 or 11 which was tabled in this House. Without giving the substance of the information which was provided under privilege to the committee, the report clearly revealed that the rivalry to which the Premier referred was rife. He was quite right. There were instances where equipment purchased for one hospital was duplicating—or would have duplicated were it not for the great degree of control exercised over such purchases—very expensive equipment, in many cases not being used to capacity, which was already available in other teaching hospitals in this city. In that regard I cannot disagree.

The major question to be asked is: Accountability to whom? If the Premier is saying that the service cannot be allowed to mushroom and duplicate where it seeks to, I agree with him. What is

happening cannot be allowed to continue; the previous Government and the previous Minister for Health tried to bring the service to heel. That will take some time, particularly under the funding arrangements, and ambitions of doctors and hospital boards and those who have responsibility for not just raising funds, but also disbursing them right down the line.

It is very easy to establish a system; but then, one is hooked on it in terms of the ongoing Consolidated Revenue funding that must be provided. The cost of buying a new piece of equipment is only the first, and often the lesser, cost. It is then necessary to provide staff to operate the equipment, a building in which to locate it and support services to maintain it.

The one point that has not yet been raised is: Why are we to have Medicare? Comments have been made about how expensive Medicare will be; the full facts are not yet known, although it has been suggested it can be covered by a one per cent levy. However, serious questions have been raised relating to the one per cent levy and there is growing evidence that the levy will not cover Medicare. If this is the case there are two alternatives: Firstly the levy will be increased or, secondly, the Federal Government will say, "We cannot raise additional funds by way of taxation and we cannot increase the levy, therefore additional disbursements will have to be made from some other pocket of money; or, the States will have to raise more money".

I am sure the present Government is well aware—or should be if it has gone back over its files or listened to its advisers—that the previous Government was betrayed by the previous Federal Government which backed away from its financial commitments. I am not talking about the level of funding or the "Rolls Royce" service some have suggested we have, but about the commitment made at the time of Medibank that the Federal Government would pick up a proportion of costs.

The Fraser Government retreated from that commitment, to the financial embarrassment of this State. It does not matter which Government is in power: When that kind of undertaking is not honoured it creates increasing difficulties because somebody must pay. With regard to the provision of a whole range of public services such as health, welfare, education, and community facilities, there is an air of expectation on the part of the community. One of the great problems facing any Government in this country is that the expectations of the community currently are greater than the capacity of the country to provide those services. There is no way we can provide the level

of public services which have come to be expected or wanted by the community without a compensating decline in some other area. The funds are not being earned as they were in the past; the cost of providing the services has risen; expectations of and demands on health, welfare and medical services have risen. The income capacity of the Government, whether Federal or State, to cope with these demands does not exist.

The allocation of funding priorities in the latest Budget and also the way in which it chose to increase certain levels of funding by attacking pensioners and other groups and trying to reap revenue from them, stands to the shame of the Hawke Government. Once a new level of service has been provided and a new plateau established, it is hard to take it away.

We have not yet been told why we must have Medicare at all. As the member for Subiaco said last night, since the Hayden Medibank plan was introduced in 1975, there have been some six or seven major changes and probably about eight or nine minor changes to the scheme, most of them by the previous Federal Government, and none of them effective. Although those changes may have made the system a little better temporarily, in the long run it enshrined a system relating to the provision of medical services which was inefficient, expensive, and bureaucratic, and which did not necessarily deliver the service it was designed to deliver.

The whole principle behind the new service, to be called Medicare, which we are told is coming in, and the way in which it is supposed to work, carries with it the suggestion that this method is the only way in which adequate medical care can be provided to the community. I very strongly dispute that suggestion, because we can go back to the pre-Medibank days and see that at that time there operated a system of personal medical insurance relating to the provision of health and medical care which may well have been improved. It was a system; it did not need to be thrown aside in favour of the Medibank scheme.

Now we are faced with another scheme—a centralist, highly bureaucratic, and inefficient system—which we are told is to come about, but we have not been told how much it will cost or even how it will work. Indeed, we are not even sure whether the Medicare scheme will provide what the community wants.

In relation to the allocation of public funds for the range of community services, as I mentioned, the community has an expectation that certain things will be provided; but, as a taxpayer, I question why in Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital we

have a ratio of doctors to patients of something like 1:5 or 1:6. Why do we need 100 doctors for 500 or 600 patients? Why, for example, do we need—the Minister will correct me if I am wrong—two salaried doctors at Wanneroo ministering to only six or seven patients. Is that the correct figure? Perhaps the Minister can tell me.

Mr Hodge: Three at the moment.

Mr PETER JONES: That is even worse. How many patients?

Mr Hodge: I gave the figures to the member for South Perth last night. The last break-up I have shows that 321—

Mr PETER JONES: How many bed patients, I mean?

Mr Hodge: I am sorry. I thought you were talking about casualty.

Mr PETER JONES: Certainly I am told by one of the doctors that at one stage a few weeks ago six or seven beds were occupied at Wanneroo. Why do we need a situation that is expensive if adequate medical and health services can be provided more efficiently and at less public cost?

Mr Hodge: The system I am trying to introduce will be more efficient; and it should be cheaper at the same time.

Mr PETER JONES: You have not managed to persuade anybody yet.

Mr Hodge: It is early days yet.

Mr PETER JONES: The Government has not convinced anybody that it will be cheaper and more efficient. Perhaps the expectations of the community are higher than we can afford.

Mr Hodge: The average bed occupancy at Wanneroo Hospital that we are expecting in the coming year—

Mr PETER JONES: I was talking about two or three weeks ago.

Mr Hodge: I do not have those figures with me. The average at the moment is 59 available beds and an average occupancy of 40 beds a day.

Mr PETER JONES: That is the expected occupancy. How many salaried doctors will there be then?

Mr Hodge: I do not know. I have not worked that out yet.

Mr PETER JONES: I gave the figure relating to some three or four weeks ago. There were two salaried doctors at Wanneroo—

Mr Hodge: They are not treating inpatients. There are three salaried doctors treating outpatients.

Mr PETER JONES: I still come back to the point that there were two or three salaried doctors for six or seven beds.

Mr Hodge: The number of beds occupied has nothing to do with the number of salaried doctors.

Mr PETER JONES: Because of the outpatient situation?

Mr Hodge: Yes.

Mr PETER JONES: With the number of doctors in private practice there, why do we need to run an outpatient service of this kind at Wanneroo?

Mr Hodge: Because there was a strong demand from the doctors themselves who wanted to stop operating the voluntary casualty service; there was demand from the shire; there was demand from the local doctors; and there were many demands from the public.

Mr PETER JONES: That is exactly the answer for which I am looking. That is exactly why I agree with what the Premier has said. We cannot go on providing a service or a system that it is demanding itself.

Mr Hodge: But this is the public, I mean.

Mr PETER JONES: Again, that it is demanding itself, because we can provide a service only that is within the capacity of the community as a whole, which means the taxpayers. We are providing a service—

Mr Hodge: This will be cheaper. This will save money.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister has not shown that to us.

Mr Hodge: When the Medicare system is introduced—

Mr PETER JONES: Let me finish. At a place like Wanneroo, clearly we run the risk of providing a service at the expense of the taxpayers which is in excess of the capacity of the community to pay. Probably it would be in excess of the capacity of the local community to pay; and certainly it is in excess of the capacity of the community nationally to pay. It is as simple as that. I agree with the Premier—

Mr Hodge: The service we give will be cheaper. It will save money.

Mr PETER JONES: How will it save money?

Mr Hodge: If you let me explain—

Mr Bertram: You do not give him a chance to speak.

Mr PETER JONES: Who is making the speech?

Mr Hodge: If we employed salaried and sessional doctors at Wanneroo and Osborne Park Hospitals, which will be linked for this purpose, the doctors will provide the casualty service and out-patients, and they will treat public inpatients in the hospital. That way, we will get the casualty service virtually free of charge.

Mr PETER JONES: Nothing is free of charge. How can the Minister say the service will be free of charge?

Mr Hodge: Because the doctors will be paid to treat the inpatients, and they will also be able to treat the outpatients.

Mr PETER JONES: I fail to see how the Minister can claim that the service would be given free of charge.

Mr Hodge: On the basis that the doctors will be already there.

Mr PETER JONES: They are there because someone is paying for them.

Mr Hodge: They are there because they are working on the rosters that will be drawn up.

Mr PETER JONES: I assume there will be sufficient doctors to have overlapping times?

Mr Hodge: You really do not understand the subject. You are demonstrating that quite clearly.

Mr PETER JONES: I admit that I do not understand the subject fully. I have not made a study of all the details. However, I make the point that somebody has to pay in the long run. The taxpayers and the community will pay. The level of expectation in the community may very well be too high.

I agree completely with what the Premier has said about accountability and the level of services. He implied they may well be too high. He has indicated the services will have to be more accountable; and I agree with what he said. He indicated there would be jealousies and rivalries between the teaching hospitals. I agree with that, because the evidence put to the Public Accounts Committee when I served on it, which is reflected in our report, showed exactly that.

In some instances, the staff levels were too high. We have had instances of that in the speeches in support of this amendment already.

I fail to see how in this area of community and social spending we can continue spending at the same rate if the income is not able to support it. The Minister for Education has indicated already—publicly, to his credit—that as far as his original promises were concerned there just is not enough money to honour those promises. There is not enough money within the Education Department and the Government to honour the under-

takings particularly relating to the employment of teachers for year one in primary schools, and the five-year-old pre-school commitment given earlier.

The point I am making is exactly the same in the health area. If the community expectation is too high, we should disregard the promises—leaving them aside if the cost is higher than the community can afford. As the Premier said, the Government has a responsibility to trim the ship a bit. However, the Minister did not indicate that. We should do what we can afford and use the funding that can be sustained. We should not continue to provide a level of service that is funded totally by the public. The Government should try to meet its medical and hospital commitments, and it should be responsible for doing so, without being such a drain on the public purse, while giving the people in the community the level of medical service they deserve.

It will not be done within a public spending framework such as the one being proposed by the Federal Government and which obviously is supported by the State Government.

I conclude by saying that I am not defending the previous situation, because it became an absolute nightmare. The Fraser Government abrogated its funding commitments to the States right from the beginning by trying to patch up a system that was not working. It would have been far better had that Government scrapped the system right at the beginning and returned to a simple, less bureaucratic, and probably more efficient and effective service.

I support the amendment.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [3.11 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by the member for South Perth. My concern is that, notwithstanding the contributions today from the Minister for Health and the Premier, we have received no rebuttal of our very well substantiated claims about the serious nature of the Budget overrun, which is approaching \$180 million.

For the edification of the Minister I indicate that, in a Budget of \$2.355 billion, the vote to the Minister for Health under part eight was \$503.036 million, an amount representing less than a quarter of the total Budget.

Recently the Minister for Health appeared on "Nationwide" and said, "About \$700 million out of a \$2 billion Budget is the position at the moment. I suppose it is probably not realistic of me to expect to get a much greater slice of the Budget than that". What the Minister was attempting to do was to say to the people that all was well in the health field, and that he as Minis-

ter, had obtained a big slice of the cake—he implied 33.3 per cent of the Budget.

The Minister commented during his speech that the works programme had not been included in the Budget and that this would raise the figure shown in Consolidated Revenue. I pause to allow the Minister to answer that allegation.

Mr O'Connor: He is running for cover.

Mr Bertram: I have not seen any movement in the camp.

Mr BLAIKIE: The matter under consideration is of great magnitude. I have attempted to portray fairly the facts as they are known to me. Again, the Minister in his contribution said that, if the figure in the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the figure in the General Loan Fund were added, it would give an amount of about \$700 million, the figure he used on that "Nationwide" programme. I pause again to allow the Minister to interject.

Mr Bateman: It sounds like monotonous repetition.

Mr BLAIKIE: It might sound like monotonous repetition, but I can assure the member that we are talking about an overrun of \$187 million in the Minister's portfolio. We are justified in believing the Minister has shown a degree of incompetence. I again pause to allow the Minister to reply. In the Minister's ignorance, he has decided not to reply.

Mr Grill: You are making a fool of yourself.

Mr BLAIKIE: In the General Loan Fund in the health area—and this relates to public works, buildings and associated works, including furniture and equipment—we find a figure of \$22.34 million. The figure for public health buildings is \$4.608 million and the figure for Mental Health Services is \$4.251 million. This gives us a total of some \$32 million. If we add that figure to the figure in the General Loan Fund—which does not apply—we find that the Minister's overrun is \$155 million, but we would have to stretch our imaginations and bend the truth a little to be able to get that figure. In fact, the overrun is \$187 million.

The Minister for Health is covering up, and we regard this as a matter of great seriousness. It is right that the member for South Perth should have moved his motion to bring this matter to the attention of the House. It ill-behaves the Minister to sit in the Chamber and to ignore the questions asked of him, particularly when we are considering an overrun of this order.

Mr Grill: He has already answered the Opposition on two occasions.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Minister has not answered me yet. I have been as fair as I could be in allowing him the opportunity to answer.

Mr O'Connor: He is misleading the people of this State.

Mr BLAIKIE: In answer to questions asked of the Minister by the member for South Perth, we have been informed that the expenditure with which the Government is currently faced is \$690.2 million. When we consider that the Minister's allocation in the Budget is \$503 million, we realise that the overrun amounts to \$187 million.

The Government has been very fast to rip off the public by increasing Government charges. The Government is also very short on facts and on a willingness to come clean. It is not prepared to advise the people or the Parliament of what is going on. Just a few months ago Government charges for power were increased. The Government indicated that its increases in charges would mean an extra \$58 million to the Government. In reality, the amount will be over \$100 million. The increased cigarette tax and the amount it expected to gain is another classic example of the Government's inability to add properly. It would seem that this disease is catching in the Eastern States, because the Federal Government had problems in its last Budget with the amount of excise duty it expected to receive. The Federal Government's error was in the order of \$400 million. For whatever reason, these errors have been committed. Only in the last few days have Press headlines in Western Australia indicated that the Government expected the clearing bans to cost it \$1 900 million.

Mr I. F. Taylor: How much?

Mr BLAIKIE: An amount of \$1 900 million.

All this relates to the financial mismanagement of the Government. The Government has been extending the truth. It has the facilities to add correctly, yet it seems willing to ignore the Parliament and its obligation to advise the people with some semblance of the truth.

It was an eminent physician, one Sir George Bedbrook, who brought this matter to a head, and we saw the Minister for Health attempt to denigrate this man. It has also been interesting to consider what the Government did in the south-west during the last election campaign and to consider how the public were shown the long bow and how the Government extended the truth. What the Labor Party told the people of the south-west before the last election bears no resemblance to what it is doing today. For example, let me quote to members that part of the Labor Party's platform relating to "Bunbury 2000". The quote

is under the heading, "Health and Community Welfare", and states—

In addition to commitments contained in our major policy statement on Health and Community Welfare, a State Labor Government will: . . .

ensure that local hospitals including the Bunbury Regional Hospital and St. John's Hospital are adequately staffed to deliver a high standard of medical services and health care.

Mr D. L. Smith: Are you suggesting they are having staff problems?

Mr BLAIKIE: I am saying that, before the last election, the Government promised to take action in this area.

Mr D. L. Smith: The member for Vasse would know quite well that, last year, one of the wards of that hospital was closed. A Press report recently was issued by the matron expressing satisfaction with the staff.

Mr BLAIKIE: Which hospital is the member talking about?

Mr D. L. Smith: I am talking about the regional hospital. I am also on the board of St. John of God Hospital, Bunbury, so I know a little about that situation, as well.

Mr Evans: The member for "gas"!

Mr BLAIKIE: The member for Mitchell may even have been one of the authors of the "Bunbury 2000" document. Let me repeat the election platform of the Labor Party—

ensure that local hospitals including the Bunbury Regional Hospital and St. John's Hospital are adequately staffed to deliver a high standard of medical services and health care.

On 25 August, I asked the Minister for Health question 937, in the following terms—

- (2) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that local hospitals, including the Bunbury Regional Hospital and St. John's Hospital, are adequately staffed to provide a high standard of medical service and health care?

The Minister, replied in part, as follows—

- (2) All hospitals' workloads are examined periodically to assess the fluctuations occurring and revise the staff establishment to reflect workload changes.

St. John's Hospital Bunbury is a private hospital which is responsible for its own operations including staffing levels.

I will now pause to allow the member for Mitchell and the member for Bunbury to explain how they will remedy the staffing situation in Bunbury.

Mr D. L. Smith: All I would say to you in reply to that question is that it means we make sure there are sufficient trained staff in the area which St. John's can employ.

Mr BLAIKIE: To qualify that answer, what the Minister is saying is that decisions of the Government have no impact on the staffing levels of private hospitals. That was a matter which came up during the election and I would say the statements made by the Labor Party at the time were to the benefit of their candidates in the area.

I turn now to the member for Warren; he called my name earlier in the debate. He would know that, recently, the Matron of Warren District Hospital resigned. I wish to quote an article which appeared in the *Warren-Blackwood Times* of 10 August under the heading, "Bureaucracy is too much for matron Ebsary", and which stated as follows—

WARREN District Hospital's long serving nursing director Amy Ebsary has tendered her resignation.

Mrs Ebsary, better known as matron, will finish on Friday. She says that government bureaucracy has figured highly in her decision.

No doubt the member for Warren has reported this matter to the Government, and has discussed the embarrassment this situation is causing the local member. The problem of bureaucratic interference is felt not only by Warren District Hospital, but also by many hospitals throughout the State. That is the very reason for the amendment moved by the member for South Perth, and which is supported by members on this side. However, the Minister for Health in his reply did not answer the charges laid by the member for South Perth. The article continued—

With more than 20 years experience in nursing, she said last week that the State Government's policies were making it impossible to run a hospital.

"There are a number of reasons. My husband has been an invalid for two years and he spends the day home by himself. That is my main concern," Matron Ebsary said.

"But bureaucracy has got the better of us. It is difficult to replace staff at the hospital because of the restraints placed on us by the present Government.

That is an interesting set of circumstances. As I said, this problem is being experienced not only at

Warren District Hospital, but also in every hospital throughout the State. If members opposite were frank and honest in their approach to this matter, they would know that what I am saying is true.

Mr P. J. Smith: It is not happening at Bunbury Regional Hospital.

Mr BLAIKIE: Does that hospital receive favoured treatment?

Mr Wilson: You do not know it is happening in every hospital.

Mr BLAIKIE: Is the Minister saying that the matron who resigned was not telling the truth?

Mr Wilson: You cannot say it is happening in every hospital throughout the State.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Minister for Housing is as embarrassed as the member for Warren. I suggest he be very careful.

The article went on—

"When somebody leaves we have to make a case to justify a replacement.

"Each case then has to be presented to the Hospital and Allied Services Department, the Health Minister and finally Premier Brian Burke.

"It is my considered opinion that you cannot run a hospital and provide proper care without adequate staffing and without knowing that you are going to have a set number of staff."

It is rather interesting this House has been told by interjection that Bunbury Regional Hospital receives favoured treatment.

Mr P. J. Smith: We do not, at all. All I said was that the hospital does not have a problem in this area.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The only person who has not been replaced at the hospital is a gardener. Bumble along with that information for a while.

Mr MacKinnon: So much for your cutbacks. You cannot have it both ways.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Matron of Warren District Hospital expressed her concern at the bureaucratic interference in the operations of the hospital, saying that applications for replacement staff had to be made to the Department of Health and Allied Services, which then would be considered by the Minister and also by the Premier. If that statement is incorrect, members opposite should indicate where it is wrong.

Mr Wilson: Which statement?

Mr Clarko: We are not surprised that you don't know.

Mr BLAIKIE: This is a matter which is of great concern to members on this side and which has caused the member for South Perth to move the amendment today. I believe the Minister has mishandled his portfolio. Certainly, he did not explain what happened to the sum of \$870 million. In addition, people throughout the hospital services in this State are dissatisfied with the way the Government is handling our hospital and health services.

With those comments, I indicate my support of the amendment.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [3.29 p.m.]: The amendment moved by the member for South Perth highlights one of the most sensitive issues currently before the people of Australia—the nationalisation and socialisation of our hospital and health services. This matter is of great concern to all people in Australia. Indeed, I receive letters every day about the loss of choice involved in the introduction of Medicare. This matter should be of concern to us all. It is highlighted when one goes into one's electorate and sees the problems besetting the local hospitals; I will give a few examples of those problems in a moment.

It must be said that the emphasis has been on the lack of clarity by the Minister. One remembers the part he played—the early Perry Mason stance he and his Premier took—regarding medicine. He seemed to be each day attacking the then Minister for Health and the general medical facilities.

Mr Blaikie: Perry Mason? He was more like J. R. Ewing.

Mr RUSHTON: The attack the Minister made was about how poor the medical care and administration were, and in this House today we heard the Premier stating how good the medical care and health are in this State. That is a remarkable change. My observation is that there is more uncertainty today than previously.

Mr Grayden: No doubt about that.

Mr RUSHTON: The great concern is: What is to happen? There has been this lack of clarity on the part of the Minister. He has not spelt out what is to happen under Medicare. The medical profession has the responsibility for servicing the public, and that profession, as well as the public—the pensioners and many other sections of the community—are realising that their opportunities are diminishing. I am receiving letters from people expressing this thought, and I am unable to satisfy them about what will take place.

I am ardently against the nationalisation of any service, and with Medicare, I can see only higher costs, less care, and a reduction in service to the

public. The Federal Government is nationalising health, and the State Government is supporting the Federal Government.

The Commonwealth Government has indicated, as a result of Medicare, there will be a shift of 10 per cent from the private to the public hospital sector. That could be an underestimate of the real figure. The medical people who have spoken to me indicate that the figure could be more like 15 per cent. That being so, tremendous pressure will be placed on the facilities and staff to accommodate people in need. The member for South Perth has demonstrated already the way in which restrictions have been placed on medical care. When one has loved ones who may need this care, it is of great concern to realise that the Government is callously lacking in consideration for people in need.

At Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital, already 60 patients a month are turned away. These people have to go to other hospitals. The elderly citizens who have not received the geriatric care they need are additional to that 60 patients. A commitment was given by the previous Government that a geriatric facility would be provided. There has been a constant plea for such a facility, but the present Government does not seem to see any real need for one.

My real concern is that the Government is not giving due attention to what health care should be. Obviously these peripheral hospitals play a major part in providing a health service. It was a major commitment of the Government—in fact the member for Armadale, as he is today, made the commitment—that the Government would provide, at Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital, services similar to those at Royal Perth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital. Of course, not only has that not happened, nor is it likely to happen, but also even the day care service provided and paid for by the previous Government was delayed. Delays occurred in the appointment of professional staff, and only in recent times was this very necessary service provided.

Everyone with an interest in that area knows that the local support for the hospital and day care service is tremendous. Clubs such as the Rotary Club have provided a special bus so that the care is as extensive and as efficient as it should be. The casualty service—another promise by the present Government—has been delayed. Also, there is uncertainty about the manning of this service when it is provided.

An announcement was made that there would be a psychogeriatric unit at the hospital, but this promise was retracted, apparently because of a

delay in the provision of the loan funds. I would like to inform members that this psychogeriatric unit is not being provided at the convenience of the Government or to service the local people or the region looked after by Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. It is there as a part of the research that was carried out. This unit will be provided to handle efficiently the need for psychiatric and other services. We do not know now when it will be provided, but it is not a number one priority.

The Government has abandoned the geriatric care which was to be provided at Armadale by the building of a new general ward, which would have provided, say, 40 to 80 beds. This ward would have looked after those people who now have to go to other hospitals in the city. We would be looking after our own elderly people, who need the extensive care which can be provided only by a hospital. Such a service is now beyond the hope of the local people, and again it is a promise which was not kept by the Government. The present Government was quite emphatic about providing these facilities.

It is no wonder that this amendment to the Address-in-Reply was moved when one has regard for the Minister's conduct when he was the Opposition's spokesman on health. Most of us are very proud indeed of the dedication and professionalism of our medical staff.

My own family has needed medical and hospital care on occasions and I could not have wished for greater dedication than that which I observed at first hand. Our present Minister exploited every casualty situation that arose at Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. He told us on every occasion that resident doctors should have been appointed. I hope members of this House realise that the doctors in the Armadale region, for quite a long time, have rostered themselves to provide medical care on call, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This meant that there was available a very experienced service as against the inexperienced service that would be provided by resident doctors. The service was provided without cost to the taxpayer. So the way these medical people were denigrated by the present Minister was very unsatisfactory to me. The doctors resented these attacks which appeared in the local Press and in other places while this Government was in Opposition.

Mr Clarko: The Minister does not have the courtesy even to listen to the debate.

Mr RUSHTON: He is proving to be a failure in this portfolio. I am sure that as time goes by—and especially when the Budget is

introduced—he will be seen to be wanting in his administration.

It was interesting to listen to the Premier defend the performance of the Minister and attempt to prop him up. The Premier made out a very strong case in relation to cost accountability. This Government destroys its own arguments constantly. Here is an instance where doctors have been providing a service in the Armadale region without cost to the taxpayer and that service is to be closed down. In fact, the doctors have been threatened that, if they do not provide the service on a sessional basis, they will not be able to treat their own patients at the hospital. That is disgusting and the Government should be condemned for taking such a stand.

At considerable cost to the taxpayer, we have provided very efficient local hospitals and staffed them with good people, and then, at the whim of the Government, a decree was issued that unless those hospitals were staffed on a sessional basis, the doctors concerned would not be allowed into them to service their own patients.

I just could not believe that any member of the public could accept that as a reasonable point of view. Here we have the Premier and other Government members wooing the private sector—the area which, in the main, generates the employment that we need so much—while at the same time they are hypocritically destroying the very basis on which that private sector operates.

It was interesting to hear the Premier's presentation on this issue. He talked about the opposition leadership being undermined by members on this side of the House. The rumours which are emanating from this House at the moment are amazing.

Mr Bryce: What are the rumours about?

Mr RUSHTON: I am not sure where the Deputy Premier is going, but we are led to believe a by-election will be held in the Cockburn electorate. I do not know where the member is going.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not know that this has any bearing on the amendment before the Chair.

Mr RUSHTON: A little while ago the Premier attacked people on this side of the House for denigrating their leader. He was trying to undermine members on this side of the House and their loyalty to their leader. However, here we have members opposite undermining people who have been loyal to their party for a long time. The member for Welshpool is supposed to be going to the Licensing Court. We do not know where the member for Avon is going.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to co-operate with the Chair.

Mr RUSHTON: I shall certainly always co-operate with you, Sir. It is all very well for the Premier to attempt to undermine the loyalty and credibility of members on his side of the House, but it is not good enough when he does it to members of the Opposition. The member for Victoria Park is going to London.

Mr Clarko: Alaska!

Mr RUSHTON: In conclusion—

Several members interjected.

Mr Wilson: Where are you going?

Mr RUSHTON: Home at the rising of the House.

Mr Davies: He is going mad; I'll tell you that!

Mr RUSHTON: I am glad my comments have drawn the reaction I expected. That shows after yesterday's performance that members opposite are uncertain. They have shown great uncertainty in their administration of the Health portfolio, and the people of this State are greatly concerned about the matter.

People do not know what will happen in relation to Medicare and they are concerned about the way in which the Burke Government is administering the hospital and medical services of the State. The staff and doctors are under threat, and, as a result, patients have a very poor expectation of the health services.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Leader of the Opposition) [3.45 p.m.]: I rise to support briefly the amendment moved by the member for South Perth. That amendment is well justified. It is rather strange that the Premier jumps to support and help the Minister for Health, a Minister who is on the hook which is virtually the same hook as that on which the Premier is wriggling.

It is also strange that the Premier is scaremongering and currying rumours in this House. He has been involved in these sorts of rumours for many months and they are directed mainly at the Opposition. In most cases, they are false rumours.

Mr Wilson: In most cases!

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not know about every case of which the Premier has spoken, but certainly he has been bandying these rumours around and many of the comments which appear in the Press come from that source.

Mr I. F. Taylor: The man alongside you might be giving him information.

Mr O'CONNOR: The man alongside me is all right and he is a very good deputy.

Mr Pearce: He will be leader soon too, I hear.

Mr O'CONNOR: There might be some changes opposite also, but I do not intend to become involved in the sorts of scurrilous rumours which are created over there.

The member for South Perth was justified in the claims he made against the Minister for Health. It is a great pity that the Minister has so quickly adopted the bad habits of the Premier and the Government of quoting figures to mislead the public.

Initially I was prepared to accept such misquoted figures as mismanagement and the bungling of finances. However, it has occurred so frequently that it is obviously done with a purpose, which is to mislead the public.

There is no doubt that the Minister for Health has misled the public. One has only to look at the quotations from his interview with Kim Gordon to see that. One should look also at the answers the Minister for Health gave to questions asked by the member for South Perth. In those answers the Minister claimed \$700 million out of a Budget of \$2 billion was being expended on health. That is just not true.

This trend coincides with the false figures the Premier and other Government members have been quoting recently. One needs only to look at the bungling which has occurred in respect of the Budget and the false figures which have been presented to the House and the public generally in regard to it to realise that what I say is true. The figures vary from day to day. One has only to look at the expected revenue from the increased Government charges which was quoted initially at \$58 million and then, eight or nine days later, after considerable pressure was exerted by the Opposition, the Deputy Premier admitted it would total \$145 million. I have here the quotation the Deputy Premier made in the Press.

However, when the Government states initially that the expected revenue to be gained from increased charges will amount to \$58 million and then admits later it will be \$145 million, that is not financial bungling; school children could not err to that degree and it is kindergarten stuff to indicate eight days later that a typographical error occurred.

If this material were dealt with by the Treasury, I do not believe the mistakes would have happened, because Treasury is more competent than the Government in the way in which it has dealt with these matters in the past.

The Government's figures in respect of cigarette advertising were way out once again. Day after day this sort of thing happens. We see regular errors being made by the Government and it

is clear they are premeditated and designed to mislead the people.

It is time the Government came clean to this Parliament and the people of this State. It is unbecoming for a Government to operate in this way. The Government cannot be trusted and this has been proved, because day after day we see errors being made by it. The Government never apologises for the errors it makes or the misleading statements it issues despite the fact that they occur frequently. Indeed, the apologies would need to be made very frequently if the Government chose to make them.

It is time the Government came clean and stopped misleading the people and the Parliament. The Government should have a look at its figures or get someone else to check them before it issues them, bearing in mind that frequently they are so grossly inaccurate. If the Government does not have anyone to check its figures, if it asks us, we will help it, because we did not make those sorts of errors when we were in Government.

I support the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 19

Mr Blaikie	Mr Laurance
Mr Bradshaw	Mr MacKinnon
Mr Clarko	Mr Mensaros
Mr Court	Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne	Mr Rushton
Mr Crane	Mr Spriggs
Dr Dadour	Mr Tubby
Mr Grayden	Mr Watt
Mr Hassell	Mr Williams
Mr Peter Jones	

(Teller)

Noes 29

Mr Barnett	Mr Hodge
Mr Bateman	Mr Jamieson
Mrs Beggs	Mr McIver
Mr Bertram	Mr Parker
Mr Bridge	Mr Pearce
Mr Bryce	Mr Read
Mrs Buchanan	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Brian Burke	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Terry Burke	Mr A. D. Taylor
Mr Burkett	Mr I. F. Taylor
Mr Carr	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mrs Watkins
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill
Mrs Henderson	

(Teller)

Amendment thus negated.

Motion

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: TENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR BRIDGE (Kimberley) [4.33 p.m.]: It seems a long time since we started our session this year. However, I have taken a reasonable amount of interest—not always a definite interest—in the proceedings of the Chamber. I have been very keen to have my chance to stand here and take part in the Address-in-Reply debate. I say this because I am convinced the State is in pretty good shape at the moment. It is in good hands and things are going fairly well for the people of the State.

An abundance of criticism has been levelled at the Government by members opposite, and I suppose this was to be expected. A big percentage of what they have had to say has been nothing short of political jargon, the definition of which is "unintelligent comment". Because we on this side have had to listen to all that, it is only right that one of us should rise and express optimism and enthusiasm about things that are happening in the State.

Pastoralists in the Kimberley have been receiving good prices this year, and in general they are happy. Down here people have had an abundance of rain and the dams are almost full and overflowing. The farmers are happy. It therefore amazes me to hear so much doom and gloom from members opposite; I cannot see how this continuous flow of doom can be justified. As I have said, there has been a continuous flow of unmeaningful debate from members opposite, so I intend to touch on some of the more productive areas of interest.

A lot of credit must go to the Government for the initiatives it has taken in areas that are important and vital to the State. Not all these initiatives have been politically palatable; nonetheless, they were taken in the interests of the people. The Government deserves credit for this.

A great deal of criticism has been levelled at the Government because of its actions in temporarily reducing the salaries of some public servants. I have been amazed at the extent of the criticism. It is all very well to say that these people have been disadvantaged and victimised, but people should consider the position from which these public servants start, the wage structure they have. They are not badly off and are quite capable of taking a little imposition such as that which has been placed on them. Even from the very first, most of them start in the work force on a wage structure that is well beyond the wage

structure available to the average worker for many years. Most of these people have never seen the day when they have had to worry about receiving just a few dollars a week as income. They receive thousands of dollars in income even before they get to the top positions. I have been surprised indeed by this great hullabaloo.

Mr Rushton: Because of the discrimination.

Mr BRIDGE: Because of the very structure of their incomes, these people are able to take this sort of reduction.

Mr Laurance: You should talk to them, because no matter what their income might be, they are highly committed. In fact, a police superintendent in your area, a highly-paid and a highly-respected person in your area, had just committed himself to a retirement house in the city. He was committed right up to his last dollar. Yet the people below him, even though they would receive overtime to bring them up to his level, would not have their salaries cut.

Mr BRIDGE: The member is suggesting that he has been badly done by.

Mr Laurance: That is what he said when he wrote to me.

Mr BRIDGE: I am certainly not saying that some people have not written to the member, to me, or to other people, but these people start off in a position which most people in the work force never reach.

Mr Laurance: I will send him a copy of your speech.

Mr BRIDGE: The member can send him 1 000 copies. I am quite prepared to say this to his face and to anyone else's face.

Mr Rushton: Who creates the system?

Mr BRIDGE: The criticism of the Government's action has been quite unfair.

A lot of criticism was also made of the Government's taxing measure on tobacco products. Here again members opposite said continually that we were intruding upon the rights of people. We are not doing that. No-one is required or compelled to smoke. We cannot be taking away the freedoms of people when they are not compelled to smoke. I could not understand the argument that, because we imposed this tax on tobacco, we were getting at the people. People do not have to smoke. Cigarettes and tobacco are there and available to anyone. Somewhere along the line in various areas of society we all have to face this sort of impost.

In the main, I think the criticism has been unfair. The salary reduction might place some people in hardship, and this could be identified only by an examination of individual cases. The

superintendent at Broome might be a classic example. However, considering the wage structure involved and considering that the economy required this sort of decision to be made, I cannot see anything extremely bad about it.

Mr Clarko: There is, because of the way it was done. The Government should have put it to a tribunal on some basis and argued that the cut should have been made. However, it did not do that; it made the cut in an arbitrary fashion.

Mr Laurance: People such as school principals have written to say that many people on their staffs will not receive a cut in salary even though they have wives who are also working. These people have written to say that although their own wives are not working they are still to be penalised by the 10 per cent reduction when junior members of the staff have wives working and their double incomes will not be touched.

Mr BRIDGE: These people are receiving a high salary, though.

Mr Laurance: Many of these people are totally committed.

Mr BRIDGE: Another area of unfair criticism that has been made in debate concerns land rights, and I will talk about land rights in greater depth later because I think it is necessary that we canvass this issue in the interests of the people of the State. As I travel around the State, I find that, generally, things are going along pretty well. I probably travel around this State more than does any other member of Parliament; I cannot be sure and I cannot speak with total authority, but I believe I do travel around more than do most members. I talk with members of local government, local members of various communities, and representatives of various organisations. I believe there is a clear indication that the public of this State, in the main, are quite satisfied with what is going on. It is important that we understand this. This is so, even though we have been in Government for only six months.

The Minister for Education has visited my electorate on a regular basis since he has been the Minister, and he has held some very good discussions with the people in the area and he has made some very good decisions as a result. Education directly concerns many people because many of them have children who are in the education system. From time to time, the issue arises of the placement of senior high schools, primary schools, and so on.

Only yesterday, I received a letter from a group of people on Koolan Island requesting that the Government consider measures to assist them to enable their children to receive a higher degree of

education without their families being disrupted. This is not to say that we will build a high school on the island, but certainly we are looking at alternatives. The Minister has been very keen to pursue all these matters and I believe he has done a very good job.

The Minister for Health came in for a fair amount of flak in the House today; no doubt the Opposition felt it was justified in making this criticism. The area of health involves matters that I believe need to be looked at. Although enormous amounts of funding have been received from the Federal Government over the years, funding provided with good intentions, the fact is that, in many areas of health delivery to the public, the services fall short of what is required. To the credit of the present State Minister for Health, I indicate that he has canvassed this matter. I know this because I have approached him on a number of occasions and a response has been forthcoming.

As for tourism, many areas in this State offer enormous potential, and the Government is looking at the most effective ways of promoting this industry. I am sure that the Kimberley and the Pilbara, which are in my electorate, will come in for their fair share of consideration by the Government when considering the tourist industry. This is something I am very keen about, because I have always been aware of the potential in the Kimberley. Areas such as Lake Argyle, Kununurra, and places close to Derby are outstanding attractions in this State. I have now become more involved with the Pilbara and it has become clearly evident to me that great tourism potential exists in this area as well; places such as Wittenoom gorge are a good example. Enormous potential exists there. The Government currently is looking at ways of promoting the benefits of that industry so that they flow throughout the State.

Matters relating to local government have been brought to the Minister by way of the various authorities in the State, and measures are being prepared which are designed to bring about structural changes for the better. So the public are not being neglected in these areas of Government responsibility.

I want to deal now with two areas and comment in some detail. I refer first to the pastoral industry. In the four years I have been in the Parliament, I have put constantly to this Chamber my view that something positive should be done about this industry. I can never accept the policy laid down by the previous Government—one which we need to work on electorally to change—of amalgamation of pastoral leases. Vast areas of land are to be found in the north-west

and other parts of the State, yet the policy calls for the removal of the smaller type family properties and their amalgamation with bigger properties to make them even larger. How one can make sense out of that has me beaten.

I hope as I contribute towards the development of this State in my time in Parliament, that that policy will be changed. The present Government would be doing a lot for the pastoral industry if it were prepared to examine that policy and see the need for its total abandonment. We need to adopt the alternatives I have been proposing since 1975. We would offer families who have some aspirations and hopes of making a go in the pastoral sector the opportunity to bring that about.

At present that is not possible because large properties already are, in the main, held by outside interests, and they are so large in their own right that local people are not able to buy or acquire an interest in them. That policy is so negative, and yet members of the previous Government argued against me vigorously, and said it was in the best interests of the industry. I hope the Minister recognises that the policy is wrong and that it needs to be looked at by people who have an understanding and appreciation of the pastoral industry. Only then will we get a real perception of what it is about.

It offers the Kimberley an industry that is still the most reliable. We can talk about other industries that have potential and that will be developed as the years unfold, but if we look at the Kimberley we see one industry that has stood the test of time and fluctuations in prices—the pastoral industry. It offers the type of development and population structure that the area needs.

We must look at the pastoral industry and at agriculture in areas such as Kimberley if ever we are to develop a situation whereby these areas will have greater populations. We will not do that if we do not take the measures I have outlined.

Agriculture has a place in the Kimberley, although areas of uncertainty exist. Anyone who has an understanding of agriculture and the utilisation of land would know that the area from Camballin to Fitzroy Crossing shapes up potentially as some of the best land in the State. The climate is ideal, there is an abundance of water, and an abundance of soil that is capable of being developed in such a way as to generate enormous population growth. With proper planning and the right sort of people, the area from Broome to One Arm Point offers enormous potential. I am confident that, with the support of this Government, the kind of vision and horizon I have outlined will come about. It is well within the scope of reason-

able planning and can be achieved for the people of the north and of the State.

It is not on to say that vast areas of land should remain vast and that pastoral holdings should become even bigger. I hope the Minister will look seriously at the change I have suggested.

We can feel confident that, despite criticisms levelled by the Opposition, things are going pretty well for the people of Western Australia. They see initiatives being implemented, and an air of confidence is evident particularly in Government agencies with which I come in contact. That is very important, and it was not that evident when I travelled around in previous years. They see that the sorts of policies we propose are necessary and that areas of reform of varying degrees must be attended to. Consideration is being given to major changes where necessary, as it is also being given to matters where slight structural changes are required. We do not need to make major changes in everything we look at; we should look at it on the basis of "horses for courses". I am optimistic that our policies will be carried out and I look forward with much enthusiasm to representing the northern parts of the State.

The most important issue that the people of the State will be looking at collectively—certainly this year, and into next year—is the move towards the ultimate introduction of land rights.

Dr Dadour: Don't forget my promise.

Mr BRIDGE: I am saddened to see the wrongful interpretation applied to the land rights issue by the Opposition. Surely members who sat down and gave a little thought and time to this matter would realise it is a process of which we must all be a part. It cannot be stopped.

I do not know whether members recall what I said here four years ago to the effect that some things cannot be avoided. Any person who has knocked around and has had something to do with people and events around us will recognise that from time to time certain trends and movements develop, whether or not one likes them. The best thing to do is to be part of that process. Then one can structure it in such a way that when it arrives it does not contain too many bad features. If one sits back and says that it should not come, that it is unrealistic to assume it will come, and that it is the work of a few people, the end result will be that the input of a few people will prevail, and that does not necessarily mean the end product will equate with the interests of all people. I cannot understand the Opposition's not making an input into the Seaman inquiry. I would have thought it was so important to do that.

Mr Court: Do you think the terms of reference of the inquiry are wide enough?

Mr BRIDGE: They are plenty wide enough. In its submission, the Opposition could have elaborated on the aspects which it felt were important. The terms of reference do not necessarily restrict one from developing an argument. Even if the Opposition took the view that the terms of reference were restrictive, there was nothing to stop it from putting in a submission and elaborating to canvass areas that it wanted to cover. That is what normally happens with these sorts of things. That would have given the Opposition the opportunity of commenting—adversely, or in a hostile or supportive way. At least the Opposition would have expressed a point of view.

Mr Court: The Liberal Party has made its policy very clear. We could not have expressed that policy under the terms of reference of the inquiry.

Mr BRIDGE: That is such a negative approach. The Liberal Party has let down the people it purports to support. If it does not say anything, what credibility can it have?

Mr Court: You must agree there is more to Aboriginal affairs than your land rights inquiry. Aren't you neglecting some more real issues?

Mr BRIDGE: Such as?

Mr Court: The problems of communities such as the one at Fitzroy Crossing and the like.

Mr BRIDGE: That is a welfare and social situation which is not part of the inquiry.

Mr Court: That is an area on which you should be concentrating.

Mr BRIDGE: That is not part of this inquiry which is looking at land tenure for Aboriginal people. The inquiry is not looking at the social needs of the Aboriginal people at Fitzroy Crossing; that is, their housing or water supply requirements.

Mr Court: Aren't you ignoring those areas?

Mr BRIDGE: No.

Mr Court: We do not hear anything about them.

Mr BRIDGE: The member has travelled through the area in the last few months.

Mr Court: Not in the last few months.

Mr BRIDGE: He will have noted the improvements in those areas.

Mr Court: Over the last few years some improvements have been made, but problems still exist—quite serious problems.

Mr BRIDGE: That is right, but we are looking at an important issue in relation to which we will

be framing legislation. It deals with land tenure for Aboriginal people, as distinct from the housing requirements of the people of Fitzroy Crossing.

The interesting thing is that despite the fact that the Liberal Party has not put in a submission to the inquiry, some people whom I would have thought leaned towards that party politically have gone in quickly with submissions. The list of people who have quickly and freely put forward documented submissions is interesting. The member is on very touchy ground in purporting to represent the broader point of view of that group of people.

It so happens that it is not true. A large percentage of the people may perhaps have the same feelings about land rights and they may well support the view of the Liberal Party. What they are saying is, "We acknowledge it is an important issue and we are doing something about it". That is commendable. That is what has to happen. We as a group of people in our society have to work for one thing; we must come up at the end with a workable formula. We have to achieve parameters within the structure of the legislation to make it workable. The things the legislation is intended to achieve are achievable, and the people who have an interest in other than what the legislation is expected to correct and focus its activities towards will not necessarily be displeased with the result.

Mr Court: Could I ask you whether you have been through the Northern Territory in the last couple of months?

Mr BRIDGE: Not in the last couple of months.

Mr Court: You are aware of the problems that have arisen there, say, in the last year—quite serious problems.

Mr BRIDGE: It is interesting that the member should say that. I had the opportunity to speak to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory when I was in Melbourne about six weeks ago. We spoke about the terms of the inquiry that had been set up here, and I asked whether he would be prepared to reveal to me the most dangerous areas that had occurred in relation to the Northern Territory land rights question. I was not asking him about the better features of the legislation, but the things which were of most concern. He said that there were very few areas of major concern. He told us of a couple of points that perhaps the Western Australian Government should look at in respect of its structure, but other than that, his view was that the land rights legislation was working pretty well.

I would like to know the view of some members of this House about some of the documentaries

which have been shown recently on television. One recent show gave an account of the reaction of the people of the Northern Territory to the land rights in the Territory. European people were interviewed and they said that they were not greatly concerned. So I believe the Opposition in Western Australia has got totally out of step with reality. There is not a lot of land involved. There are no mass areas of takeovers—an idea that has been put forward from time to time. It is just not on that such a thing would happen in Western Australia. It cannot happen, and it should not happen. It is as simple as that. Nobody expects it to happen.

Why should an organisation such as the Opposition go around saying that we are likely to face major mass areas of takeover, and that that is the intention of the Aborigines? Such statements can have only harmful effects as they create areas of hostility unnecessarily. These statements create fear in people's minds, and that is not what we are on about.

I would like to give an example of the way in which Aboriginal people see this issue. An old full-blooded Aboriginal came to me in Halls Creek the other day and said, "You know what the Government is doing is a good thing. The people might reckon that I am a myall blackfellow, but I know the difference between right and wrong". Let us hope that all the people who look at the needs of the Aborigines recognise that. All we want the Parliament to consider is right from wrong—nothing beyond that. That is what the Aboriginal people of this State are wanting and, if we ultimately come up with a workable formula, that is what we hope the legislation will provide. What is wrong with that? Where is the threat or the danger in that to the other interests of our society which we hear about from time to time? We see bold statements in the Press about the terrible dangers to which the European people are likely to be subjected.

Mr Hassell: No, all people are subjected to dangers from those claims for land rights. They are discriminatory, and they will create division in the community just as they have done in the Northern Territory and in other places.

Mr BRIDGE: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had been here five minutes ago—

Mr Hassell: I have been listening very carefully; that is why I came to the Chamber.

Mr BRIDGE: Anyone who suggests that it is creating hostility in the Northern Territory—

Mr Hassell: Within communities.

Mr Clarko: And in Darwin.

Mr BRIDGE: —is misleading this place.

Mr Hassell: You are wrong, but even if you were not, the fact of the matter is you are seeking to divide Australia into black and white which I thought was something people had been trying to break down.

Mr BRIDGE: How does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have the gall, with respect, to put that proposition to this Parliament? Quite clearly, we need to have special regard for the social factors that surround some of these communities. All we are saying is, because of these special factors, measures must be implemented by way of legislation in terms of land rights. How can the deputy leader say that is dividing people?

Mr Hassell: We are not opposed to meeting people's special needs, but we are opposed to creating special rights on the basis of race. There is a whole world of difference, and the Seaman inquiry is a farce because it has already determined the outcome in the terms of reference.

Mr BRIDGE: That is not true.

Mr Hassell: It has—it gives a clear direction.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kimberley has the floor and he is the person I will hear.

Mr BRIDGE: I made the point a little while ago that the terms of reference are not restricted. They are restricted only to those not interested in using them.

Mr Hassell: That is not right.

Mr BRIDGE: When Opposition members have nothing constructive to say, this is the way they go about it.

Mr Hassell: We did plenty of constructive things in Government, both State and federally.

Mr BRIDGE: Just in the last few days the Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal affairs spoke in the other Chamber of this Parliament. I am not sure whether you had the opportunity to hear those comments, Mr Speaker, but I did have that opportunity. This is the spokesman apparently representing Aboriginal interests in this State on behalf of the Opposition. This person gave the Aborigines and the people who supported them one decent kick. The radio people, the "Nationwide" programme, the churches, and every person who has as much as uttered a word in support of the Aborigines copped a caning in that House.

Mr Hassell: The church is rapidly becoming a political party in this country.

Mr BRIDGE: I would have thought anyone who represented a group in our society—an elite

or a disadvantaged group—would be there to really represent the group's interests. Such a person should not get stuck into the group he is representing. He should advance its position, but the Opposition is not prepared to advance the position of the Aborigines. It did not take on that responsibility. If I were the spokesman on transport, I would not get stuck into the industry. If I were the spokesman on Aboriginal affairs, I would not give them one decent kick, as happened the other day. It was nothing short of an absolute disgrace.

Mr Hassell: He was kicking the Government of the day which is seeking to divide the State on racial grounds.

Mr Davies: I think the bias of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is coming through.

Several members interjected.

Mr Hassell: We will pay for land rights in this country for generations. What has been done in the Northern Territory has divided the nation.

Mr BRIDGE: One of the reasons this has become such an issue is that it was completely and utterly neglected by the Opposition over the period of time it was in Government—and that goes back many years.

Mr Hassell: It should not be an issue.

Mr BRIDGE: Had the Opposition been prepared to address itself to this problem, even partially, we would not be in the mess we are in today. But no, the then Government members stood back. The Aborigines will get land rights in this State. Thank goodness we have the courage at least to face up to this issue.

Mr Hassell: When you have apartheid, you will complain about that because that is what you are asking for.

Mr BRIDGE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is like a man who wants to solve an argument by turning his back on it.

Mr Hassell: That is not so.

Mr BRIDGE: That is what the Liberal Government did.

Mr Hassell: You go through the positive policies in the things that happened.

Mr BRIDGE: That is why we have reached this situation today. If the Liberal Party had been as concerned in 1977 when this issue started to gather momentum as it is today in 1983, we would be a lot better off. The Opposition employed a negative attitude over the years and it allowed the problems to develop. Over that period of time, some reasonable propositions which would have solved many of the problems were put to the then Government. Other problems would

have been eased, and we would not have the degree of hostility which has now intruded into the whole process. What did the previous Government do?

Mr O'Connor: You are wrong. I did quite a lot in the short time I was there as Premier, and you know it.

Mr BRIDGE: I am aware that the Leader of the Opposition faced some of the problems, but there are other issues, and he knows it.

Mr Hassell: Some people are never satisfied despite all that has been done. The vast amount done by the Commonwealth and successive Governments is never acknowledged. It's a claim for land rights today, the Makarata tomorrow, and something else the day after because the dogooders in the community—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Hassell:—think there is no end to what can be claimed for one racial group.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Hassell: If you were prepared to work together—

Mr BRIDGE: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is fearful of the emergence of the dogooders, the way he is going he is playing right into their hands. He is playing them at their own game. If he thinks this is being responsible in the areas in which he is claiming to represent a large group of the Western Australian society, he is failing.

Mr Hassell: The needs of the Aboriginal people will not be solved by land rights. That is what we are saying.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Hassell: We acknowledge the needs and the problems and we work on those problems. They will not be solved by land rights.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have called the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order on a number of occasions. The person making the speech in this Chamber is the member for Kimberley.

Mr Hassell: Sorry.

Mr BRIDGE: I would like to finish by saying that it is commendable of the Government to take this very bold step. I am confident that in the course of the next year or two we will give all people in Western Australia—and I really mean all people—an opportunity to have a say and to take part in framing the legislation. At the end, all those who supported it will be very happy that they did because what will be introduced into this State is not what the Opposition suggests will be introduced, but rather a situation where regard

has been given to those areas that need attention. In other words, if it can be shown clearly that special attention needs to be given to a group, that attention will be given. In areas where it is not necessary, the whole process will remain as it is now. Such a system will give us a broader area of input.

Mr Seaman will be able to collate all the information he gathers and I am sure we will find that this House will introduce and pass legislation to bring about a situation in this State where the land aspirations and interests of the Aboriginal people will be accommodated. The Aboriginal people will not have a mass area of takeover as has been suggested by a few people.

Mr Hassell: Well, that is what happened in the Northern Territory.

Mr BRIDGE: It is not what happened in the Northern Territory. In the Territory the land rights legislation has been applied to a select area of land.

Mr MacKinnon: Yes, about 48 per cent of the Territory.

Mr BRIDGE: No, that is not true at all. Members know that as well as I do and, if they read the Act as it applies in the Northern Territory, they will see it is restricted to certain types of land there.

Legislation will be passed in this House which will achieve those results for the people concerned. The wide-ranging area of input will ensure all areas of interest in the community are considered, despite the fact that the Liberal Party has decided not to contribute anything to the inquiry. The already established interests will be recognised and protected where necessary and the whole process of equality and the bringing together of different values will be accommodated. As a result, we shall work as we ought to; that is, happily side by side. That is not always the case at the moment because economically—this is an important factor—many Aboriginal people do not have adequate opportunities. That is the case not because of those people's shortcomings, but as a result of the structure of our society. I would have thought these people were making a reasonable request of us as legislators in this State.

It will be most rewarding for those of us who have promoted and supported this process to see, as the end result, that sort of thing happening in this State. I congratulate the Government on its initiative. Not only do I speak on behalf of Aboriginal people, but also I represent a large percentage of European people who want to see this happen because they know it is fair and proper. I

hope that in 18 months or two years' when this legislation is passed through the Parliament, we shall all share in a very happy situation and the interests of the people involved will be met and great benefits will flow from this move.

That is my summary of the matters I see as being important. The people of Western Australia are generally very supportive of the measures put forward by this Government. They see the changes which are necessary and the attempts we are making to achieve a more satisfactory situation. I can assure members that, as the member who represents a very big, complex, and difficult electorate, I look to my task with great enthusiasm, because I can see the opportunity to do the things which are very important—even if some are little things—and which accommodate the interests of the people in those areas which are important in this State.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr TUBBY (Greenough) [5.18 p.m.]: Firstly, and belatedly, I congratulate you, Sir, on being elected to the very high office of Speaker of the House. I am sure that, in selecting you, your party selected one of its most respected members. I believe the respect in which you are held will stand you in good stead during the exercise of your duties in that office.

Once again belatedly, I extend a welcome and good wishes for the future to new members in this place. It was very nice to hear the compliments which have been paid to the staff in respect of the way in which they receive new members into this place. It takes me back to the time when I was elected to this place in 1975. It was at the tail end of a long session, during those traumatic days in the history of Australia which led to a Prime Minister being sacked, which happened within a few days of my entering this place. I came straight from a farm into the turmoil of the House and it was quite an experience. After my first sitting day, I arrived home in the morning at the time I would normally be rising to start a day's work on the farm. Believe me, all in all, it was quite an experience and I wondered what I had let myself in for!

During this debate, I shall refer to a number of matters of concern in my electorate. Firstly, I turn to the cost-price squeeze and its effect on the farming industry. This is a very serious situation and farmers come to me continually asking, "Where are we heading?" Rural industries are being greatly affected by the cost-price squeeze today. This year, we have had a slight reprieve as a result of a very good season, but generally, over a number of years, we have had a bad run

throughout this State, and the debt which has been built up over that period is of great concern to the rural community.

Efficiency has been stretched to the limit and labour costs have been slashed. Indeed, in many cases, labour has been unfortunately eliminated completely, because farmers can no longer afford to employ people.

Looking back over the years, one sees rural industries were a great source of labour. Many young people were able to make a good start in life and consolidate their futures through working on farms where they received a reasonable wage, their keep, and a bonus at the end of the year. A number of the young fellows who started off with nothing have moved into a farming career and many of them have gone into business. Unfortunately, because of the cost of labour—I include here the hidden costs of labour also—the opportunity that young people had previously to make a very good start in life by working on farms has more or less disappeared.

The problems caused by the very lean seasons which have been experienced for some years have been added to by the very high debt structure and interest charges on the money borrowed. Those loans have been necessary to enable people to carry on and this matter is of great concern.

Agricultural products are being priced out of world markets. As a result of the cost of production and union activities in this State, agricultural products, as well as many other commodities, are being priced out of world markets and this State is being looked on as an unreliable supplier.

We are looking forward to an excellent season this year and a tremendous amount of grain will be produced. However, it is important that costs be kept to a minimum and this brings me to the area of union involvement. It is very important that rural products reach overseas markets with a minimum labour cost and an absence of union involvement.

The export of live sheep is very important to this State. The export of heavy wethers to the Middle East is very lucrative for the shipping industry. Without that export market the number of sheep produced in Western Australia would be reduced considerably. Unionists say sheep should not be exported live, but rather should be sent overseas in carcase form. This is a lot of nonsense. The unions say they are being deprived of work because sheep are not slaughtered in Western Australia before they are exported. In fact, were it not for this outlet, the sheep flock in Western Australia would be reduced considerably. The ex-

port of live sheep is very profitable from the farmers' point of view, although only a small percentage of the sheep qualify for that market. The remainder of the sheep are used to produce wool and meat for Western Australians.

It should be borne in mind also that while the wethers are growing to maturity—normally a full-mouthed wether or a mature age wether is exported—they are producing wool. This creates employment throughout the State. Were the unions to get their way and this valuable outlet for live sheep were to be terminated, it would have a devastating effect on the sheep numbers throughout Western Australia.

The wide comb issue is also of concern to the wool industry. This is a ridiculous situation also. The arbitration court issued a ruling to the effect that wide combs could be used, subject to agreement between the shearers and the woolgrower. That is a very reasonable proposition, because the use of the wide comb is determined very largely by the type, age, and condition of the sheep.

The nonsense in which the unions are indulging and the very nasty situation which was created in the Eastern States earlier this year is completely unnecessary. I cannot see how it can be said that, as a result of the use of wide combs, the cost of shearing is reduced. Wool growers are not concerned about the fact that shearers can shear more sheep in a day. So far as the growers are concerned, the quicker the sheep are shorn to a satisfactory standard, the better it is for the grower as well as the sheep which are out of the shed and the quicker the wool is processed.

The woolgrowers are not likely to see any change in the cost of shearing simply because a shearers shears a few more sheep a day because he is using a wide comb.

Unions are also endeavouring to gain control in the bulk handling of grain. The following article appeared in *The West Australian* today under the heading, "CBH Hit By More Strife"—

INDUSTRIAL action is again harassing Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited at the start of a new season.

As CBH gears up for a big season, workers at Kwinana—members of the Waterside Workers' Federation—have begun rolling strikes and other guerilla tactics.

The general manager of CBH, Mr E. J. U. Green, said that the WWF members were dissatisfied that the company would not agree to several award claims.

Mr MacKinnon: Does it say anything about action that this Government has taken to help the situation.

Mr TUBBY: No, it has done nothing. In a few moments, on compassionate grounds, I shall ask that the Government look at the actions which are affecting people in the farming community on a different basis from the way in which it looks at the actions which are affecting big companies. To continue—

In the company's view these were in breach of the wages pause, he said.

The WA secretary of the WWF, Mr Ron Inkster, said that there had been disputes with CBH over four years.

The federation recognised that negotiating on wages would be in breach of the wages pause, but it wanted to negotiate on 32 other awards claims to improve working conditions.

Believe me, the conditions they are chasing and the log of claims they have submitted are absolutely ridiculous. These actions will add greatly to the cost of grain handling.

Mr Court: Doesn't the Deputy Prime Minister want us to stop growing grain?

Mr TUBBY: That was a ridiculous suggestion. The Deputy Prime Minister reckoned we could do without the rural producers and import all our grain. What a ridiculous position!

There is no doubt the rural industries are the backbone of this State and production per unit is incredible when compared with that of the remainder of the community. Rural industries produce the very basics that the community needs; that is, food and fibre.

Strikes and bans have a devastating effect on farmers and their families. They affect them in a very personal way. Farming families are very hard-working units. In most cases, they work double the hours that unionists work and they do not receive weekly pay packets and all the other perks unionists get. I spent over 30 years as a farmer and started off in a very difficult way. I worked the hours that farmers work and, frequently, I worked 18 to 20 hours a day, so I know all about it.

A farmer is not paid every week, and many farmers are paid only every year, particularly those in the grain industry. Anything that will interfere with or disrupt the opportunity for a farmer to receive his revenue for the 12 months is deeply felt by him. It is absolutely criminal that this strike action has occurred and will affect farming families personally.

Farmers are anxious to get rid of their grain in order to meet their financial commitments and hopefully reduce their overheads. They have certain seasons when work must be done and produce must reach the markets, otherwise their return is considerably reduced, and their loss can never be made up. Their margin is just not big enough to allow for strikes.

This Government and the Federal Government are well known for their lack of consideration for rural industries and country people. Those Governments are definitely on the side of consumer wealth and give little consideration to creation. When the demand is greater than the supply or the consumer is greater than the creator, we head for big trouble.

A simple example in farmers' terms is that if a farmer puts into a paddock stock of greater numbers than the stocking capacity of the paddock, the pasture is consumed at a great rate. I see the balance of the economy in a similar way.

When a Government is being criticised there are many areas of concern, and one raised its head today, which showed that this Government cannot be trusted.

The Leader of the Opposition today asked the Deputy Premier this question—

Is he aware that any of the staff or facilities of his office or department, or the Premier's office or department have been used to assist him to campaign for the ALP candidate in the Mundaring election?

The Deputy Premier replied—

That has certainly not happened to my knowledge.

Yet on 12 September 1983 the Deputy Premier wrote on paper from his office to the electors of Mundaring. The letter is signed "Mal Bryce, Deputy Premier and Minister for Economic Development and Technology". In view of this letter and the answer he gave today, it is clear he seriously misled this House. The letter states—

Dear Electors,

When Gavan Troy first stood as your representative in Parliament he, like other ALP Candidates, made a commitment to the business community.

Action was promised in four key areas:

- Council rates;
- Shopping Centre Leases, rents etc.;
- Water rates;
- A Small Business Development Corporation.

I write to let you know of the advances made in these areas since that date, and of the substantial impact made on your behalf by Gavan Troy.

For a number of years Gavan had been Chairman of Mundaring's "Differential Rating Committee", and the Minister for Local Government, Jeff Carr, has appointed him Chairman of a Working Party to work on the development of alternative rating systems for your district. It is hoped that a completely new and more equitable system can be in operation next year.

I have established an Inquiry, headed by leading Perth Barrister, Nigel Clarke, into all aspects of Commercial Tenancy Agreements, which covers all matters, including leases, the clauses contained in them, and rents. The Inquiry will make recommendations to me on any action necessary in this important area. You are welcome to make a submission—further details are available from Mr P. L. T. Davies, Executive Officer, Inquiry into Commercial Tenancy Agreements, 7th Floor, Wapet House, 12 St. George's 3253460

My colleague, the Minister for Water Resources, Arthur Tonkin, has established an Inquiry into non-residential water rating systems.

The Bill to establish the Small Business Development Corporation has been drafted and is being circulated widely amongst Small Business groups for comment. This Bill, details of which are attached, will be presented to Parliament in this Session.

I need to have Gavan Troy's support, expertise and assistance on these matters. His studies in Business Management and his experience in both management and Local Government are important.

There is one final and very important point that I believe needs to be made about this by-election. Neither the Federal Labor Government nor the State Labor Government will be changed because of its result. As a person involved in business, the choice is either to have a voice from your area in the Government ... or not.

On September 20 (Tuesday), Gavan Troy and I will be hosting a breakfast for members of the business community at the John Forrest Tavern in the National Park at 7.30 a.m.

This letter serves not only to keep you up to date with what is happening, but also as a

personal invitation to you to attend this special breakfast meeting.

A charge of \$10 will be made to cover costs.

Please telephone 325 8152 (Maxine Henderson) by 10 a.m. Monday, September 19 to reserve your place at this meeting (after hours 322 6258 message only).

[Interruption from the Gallery.]

Mr MacKinnon: Is that the latest reporter for the *Daily News*?

Mr TUBBY: The letter was typed on Government stationery. The Deputy Premier blatantly misled this House in answer to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Blaikie: This calls for a resignation.

Mr TUBBY: I will give further indications of the concern regarding the activities of this Government. Rural industries are concerned about the Government we have had since the Labor Party came to power. In a rural community it is easy to determine whether a Government is good, because a farmer is a financier, a manager, and a worker—all rolled into one. These people are tuned into what is going on.

Mr Pearce: How did the farmers stand on the 10 per cent wage cut? What was the attitude of the rural community on that issue?

Mr TUBBY: Farmers are more concerned about matters that directly affect them, and have not made any comment about the wages pause.

Mr Pearce: A lot of farmers have told me that they think it is good stuff.

Mr TUBBY: They are probably hobby farmers who work on the terrace.

Mr Pearce: It is the hobby farmers who have had their wages cut.

Mr TUBBY: Farmers have said that I deserve the income I receive in this job. I have been told by farmers that they would not do my job for anything because of the area I have to cover.

Mr Jamieson: Yours is a more difficult one than Murchison-Eyre, which you are always talking about.

Mr TUBBY: Farmers are asking when they will see real government as promised prior to the election by the Labor Party. All I have seen are gimmicks and cover-ups of inadequacies as a result of the Government's lack of experience. The farmers are concerned about advisers who have been appointed to the staff of the Premier and Ministers. Despite the advice they receive, they are completely unbalanced. Farmers have deep anxiety over the action of unions, which greatly

affects their livelihoods. Farmers are concerned about this Government and that it appears to be losing to the other side of the community. The type of legislation that has been and will be introduced into this place indicates that this Government is not capable of governing as well as was the previous Government. It has given priority to electoral reforms that it hopes will pass, and will put it in a favourable position to be returned. Certainly this Government will not be returned on good performance because it has already demonstrated where its priorities lie. The appointment of advisers and the type of legislation already introduced indicate that this Government is not good.

Country areas are concerned that the recreation grants made available by the previous Government, grants which worked very well in country areas, will not be continued at the same level. The grants that were made available certainly brought about an upgrading of sporting facilities for country communities. These facilities were greatly appreciated because they enabled country people to compete on an equal basis with visiting sporting teams from the metropolitan area. I hope this Government will see the need to continue those grants because not all country towns have the proper facilities, and towns which do not have them now are at a considerable disadvantage when competing with other areas, and are not able to participate in games with metropolitan teams.

I urge the Government to give serious consideration to the continuation of these grants, because through that avenue the Government can be responsible for the upgrading of many country community facilities.

The member for Geraldton does not agree with me very often, but I think he would agree that the funds made available for the Queens Park Theatre in Geraldton enabled Geraldton to obtain a tremendous asset, which benefited not only Geraldton, but also that local region and the State as a whole. Western Australia can be thoroughly proud of such a venue. Performers under excellent conditions can be seen at a regional centre.

When Rolf Harris was in Geraldton he said after his performance that the theatre was the best venue in which he had performed. From an experienced performer that was an excellent compliment about the facilities provided with the assistance of that grant.

I move now to discuss my favourite place, the place I always mention in my speeches in this House. I refer to the tourist resort of Kalbarri. A lot of private enterprise development is taking

place in this town at present and it is becoming a more widely recognised holiday resort throughout Australia. I believe its reputation, and the publicity it has received are well deserved.

The Government can play a part in the development of Kalbarri by assisting the local shire council in its moves to upgrade the road leading south from Kalbarri to Port Gregory. The first section of that road goes through the national park.

Mr Tonkin: You opened fantasy land in Kalbarri, didn't you?

Mr TUBBY: No, I opened the mining section of fantasy land.

Mr Tonkin: I enjoyed going through it, and I noted your esteemed name.

Mr TUBBY: I am very glad the Minister enjoyed his trip there. If he has a good look around the town of Kalbarri, he will find my name on quite a number of buildings that have been opened there, and I am very proud of that fact.

Mr Pearce: Is that because you could not get Ministers up there to open the buildings?

Mr TUBBY: No; it is because the town of Kalbarri acknowledges and appreciates my support of and involvement in the area.

Mr Bertram: Are any fish being caught there at the moment?

Mr TUBBY: Some beautiful fish are being caught, and plenty of them!

The Main Roads Department has been involved in the planning and resurveying of this road, as has the National Parks Authority and the local shire council. At present, considerable conflict exists as to the route this road should take. Naturally, the National Parks Authority wants the road to go through the national park by the shortest and most direct route possible, with complete disregard for the type of road making material available along the route and for the tourist aspects of the road. This has led to a deadlock situation because the Northampton Shire Council wants to develop this road so it can promote the very beautiful gorges and swimming and fishing spots along the coast. This can be achieved by the road's being sited for two-thirds of its length along the route followed by the present upgraded track, because for the whole distance travellers would be able to see the ocean and view the beautiful gorges. Very defined tracks have been made from the main track, leading to these beautiful spots.

Mr Davies: I agree there is a lot in what you say. However, will the shire council guarantee to maintain the dunes in the area, and keep them from ecological damage?

Mr TUBBY: I am sure it would do that.

Mr Davies: Good; that is what I want—someone to pay.

Mr TUBBY: I am sure the Minister would appreciate the role played by the Northampton Shire Council, its pride in the area, and its control of these beach areas by the well defined outlooks along this route.

Mr Davies: We usually find they put in a road and then want all sorts of extras. If we can get some undertaking regarding the maintainance of the dunes, waterways, bays, and the like, we will be happy to do it.

Mr TUBBY: I am pleased to receive that undertaking from the Minister for the Environment; I had heard he had become involved in this matter.

Mr Davies: I am sorry I have become involved.

Mr TUBBY: I wrote to the Premier and Minister for Tourism hoping that he would get involved in promoting the tourist aspect. When such a road is being constructed, it is important it be routed to its maximum potential, so that travellers not only have a pleasant road surface, but also are able to view beautiful scenery along the way.

It would be a crying shame if the road were sited inland because already there are 40 miles of road of this type going through the national park leading from Great Northern Highway into Kalbarri. If people are to return over the same road on which they travelled into Kalbarri, it could become rather boring for them. It would be a pleasant end to a wonderful day in Kalbarri, if they were able to travel along a direct route southwards, and at the same time could view the beautiful scenery along the way. I hope the Minister for the Environment will take note of my comments and give support to the Northampton Shire Council.

Mr Gordon Hill: It is a great spot, with good fishing.

Mr TUBBY: Yes, I have noticed the member for Helena enjoying himself up there; it is a very pleasant place indeed, which is why a number of people choose to go to Kalbarri to get away from it all. I know that when I feel down and want a needle and a little rejuvenation of my thoughts and vigour I always go to Kalbarri because the people there really think and act differently. If ever there is a place motivated towards and catering for tourists, it is Kalbarri. The people there think and eat tourism and they deserve the suc-

cess they are enjoying in the promotion of their town. The people of Kalbarri say that if they did not read the newspapers and watch television, they would not know about the gloom and doom in the world today. That is a good indication of the way of life and the comparative isolation of the town from the problems of the State.

Another matter I want to touch on relates to the Northampton District High School. I am glad the Minister for Education is in his seat. I know he has been rather busy over the last few days. I put some questions to him on this matter.

Mr Pearce: I have been organising my trip to your electorate, or to its near environs.

Mr TUBBY: I hoped the Minister would be able to answer my queries. I appreciate the opportunity he has made available to my colleague, the Hon. Margaret McAleer and me, representatives of the Parents and Citizens' Association of the Northampton District High School, and members of the shire council to meet him in an attempt to overcome the problems existing in this area. At present, there is a very nasty atmosphere surrounding the proposed redevelopment of the school and the lack of activity in this area.

I know that the history of the redevelopment of the school goes back quite some time and that many very old buildings are incorporated into the high school. The reason the school has not been upgraded before this time is that we experienced a cyclone in the area which has disturbed the entire building structure which is now in very poor shape. Following the cyclone, a decision was made to seek the school's redevelopment. Because of the recreation grants made to the area, excellent sporting facilities have been made available, and an area of land adjacent to these facilities could be used for the redevelopment of the school. I believe it is a good move, because I can see the school being redeveloped on a site which would enable maximum utilisation of existing sporting facilities, thus saving a lot of duplication, and the need for ovals and other sporting facilities to be provided by the Education Department.

I strongly supported the move because the present school is situated on the top of a very steep hill which is smothered with granite boulders and rocks. Whenever sporting facilities or buildings are installed at the high school, a great deal of fill must be carted onto the site and the area actually created. This largely has contributed to the poor condition of the buildings, in that the unstable earth foundations have led to sinking. I know of

one room in which the fall from one side of the room to the other is almost one foot, and one has difficulty walking from one side of the room to the other.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr Speaker, I move—

That I be given leave to continue my speech at the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

Debate thus adjourned.

**PETROLEUM PIPELINES AMENDMENT
BILL**

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House), read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: LESCHENAULT INLET

Laporte Australia Ltd.: Effluent

944. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Does the Government intend to proceed with the recommendation of the ALP State executive to recycle Laporte's effluent at Australind?
- (2) If so, is the Government aware of the problems of recycling the waste?
- (3) Has a feasibility study been carried out on recycling Laporte effluent?
- (4) Has an estimate been done into the cost of recycling the effluent?
- (5) What markets are available for the recycled by-products?
- (6) What harm is being caused by the present effluent disposal at Australind?
- (7) Does the Israeli company recycle ilmenite effluent in any other part of the world?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (7) No decision has been made. This alternative, along with a number of others, is being evaluated by the Laporte Effluent Disposal Committee.

977. *This question was further postponed.*

WAGES: FREEZE

Main Roads Department

1015. Mr WATT, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Have the employees of the Main Roads Department recently had the hours they are required to work reduced to 37½ per week?
- (2) If so, is this a contravention of the wage freeze?
- (3) Were salaries or wages reduced in proportion to the reduction in hours?
- (4) Will extra employees be required to perform the work lost by the reduction in hours?
- (5) Were any other concessions granted at the same time?
- (6) What extra cost will be incurred by the Government?
- (7) Was the decision to reduce the hours publicised in the media?
- (8) If not, why not?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The hours of wages staff have recently been reduced from 40 to 38 per week. Salaried staff have for many years been working 37½ hours per week.

The changes in hours for wages staff have been introduced on a 19 day four weekly cycle.

Claims were served on the Main Roads Department seeking a reduction in working hours for wages staff early in 1982 and followed changes in working hours for workers under comparable Federal awards.

The estimated cost to Main Roads Department for reducing hours from 40 to 38 was \$1.4 million per annum. The former Government was aware of these claims and agreed that negotiations on an individual employer basis could take place provided that there was no extra cost to the department, no loss in productivity and the comparable private industry awards also provided for 38 hours a week.

Negotiations were finalised under the present Government and included unions agreeing to the following offsetting arrangements:

Afternoon tea breaks were abolished.

Washup time at completion of work abolished.

Payment of wages into banks, building societies or credit unions in lieu of cash payments or individual cheques.

Agreement to split annual leave.

The benefits to the department in terms of increased productivity and cost reduction were estimated to reduce the \$1.4 million to \$62 000.

The Government considered this a nominal cost in the circumstances and the department was satisfied with the meaningful way in which negotiations were concluded.

- (2) No.
- (3) No.
- (4) No.
- (5) No.
- (6) As mentioned in (1) above, \$62 000.
- (7) No.
- (8) It is not normal practice to do so. However, information concerning the matter in question was made freely available to all persons concerned.

TRANSPORT: BUSES

"Fastworker"

1032. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What "fastworker" bus services currently operate from the Willetton, Bullcreek and Leeming areas to and from the City?
- (2) Is consideration being given to re-routing these services via the Freeway?
- (3) If so, what is the estimated savings in travelling time from a re-routed service?
- (4) When is it anticipated that this service will be in operation?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) In the a.m. peak period, three trips are provided to the city. In the p.m. peak period, four trips are provided from the city.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Depending on the boarding point, travel time reductions would vary from 10 to 20 minutes.
- (4) A date has not been set but the matter is still under active consideration.

1033 and 1034. *These questions were further postponed.*

BRIDGE: BURSWOOD

Foreshore Road, Maylands

1049. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Main Roads Department redesigned the road system emanating from the north of the proposed Burwood Bridge to avoid the use of the foreshore road along the western bank of the Swan River in Maylands?
- (2) When was this decision made?
- (3) Will he table a schematic plan of the proposed road system to join the Burwood Bridge to the Great Eastern Highway?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) No changes have been made to proposals for Swan River Drive in Maylands.

- (3) A schematic plan showing the approaches to the Burwood Bridge and the connection to Great Eastern Highway is tabled. Of course, matters of detail have to be discussed and finalised.

Swan River Drive is shown in the metropolitan region scheme and has been since 1963.

It is merely a future option and detailed design of the road system has never been drawn up. There are currently no plans for its construction.

LAND: ABORIGINES

Rights: Inquiry

1050. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister with special responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) With regard to the inquiry into Aboriginal land rights being conducted by Mr Paul Seaman, Q.C., how many applications from:
 - (a) Aboriginal;
 - (b) non-Aboriginal
 groups have been received seeking funding assistance in preparing a submission to the enquiry?
- (2) How many of each group have been—
 - (a) agreed;
 - (b) refused?
- (3) What criteria are involved in determining funding support?
- (4) Who are the individual persons involved in determining the level of financial support?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) A total of 43 applications have been made. Records are not kept as to the origins of applicants.
- (2) (a) 13;
- (b) 2.
- 28 applications have been deferred for additional information
- (3) It depends on the need of the person or group for assistance.
- (4) Committee decision. The members of the committee are:
 1. Ernie Bridge, MLA
 2. Darryl Kickett
 3. Robert Riley
 4. Thomas Newbury
 5. Alfred Barker

1051. *This question was postponed.*

BUNBURY FOODS PTY. LTD.

Tenders

1052. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) With regard to Bunbury Foods, was the Government recently represented at meetings in Switzerland in relation to the future of Bunbury Foods?
- (2) Was it anticipated that Dr Oskar would be making a financial settlement in Switzerland to the Government representative in relation to his tender bid for Bunbury Foods?
- (3) As Dr Oskar has not satisfied the Government's requirements, is it now intended to negotiate with the second highest tenderer?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) In view of the confidential nature of the negotiations which are taking place on this subject, I am not prepared to provide a detailed response at this time.

MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr W. J. Marron

1053. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) During his recent visit to the United States, was the Minister accompanied for all, or part, of his visit by Mr W. J. Marron?
- (2) If so, what are Mr Marron's qualifications which suited him for such patronage?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The member's question does him very little credit.

Mr. Marron is one of a growing number of successful businessmen who have offered to support the Government's endeavours to encourage the establishment of a high technology industry in Western Australia.

I accepted and appreciated assistance and advice from Mr. Marron during the Silicon Valley segment of my visit to the US, where our visits coincided.

It is the Government's firm intention, in pursuit of the State's economic develop-

ment, to establish an effective working relationship between private industry, academic institutions and Government agencies.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Shannon River: World Conservation Strategy

1054. Mr BLAIE, to the Premier:

How does he reconcile the proposal of his Government to include the Shannon River basin as a national park with the world conservation strategy policy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The aim of the world conservation strategy as stated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)—and supported by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wildlife Fund—is to achieve the three main objectives of living resource conservation:

- (a) to maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems;
- (b) to preserve genetic diversity; and,
- (c) to ensure the sustainable utilisation of species and ecosystems.

Further, the policy goals for forestry recommended by the IUCN include management of the forest estate on the principle of stewardship, with commitment to maintain in perpetuity ecological processes, watersheds, soils and genetic diversity.

The Government's proposals for the Shannon Basin and the rest of the State forest acknowledge these aims and seek to ensure that the forests will be maintained with respect to conservation, recreational and productive values.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Imports

1055. Mr BLAIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In each year since 1976, what has been the—

- (a) number;
- (b) tonnage;
- (c) value,

of lambs purchased by the WA Lamb Marketing Board from—

- (i) interstate;
- (ii) overseas sources?

Mr EVANS replied:

The Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board has not purchased lamb overseas. Periodically the board has purchased lamb in the Eastern States on a negotiated tonnage of processed carcase delivered to ship or aircraft. Such purchases have been made in order to fulfil overseas contracts and have been made at a profit to the board. The purchases have been:

1975-76—Nil
 1976-77—Nil
 1977-78—1 736 tonnes
 1978-79—1 327 tonnes
 1979-80—6 187 tonnes
 1980-81—2 053 tonnes
 1981-82—1 643 tonnes

The value of these purchases is information confidential to the board.

HOSPITAL: ROYAL PERTH

Staff: Study

1056. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Eastern States-based management consultant, Mr Peter Cabban, completed his staffing study at Royal Perth Hospital?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) when was the study completed;
 - (b) why has it not been released; and
 - (c) when will it be released?
- (3) Will he disclose a summary of findings and recommendations contained in the report?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) A draft report has been completed and is being considered by the hospital administration.
- (2) (a) A draft report was completed at the end of August 1983;
- (b) the draft report will be discussed with the hospital when the consultant returns to Perth on 21 September 1983;

(c) this will be a matter for the hospital board to decide.

- (3) Government has no objection to the release of a summary of findings and recommendations contained in the report. The hospital advises that this is unlikely to be available until October 1983.
- (4) Not applicable.

HEALTH: ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION AND IN VITRO FERTILISATION

Children: Legal Status

1057. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does Western Australia have legislation defining the legal status of children born as a result of artificial insemination by donor and as a result of in vitro techniques?
- (2) If not, does the Western Australian Government intend to legislate in these areas?
- (3) Will such legislation cover the areas of ova and donated embryos?
- (4) At present, what is the status of these children?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The Government has established an in vitro fertilisation ethics committee to examine these issues.
- (3) To be determined.
- (4) The child is a child of the donor of the genetic material.

HEALTH

Asthmatics

1058. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Government aware of the dangers involved in asthmatics using scuba-diving equipment?
- (2) What are the regulations controlling the use of this type of equipment?
- (3) Is a doctor's certificate currently required for the purchase of this equipment?
- (4) If not, how does the Government intend to safeguard against the use of such equipment by persons who may not, because of asthma or similar conditions, be

fully able to operate such equipment safely?

- (5) Is the Government aware of allegations that some doctors are giving asthmatics medical clearance to dive?
- (6) Does the Government feel that compulsory training and regular medical examinations of divers is required?
- (7) Is there current legislation to ensure that these requirements are met?
- (8) If not, does the Government intend to introduce such legislation?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The Government is aware of a theoretical possibility of danger.
- (2) There are no specific regulations for this type of equipment.
- (3) No.
- (4) Measures being considered include self regulation by diving organisations, equipment distributors and retailers, health education and legislative control. Legislation is unlikely to prevent a person borrowing equipment or using second hand equipment.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Training and medical examination are recognised as desirable.
- (7) Yes, for professional and commercial divers, but not for amateurs.
- (8) Not at present.

HEALTH

Radiation Safety Act: Microwave Ovens

1059. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

Are the new regulations drawn up under the Radiation Safety Act to improve safety in the use and servicing of microwave equipment considered adequate or are further regulations intended?

Mr HODGE replied:

The regulations relating to microwave ovens are being amended to:

- (1) Remove the reference to the Electricity Act regulations.
- (2) Eliminate unnecessary duplications with the Australian standard on microwave ovens.
- (3) Remove any doubt that new microwave ovens comply with the Australian standards.

The amendments will strengthen the regulations in the implication of the Australian standard requirements to ovens sold in WA.

There is intention to produce regulations for other microwave equipment.

HOSPITAL: ROYAL PERTH

North Block: Delay

1060. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has any decision been made as yet in respect of recommencing work on the Royal Perth Hospital north block?
- (2) If not—
 - (a) does the Government regard the project as having high priority;
 - (b) what is the reason for delaying a decision; and
 - (c) when is a decision expected?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The steering committee for Royal Perth Hospital (north block) and site redevelopment met this week. They decided to approve maintenance work on existing steel and concrete framework; proceed with alterations to the concrete slabs for proposed new lift shafts; engage consultants for mechanical and electrical work to complete the final design work on north block; plan an additional car park and that the total site plan for the Wellington Street complex should be completed for presentation to the committee.
- (2) (a) to (c) This action is a clear indication of the Government's commitment to the future development of Royal Perth Hospital.

HEALTH: CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (KWINANA) PTY. LTD.

Effluent: Storage

1061. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has the Kwinana chemical manufacturer C.I.K. Pty Ltd been successful in finding storage facilities for its effluent while the deep well is being drilled?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) where;
 - (b) does the waste constitute a health hazard in any way?

(3) If "No" to (1)—

(a) will C.I.K. be forced to cease operating while the bore is being drilled;

(b) will workers be laid off?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) The company has not advised me of its intentions.

(2) and (3) Answered by (1).

HEALTH

Cerebral Palsy

1062. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that cerebral-palsied children whose formative years are spent within the mainstream of the community have a much more positive attitude about themselves and that normal children with whom they associate develop much more positive attitudes to the disabled?

(2) What steps are being taken to ensure more acceptance of integrating disabled children in the community rather than segregating them in special groups?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) (a) It depends on the degree of severity and the range of disabilities. For the more severely handicapped, for example, the quadriplegic with profound intellectual handicap, it may make little difference but for the majority the principle is accepted;

(b) yes.

(2) While safeguarding that the child is receiving adequate therapy dictated by the need, every attempt is made to keep children in their homes, to attend normal pre-school and, where possible, to enjoy normal primary and secondary education. For those children for whom more intensive therapy is required every effort is made for them to be in an environment which will give maximum useful access to normal educational facilities.

HOSPITALS: STAFF

Replacement Policy: Number

1063. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

What is the current number of Government hospital employees that have not been replaced as a result of the Government's staff replacement policy?

Mr HODGE replied:

Out of a State-wide total of 871 vacancies, 53.67 full-time equivalent positions have not been replaced. Of these, 24.51 positions have been deleted by the hospitals themselves.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

Cigarettes: Mail Order

1064. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is the Government aware of plans by an Adelaide businessman to mail ordered cigarettes to Western Australian smokers?

(2) Does the Government intend to oppose this scheme?

(3) (a) If so, what legislation would be applicable;

(b) will the Government introduce new legislation if no existing laws are applicable?

Mr HODGE replied:

(1) to (3) This question should be redirected to the Treasurer.

FUEL AND ENERGY: GAS

Appliances: Regulations

1065. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) When is it expected that the proposed new regulations governing the installation of all gas appliances will be gazetted?

(2) Will the regulations enable the State Energy Commission to inspect caravans and camper vans to ensure that gas appliances have been properly fitted?

(3) What other aspects will the regulations cover?

(4) Have the regulations been discussed with the National Safety Council and the Royal Automobile Club?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Within two weeks.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The regulations provide for the supervision and control of persons concerned in, and to regulate the practice of gas-fitting in consumers' installations including domestic, commercial and industrial installations, caravans, marine craft and mobile engines.
- (4) In the case of the National Safety Council—no. In the case of the Royal Automobile Club—yes.

AGED PERSONS

Council on Ageing (WA) Inc.

1066. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the WA Council on Ageing sought financial assistance from the Government?
- (2) If so, what action does the Government intend taking in respect of the request?
- (3) If not, has the Government taken action of any kind to assist the council in its present financial difficulties?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) A decision will be announced when the State Budget for 1983-84 is presented.

HEALTH

Terminal Patients

1067. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware of the report by the Victorian Health Advisory Council which states that terminally ill patients should be able to refuse life-prolonging treatment and die naturally and that there had been no substantial objection on religious or moral grounds to a terminal patient's right to die?
- (2) Is he also aware that the report was commissioned as a prelude to legislation which would allow people to refuse treatment in certain circumstances?
- (3) Is similar legislation under consideration in Western Australia?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.

HEALTH

Chemicals: Defoliants

1068. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Public Health Department a record of those ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen who believe they may have been affected by defoliants during the Vietnam war?
- (2) Has the department assisted such ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen to make claims against the Federal Government in relation to the effects of Agent Orange and other chemicals used in Vietnam?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No claims have been lodged with the Public Health Department.

1069. *This question was postponed.*

HEALTH: INSURANCE

Medicare: Representations

1070. Mr GRAYDEN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he made any representations to the Commonwealth Government in respect of suggested amendments to its Medicare legislation?
- (2) If so, what suggestions have been made?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Relevant aspects of impending Medicare legislation were discussed at the two recent health ministers' conferences which were specially convened to consider Medicare and its related issues.
- (2) See (1).

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Institutions: Closure

1071. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

- (1) Which Community Welfare Department institutions are to be closed down in September?
- (2) Why are these closures to be effected?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) The community welfare departmental institutions being closed down are Hillston and Bridgewater.
- (2) The existing functions of these facilities are being changed. They will now become a base for other departmental operations, particularly those that provide more appropriate community based programmes for young offenders and children in need of care and protection.

FISHERIES

Bluefin: Management

1072. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Is it fact that the Commonwealth Government is taking over the management of the southern blue fin tuna fishery from 1 November 1983?
- (2) If so, is this takeover of responsibility for the fishery being carried out with the consent of the State?
- (3) When was that consent given?
- (4) Have Western Australian fishermen engaged in the industry been consulted by the Western Australian Government, and if so, when and how?
- (5) What action is being taken by him in relation to the views of Western Australian fishermen engaged in the industry?
- (6) Is he concerned about any aspect of the proposed administrative policy and licensing arrangements?
- (7) If so, what are his concerns and what action is being taken?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) The major portion of the tuna fishery is in Commonwealth waters and is therefore already subject to the Commonwealth Fisheries Act. Due to the national and international nature of the southern bluefin tuna fishery, the Commonwealth have made clear their intentions to play a leading role in the management of this fishery.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) See (1).
- (4) Yes, over a number of years. The latest consultations were with over 100 fishermen on Friday, 2 September 1983

at Albany and with the processing sector on Wednesday, 14 September 1983.

- (5) The views of the WA industry have been clearly enunciated in writing to both myself and the Federal Minister for Primary Industry. Management of the Australian tuna fishery will be one of the major items discussed at the next meeting of the Australian Fisheries Council of Ministers to be held in Sydney on Friday, 23 September 1983.
- (6) Yes, but these will be discussed at the meeting of the Ministers on 23 September.
- (7) See (6).

POLICE

Officers: Retirement

1073. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is it fact that a working party is considering the implications of the Government's commitment to provide optional early retirement for police officers?
- (2) What is the expected starting date?
- (3) Will police officers be placed in a different position from that applicable to members of the State Public Service?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) These are matters being addressed by the working party.

POLICE

Officers: Training and Promotion

1074. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) What is the proposal for training and promotion of police officers prepared by the Commissioner of Police?
- (2) Does the proposal have his support?
- (3) Will he table for public information a copy of the proposal?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Discussion papers have been distributed to individual members of the police force in relation to the upgrading of an examination leading to promotion.
- (2) The concept has my support.
- (3) Yes, when the scheme is ready for implementation.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Soccer Pools: Effect

1075. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

- (1) Has he been advised that the introduction of soccer pools in Western Australia may adversely affect the profitability of Western Australian TAB operations?
- (2) If so, by whom was that advice given and to what effect?
- (3) Will he table the details?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) to (3) The question of the introduction of soccer pools into Western Australia is a matter which has yet to be considered by Cabinet. All implications of any such introduction will be carefully considered by the Government before any decisions are made.

LOTTERIES: INSTANT, LOTTO AND STANDARD

Soccer Pools: Effect

1076. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

- (1) Is he concerned that the introduction of soccer pools in Western Australia may reduce the income derived by the Lotteries Commission from instant lotteries, usual lottery ticket sales and lotto?
- (2) Has he sought advice in relation to these two matters?
- (3) If so, what advice has been received?
- (4) Will he table details of that advice?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) to (4) See answer to question 1075.

LOTTERIES

Commission: Secretary

1077. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Did he give his approval to the visit to Paris by the Secretary of the Lotteries Commission, Mr Bob Ince?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes.

HEALTH: ABORIGINES

Medical Service

1078. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Health:

Does he and the Government support the establishment of separate medical services for Aborigines in Western Australia?

Mr HODGE replied:

Unlike the previous Government which offered very little support, the present Government believes the Aboriginal Medical Service has a very important role to play in the delivery of primary health care and should receive every encouragement.

EDUCATION: STUDENTS

Gifted and Talented: Programme

1079. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Hon Garry Kelly, MLC, is involved in a review of the Education Department's programme for intellectually gifted students?
- (2) Who are the other members of the review committee?
- (3) What are the qualifications of the Hon Garry Kelly and other members of the committee to undertake this review?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Hon Garry Kelly, MLC—(Chairman)

Dr Ian Fraser—Superintendent of Planning Education Department

Mr Mike Evans—Co-Ordinator, Gifted Programme, Applecross Senior High School

Mr Barry Kissane—Research Fellow, Gifted and Talented Children, University of W.A.

Mr Arthur Godfrey—Community Member

Mr Rob Cavanagh—Teachers' Union

Mr Norm Hodgkinson—Gifted and Talented Children's Association

A representative is yet to be nominated from the WA Council of State School Organisations.

EDUCATION: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership

1080. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the Education Advisory Committee?
- (2) Who are the members of that committee?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) As far as I am aware there is no such body as the education advisory committee. If, however, the member is referring to the Education Advisory Council I can advise him that prior to the election this year an important part of the Labor Party's education policy was the setting up of an advisory council to advise the Minister for Education on all aspects of education policy. More specifically the council will be asked to undertake a complete review of the Education Act and Regulations and representatives from the non-Government schools sector will be asked to examine the proposal for needs based funding of non-Government schools.

The Council has now been established and will have its first meeting later this month.

- (2) The organisations and institutions represented on the Council are:

WA Council of State School Organisations.

Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia.

State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (Inc).

Independent Schools Salaried Officers' Association of WA.

Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (Inc).

Interim Guild Management Committee, Student Guild of the WA College of Advanced Education.

Guild of Undergraduates of the University of WA.

Confederation of Western Australian Industry.

Catholic Education Commission of WA.

Parents and Friends' Federation of WA (Inc).

Guild of Students, Murdoch University.

Student Guild, Western Australian Institute of Technology.

University Salaried Officers' Association of WA.

Trades and Labor Council of WA.

Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union (WA Branch).

Isolated Children's Parents' Association.

Civil Service Association of WA (Inc).

Academic Staff Association of the WA Institute of Technology.

Academic Staff Association of the University of WA.

Academic Staff Association of Murdoch University.

Academic Staff Association of the WA College of Advanced Education.

Australian Union of Students, WA Institute of Technology.

University of WA.

Murdoch University.

College Council of WA College of Advanced Education.

WA Institute of Technology Council.

Hedland College Council.

Karratha College Council.

Kalgoorlie College Council.

Education Department.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Social Workers and Psychologists: Activities

1081. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

- (1) Have any social workers or psychologists employed by the Department of Community Services condoned or encouraged the use of cannabis by persons for whom the department is in some way responsible?
- (2) Does the department or its office in any case encourage children to leave home?

Mr WILSON replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

POLICE: FIREARMS ACT

Review

1082. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Will he table for public information the police report resulting from its review of the Firearms Act?

Mr CARR replied:

The report is presently being studied by the Government. A decision on whether or not to make it public will be taken in due course.

ABORIGINES

Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act: Review

1083. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

- (1) Who is undertaking on behalf of the Government its review of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act?
- (2) What is the basis of the review?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) I am.
- (2) (a) To allow the Commonwealth/State departments to be separated;
- (b) to ensure a broadly based, effective consultative process with Aboriginal people is established and maintained.

FISHERIES: PROFESSIONAL

Licences: Moratorium

1084. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Will he please detail for the House precisely the reasons for the introduction of the moratorium on the granting of professional fishermen's licences?
- (2) On the basis of what advice given by whom was the decision made to impose the moratorium?
- (3) What action is to be taken by the department in relation to fisheries during the period of the moratorium?
- (4) In particular are management policies to be developed in respect of all Western Australian fisheries?
- (5) In respect of which Western Australian fisheries in particular are new management policies being considered and/or developed?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) I will supply the member with a copy of my press release on the subject which sets out that there are clear indications that the inshore reef fisheries are already being heavily exploited with the existing fleet.
- (2) On the advice of the director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife setting out his concern about the increasing

level of fishing pressure on the inshore reef fisheries.

- (3) The fisheries will continue to be available to the present fleet under the correct management rules.
- (4) The development of fisheries management policies is a continuing process with some fisheries being given more detailed consideration than others.
- (5) Particular fisheries currently under consideration are the tuna fishery in association with the Commonwealth, the Kimberley prawn fishery, the scallop fishery and the snapper fishery.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Carnarvon

1085. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Which officers of the Department of Industrial Development have been assigned to carry out the economic study to identify future development prospects for Carnarvon?
- (2) How long is the study expected to take?
- (3) Apart from identifying current problems, what positive benefits are expected to flow from the study?
- (4) What assistance from the State Government will be made available to the town in order to implement the findings of the study?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The economic study for Carnarvon will be co-ordinated through the office of the Gascoyne regional manager and will involve staff from both that office and other departmental offices as required.
- (2) Up to five months.
- (3) Rather than identifying current problems, the main aim of the study will be to identify existing activities which might have the potential for expansion or new ones which might be established.
- (4) The final report will provide the shire council and other local organisations with a valuable base document on which future action can be planned. Wherever appropriate or possible, government assistance will be considered to advance the findings of the study.

MINING: SALT

Lake McLeod: Future

1086. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

What stage have his negotiations with the Dampier Salt Company reached over the future of the Lake McLeod salt operation?

Mr BRYCE replied:

Meetings have been held by Government with the Dampier Salt Company and representatives of the unions involved to seek ways of reducing company losses on the Dampier Salt Lake McLeod field. As part of these negotiations, consideration is being given to areas where Government and unions and the company can achieve economies in the operation of improved product quality and performance.

I am assured by the company that it is prepared to guarantee the present employees' jobs during the currency of the agreement reached with its workforce as a result of the present negotiations.

The Government is considering alternatives regarding power generation or supply and is prepared to relieve Dampier Salt of obligations to maintain the existing langbeinite plant at Lake McLeod as part of a restructured processing understanding.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Airports: National Airports Authority

1087. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What involvement has the State Government had with the development of a National Airports Authority as announced by the Federal Government?
- (2) Will Western Australia be represented on this body?
- (3) What will be the cost to Western Australia?
- (4) What benefits could Western Australia expect from the establishment of a National Airports Authority?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) to (4) Funding for the planning of a national airports authority was only announced in last month's Federal Budget. This planning will define the form and

approach of the authority. I am in contact with the Federal Minister for Aviation to ensure that this State is kept abreast of developments and given every opportunity to participate in the planning process.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Airport: Perth

1088. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When is it expected that tenders will be let for the construction of new air traffic services centres and control tower at Perth airport?
- (2) What is the anticipated cost of this work?
- (3) When is the project expected to be completed?

Mr GRILL replied:

I am advised by the Federal Department of Aviation that:

- (1) The new air traffic services centre at Perth airport is already constructed. Tenders for the building of the control tower should be let by early 1984.
- (2) The air traffic services centre cost approximately \$2.7 million to build. It is anticipated that the control tower will cost \$2.5-\$3.0 million. Each of these figures is a construction cost only.
- (3) Final equipping of the air traffic services centre may not be completed until early 1985. The construction and equipping of the control tower should be completed by about the same time.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Rural: Subsidies

1089. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What rural air service subsidies will be paid in the 1983-84 financial year to operators in Western Australia by the Federal Government?
- (2) How do the subsidies for each company and each route compare with the previous financial year?

- (3) Are any of these operators or routes paid an additional subsidy by the State Government?
- (4) What other subsidies will be paid by the State Government in the 1983-84 financial year for rural air services?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Commonwealth Department of Aviation advises that it is budgeting to pay \$45 000 in 1983-84 in subsidies to operators of rural air services in Western Australia.
- (2) The Department of Aviation is budgeting to pay a subsidy in 1983-84 of \$25 600 to Skywest Airlines for its operations in the Murchison and the Pilbara compared to \$24 150 for these routes in 1982-83. On past experience, slightly over half of the subsidy to Skywest Airlines would relate to the Murchison service. \$19 800 is budgeted to be paid to Ord Air Charter for the Kimberley station routes in 1983-84 compared to a payment of \$14 950 in 1982-83.
- (3) Yes. A subsidy is provided by the State Government through the Transport Commission to passengers travelling on the Skywest Airlines Murchison service. In 1982-83 this subsidy amounted to \$9 529 and in 1983-84 \$10 800 has been included in the budget.
- (4) In addition to the Murchison subsidy, Paggi Aviation is budgeted to receive an \$8 700 subsidy in 1983-84 for the operation of the Onslow/Paraburdoo route.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Rents: North-west

1090. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he explain why, when the new rent schedules for the State Housing Commission were published to take effect from 1 August 1983, that two-bedroomed town houses in the metropolitan and country areas were not increased but similar accommodation in the north-west increased by \$5 per week to \$48 per week?
- (2) Why is this type of accommodation more expensive in the north-west when for all other types of accommodation, the rental charged is marginally below

that charged in the metropolitan and country areas?

- (3) Does the figure of \$48 per week for this accommodation take into account any allowance for a north-west subsidy?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) The State is required under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement to progressively move State Housing Commission rents on dwellings towards a market rent on an annual basis.

In this regard, a review of the private market level of rents in the metropolitan and country areas for two-bedroomed town houses and duplexes indicated the rent level over the 12 month period showed no movement. Therefore, the rent levels were not altered.

The opposite occurs in the north-west of the State as investigation showed the rent on private town houses and duplexes to be much higher than commission rents and therefore an increase was required.

- (3) Yes. In the north-west the weekly rent from August 1, 1983, on two bedroom town houses is:—

	\$
Gross	50.00
North-west Subsidy	2.00
Net Rent	48.00

EDUCATION: NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Funding: Reduction

1091. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) With regard to Government funding for independent schools, does the Government support the reduction in public funding to the independent school system?
- (2) In view of his stated support for the Federal and State teachers industrial organisations, does he support the policy of the Australian Teachers Federation on funding for independent schools?
- (3) In view of his advice to the Annual Conference of the WA State School Teachers' Union that funding for education in Western Australia will increase, does this include the independent school system?

- (4) Does his department support the capital funding directive given to the Schools Commission by the Federal Education Minister?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government is supportive of the general philosophy of provision of funds to independent schools on a needs basis. At the same time it recognises the necessity for a viable alternative to Government schools.
- (3) Details of the extent of increased funding for education in 1983-84 will be available when the Budget is presented to this House in October.
- (4) Action taken by the Commonwealth to rationalise the impact of its school building programme on existing school facilities is supported.

RAILWAYS AND ROADS

Expenditure

1092. Mr TOM JONES, to the Minister for Transport:

Will he detail on an annual basis for the last five years the capital expenditure and loan money expenditure on—

- (a) railways in Western Australia; and
(b) roads in Western Australia?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (a) Capital expenditure on railways, including loan money expenditure, over the last five years was—

	million \$
1978-79	20.2
1979-80	28.7
1980-81	36.8
1981-82	39.7
1982-83	27.4

- (b) Insofar as the Main Roads Department is concerned the following tabulation sets out the expenditure by the department on road construction, maintenance, engineering charges, grants to local authorities and works for other organisations in each of the last five years.

The figure in brackets is the inclusive amount of loan moneys raised in each of those respective years by the Main Roads Department.

This does not include all money for roads in Western Australia during the

period. Additional expenditure would also have been made by local government, other government agencies and some non-government bodies.

	\$	\$
1978-79	131 936 669	1 000 000
1979-80	152 391 927	600 000
1980-81	165 640 967	1 800 000
1981-82	173 883 483	200 000
1982-83	207 739 899	1 500 000

RACING, TROTTING AND GREYHOUND RACING

Broadcasts

1093. Mr TOM JONES, to the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

Since the Golden West Network ceased to broadcast racing, trotting and greyhound racing as from 1 August 1983, will he please advise the effect on turnover at the following TAB shops:

- (a) Bunbury;
(b) Busselton; and
(c) Collie?

Mr PARKER replied:

For the five week period prior to 1 August 1983 Bunbury agencies' turnover was \$501 472 whereas for the five weeks after that date the turnover was \$509 745. This is an increase of approximately two per cent. For the same period, increase in TAB agencies' turnover for Busselton was approximately 17 per cent and for Collie approximately ten per cent.

In assessing these figures, however, the following factors affecting agencies' weekly turnover must be taken into consideration.

Quality of horses in field;
Size of fields;
Number of meetings;
Location of courses;
Weather;
Postponed, abandoned or transferred meetings;
Big client betting one-off;
Number of winners re-investing;
Framing of programme—e.g. 2 year old or maiden.

LIQUOR: DISTILLERY

Swan Valley: Government Guarantee

1094. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Did he, at a meeting in the Swan shire offices on 20 July, give an undertaking to Swan Valley winemakers and grapegrowers, that the Government would assist with the establishment of a co-operative distillery in the Swan Valley?
- (2) At that meeting, did he state that support for the distillery from the Government would take the form of a \$400 000 State Government guaranteed loan?
- (3) Did he state that this loan would be guaranteed at the interest rate of 8 per cent per annum?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) There have been recent questions asked by the member and others regarding this subject.

Confidential negotiations have been and are still being conducted concerning the detail of the proposed distillery.

An announcement of the outcome will be made at the appropriate time.

MINING: COAL

Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd.: Writ

1095. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Prior to the State Energy Commission lodging a writ with the Supreme Court concerning its dispute with Griffin Coal Mining Co. Ltd., did the Minister meet with the company to advise the company of the Government's intentions?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) When will the Minister now be meeting with the company as they have requested to discuss the State Government's attitude over this matter?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The issue of a writ by SECWA on Griffin is a matter between the parties concerned.
- (3) Discussions were held with Mr R. Stowe at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 13 September 1983. Arrangements are in hand for the board of directors of Griffin Coal

Mining Co. Ltd. to meet with the Board of Commissioners of the State Energy Commission.

LAND

Collie: Coal Basin

1096. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Who will carry out the announced land use study for the Collie coal basin?
- (2) What will be the nature of the study?
- (3) When is it anticipated the study will be completed?
- (4) Will the results of the study be made public?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) A working group consisting of senior officers from seven Government departments, the South-West Development Authority, and the Collie shire will undertake the study under the broad guidance of a sub-committee of the planning and co-ordinating authority.
- (2) The preparation of an overall land use plan for the Collie Basin.
- (3) A target completion date has not yet been set.
- (4) Yes, unless details of a commercially confidential nature are involved.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Lynwood: "Special Gymnastics" Classification

1097. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

Will Lynwood Senior High School be given the classification of a special gymnastics high school for the 1984 academic year?

Mr PEARCE replied:

There are no plans at present for the classification of Lynwood Senior High School as a special gymnastics high school.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTORAL: BY-ELECTION

Mundaring: Government Staff and Facilities

247. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Deputy Premier:

Is he aware that any of the staff or facilities of his office or department, or the Premier's office or department, have been used to assist him to campaign for the ALP candidate in the Mundaring election?

Mr BRYCE replied:

That has certainly not happened to my knowledge. If the Leader of the Opposition has any evidence or indications to the contrary I would be pleased if he would let me know.

Mr O'Connor: "Not to my knowledge" was all I wanted.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE CABINET

Political Adviser

248. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

What are the duties or responsibilities of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet which require the secretary to have a political adviser, or adviser?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows, the office of the Cabinet Secretary has been expanded by the present Government. In addition to the establishment of a discrete Cabinet office and a policy secretariat, the office of the Premier and Cabinet has been expanded greatly. As part of that process, which is aimed at making more efficient and better researched considerations and deliberations of Cabinet likely, certain adjustments have been made to the office of the Cabinet Secretary. I cannot say of my own knowledge immediately that the classification of the person employed within the office of the Cabinet Secretary is that of research officer, but it may be the case as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggests. I am perfectly happy to provide the duty list of that person to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to explain exactly what that person is engaged to do.

Mr Hassell: That wasn't the question I asked.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If I may finish, I can inform the House that the list of duties may explain the duties required of the person employed by the Secretary to the Cabinet, and should answer the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If, however, it does not, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition may ask another question, or casually make inquiries of me in the corridor, and I would be only too happy to provide him with any information which would be in keeping with our policy of open government.

TECHNOLOGY

Initiative: Joint Statement

249. Mr P. J. SMITH, to the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Is he aware of a joint statement made by the Federal Ministers for Science and Technology, and Industry and Commerce, in Canberra yesterday?
- (2) What is the State Government's attitude to this initiative, and what are the implications of that initiative for Western Australia?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) I thank the member for notice of the question. Yes, I am aware of the statement and I thank the member for drawing the attention of the House to a matter of great significance for the whole of Australia.

Mr MacKinnon: It is pathetic, \$20 million in a year.

Mr BRYCE: That is 20 million times greater than the Fraser Government ever made available.

Mr MacKinnon: You know that's not true.

Mr BRYCE: It is 20 million times greater than the Fraser Government ever provided to encourage investment in the scheme. It is a beginning.

- (2) Naturally, the State Government welcomes and applauds this initiative. It is something for which I have pressed hard over a period of some years. Since assuming office I have made many representations to the Prime Minister and his Federal Cabinet colleagues, urging such action. It is very encouraging that the Hawke Government in Canberra, in contrast to its predecessor, recognises

the urgent need to stimulate development of high technology industries in Australia. I agree with the statement by the Federal Minister, Mr Barry Jones, that this decision heralds the beginning—for the benefit of the member for Murdoch—of the technological revolution in Australia. It will open up a vast array of new opportunities. This is of particular significance to us in Western Australia because of our long tradition of resourceful innovation.

We can justly be proud of our inventive ability.

It is a sad fact, however, that many worthwhile and promising inventions have either not got off the ground or have been developed elsewhere because of a lack of necessary capital available in Western Australia.

The new Federal initiative will go some way to addressing this vital need. I have no doubt that the system will be refined and modified in due course but it is a great start, aimed at removing some of the critical impediments to the growth of high technology industry. The State Government will naturally watch the operations of the scheme very closely to ensure that Western Australia derives the fullest benefit.

HEALTH

Chewing Gum: Nicorette

250. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Minister heard of Nicorette chewing gum?
- (2) What are the contents of the chewing gum?
- (3) Is it freely available in Australia?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No record of its contents is available. It is believed to include nicotine, lobeline or a similar alkaloid.

Mr MacKinnon: What is that?

Mr HODGE: I do not know. To continue—

- (3) and (4) Inquiries from two major wholesalers have been answered in the negative. It is not manufactured or distributed in Australia. The Government is

not responsible for the distribution arrangements of manufacturers.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Mandurah: Fire

251. Mr READ, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the recent fire in the science block at Mandurah Senior High School?
- (2) Is he also aware of the disruption to the general school programme and, more importantly, the TAE students' programme caused by this fire?
- (3) Would the Minister inform the House of the actions taken to initiate repairs to the science block and the expected date of commencement and completion of those repairs?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Quick action has been taken to rebuild the damaged rooms and a decision on local quotations for the work will be made shortly.

Liaison with the principal determined that he would need one temporary room to allow an acceptable timetable to be maintained during the restoration period. A room has been supplied.

I commend the member for the quick action he took in drawing the problems to my attention, particularly that of the TAE students. I commend him also for the keen interest he has taken in getting the situation remedied as quickly as possible.

ELECTORAL: BY-ELECTION

Mundaring: Government Staff and Facilities

252. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Deputy Premier:

A few moments ago I asked the Deputy Premier whether any staff or facilities had been used in connection with the forthcoming Mundaring by-election. He replied that, to his knowledge, none had been used.

I have here a letter on the Deputy Premier's letterhead, and an envelope from his office relating to the Mundaring electorate which reads as follows—

On September 20 (Tuesday) Gavan Troy and I will be hosting a breakfast for members of the business

community at the John Forrest Tavern in the National Park . . .

It then gives his office phone number and the staff to be rung in connection with this matter.

I ask the Deputy Premier—

- (1) Is this his letterhead?
- (2) Did he mislead the House in connection with this matter, as he has signed the letter.
- (3) Does he intend resigning or making an apology to Parliament?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) If I recall, the Leader of the Opposition asked me whether my office was engaged—

Mr O'Connor: I asked whether you were using facilities or staff, and you said not to your knowledge. It was untrue and you know it.

Mr BRYCE: The breakfast arrangement is only one of a number I have in train and intend to conduct in constituencies represented by members on both sides of the House. The fact that an election is being held in Mundaring is purely co-incidental.

Opposition members: Rubbish!

Mr O'Connor: What a beauty!

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Abolition: ALP Policy

253. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

It has been alleged by members of the Opposition that electoral reform is a subterfuge by the ALP to gain control of the Legislative Council and then to abolish it. I ask—

Is this the Government's intention?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The Australian Labor Party is the only party to gain Government and play fair on electoral issues. The Western Australian branch of the ALP does not have a policy of abolition. This issue was widely debated and changed several years ago and it is dishonest of some opposition members to use scare tactics based on some previous situation which is not in effect today. The ALP was responsible for reforming the Senate, and

the South Australian and New South Wales upper Houses. When it has had majorities in those Chambers following those reforms it has not tried to abolish them. In fact the ALP has never had a majority in the South Australian Legislative Council, where similar conditions apply and there has been a good Labor vote. As one can see in Queensland, abolishing the upper House does not make the electoral system fair or help the ALP at all. Under Statewide proportional representation which the reform proposes, the two major parties will probably find it difficult to gain a constitutional majority. Small parties will be protected and encouraged and they are highly unlikely to vote against a system which gives minorities a voice in Parliament. Finally, the ALP has made this new electoral system for the Legislative Council part of the State Constitution and as such it would need a referendum to change or abolish the Council, so the citizens of this State would have the final say with an equal vote in a referendum.

ELECTORAL: BY-ELECTION

Mundaring: Government Staff and Facilities

254. Mr HASSELL, to the Deputy Premier:

For the sake of the record I ask the Deputy Premier—

- (1) Was the letter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition prepared in his office?
- (2) Was it despatched from his office using Government postage?
- (3) Did he sign the letter, and does he acknowledge it is a party political letter supporting a candidate in the by-election?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) to (3) One would almost imagine the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was suggesting that the democratic process in this State constituted a crime.

Mr Hassell: It is a blatant party political letter.

Mr BRYCE: As Minister responsible for this particularly important piece of legislation I happen—

Mr O'Connor: To have been untruthful in this House.

Mr BRYCE: —to have written to businessmen in the electorates of Dale, Albany, Murchison-Eyre, and Ascot, and—

Mr Hassell: The letter talks about a by-election.

Mr BRYCE: I have written to about six electorates in the last three or four weeks. The process of Government does not stop simply because a by-election is called. I have no intention whatever of refraining from writing to explain and seek information from small business people in any part of Western Australia.

Mr Hassell: It is a campaign letter.

HEALTH: TOBACCO

Franchise Tax: Tasmania

255. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that the Tasmanian Liberal Government has increased tobacco tax to add about 13 cents to a packet of cigarettes?
- (2) If so, are the actions of the Liberal Government in Tasmania in accord with the policies of the Western Australian Government and those of the Opposition?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes. I am aware that the Liberal Government in Tasmania has imposed an increase in tobacco tax. However, I am not aware whether it is the intention of that Government to use any of the funds it raises from that tax for a broadly based antismoking campaign based on children as has occurred in Western Australia under the present Government's direction. To that extent. I am not sure that the Tasmanian Government's policies accord entirely with the Western Australian Government's policies on this issue.

I can assure the honorary member that what is proposed in Tasmania does not accord with the policy of the Opposition in WA which, in nine years of Government, spent only 0.13 per cent of the revenue raised from the tobacco products licence fee to finance efforts to counter smoking.

I also remind members that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition told this House that the Opposition would let the Government's tobacco legislation go

through because it was a Budget measure, not because it supported the legislation.

Clearly, the Opposition in WA could not care less about an antismoking programme for children.

MEAT: LAMB

Marketing Board: Boycotting

256. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Further to my question yesterday regarding members of the Lamb Marketing Board and Mr Goodchild's conflict with the board, I understand Mr Goodchild has indicated that although he is implacably opposed to the board he has no intention of resigning his position. This indicates a lack of moral and ethical standards as he does not see a conflict of interest requiring his resignation. I ask—

In the interests of lamb producers in Western Australia, will the Minister reconsider his decision and use his powers to remove Mr Goodchild from the board?

Mr EVANS replied:

I have had no communication with Mr Goodchild, nor he with me. At this stage I intend to take no further action.

ELECTORAL: BY-ELECTION

Mundaring: Government Staff and Facilities

257. Mr O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

- (1) Was the Premier aware of the letters sent out on departmental letterhead by the Deputy Premier from his office?
- (2) Does he approve of letters of that nature being sent out supporting a candidate in a by-election, and paid for by the public of this State?
- (3) Was he aware that the stamps, etc., were paid for by the Government?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) I was not aware the letters were sent. Had I been aware they were to be sent, I would have completely endorsed their despatch. I am absolutely appalled at the hypocrisy of an Opposition which when in Government was led by a Premier who wrote during the time of a by-election asking people for money. Did

the now Opposition criticise its Premier at that time.

Mr O'Connor: Not with Government money. I paid for them.

Mr Bryce: Who paid the postage?

Mr O'Connor: You are cheating the people of this State. This Government is the most corrupt I have seen.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Opposition squeals when it is served some of the medicine it attempts to serve us. Members opposite are so beside themselves that the Leader of the Opposition thinks I referred to a by-election held when he was Premier. He does not realise that no by-election was held in Kalgoorlie when he was Premier.

Mr O'Connor: I did not say it was.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The incident to which I referred was during the currency of the Kalgoorlie by-election.

Mr O'Connor: I paid for my own.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: As far as the Government is concerned, on-one is involving themselves in any campaign at the expense of the public. It is not appropriate for ongoing activities which were scheduled, in many cases before the Court of Disputed Returns—

Mr Hassell: Nonsense! Have you read the letter?

Mr O'Connor: This is cheating; it is the worst I have seen. It is disgraceful.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is not appropriate for the Opposition to expect that the process of government will grind to a halt simply because a by-election is called.

Mr Hassell: It has nothing to do with the process of government.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If there is no more vivid example of what the Opposition will do when in Government, members should recall the full-page advertisements which the former Government confiscated the tax payers' money to fund during the currency of the last State general election campaign.

Mr Bryce: It was \$100 000, probably.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The former Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation spent \$7 000 or thereabouts of the taxpayers'

money on the space involved in putting his own picture onto the advertisements.

Point of Order

Mr O'CONNOR: The Premier has not yet answered the question, but he is making a policy speech. I wonder if there is any chance of having him answer the question—

Government members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: —as to whether he approves of the expenditure of public funds in this way.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition knows that there is no point of order in that.

However, I remind the House that questions without notice are at the discretion of the Speaker. If I have to rise to my feet on many more occasions to call for order, I will call for Orders of the Day.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I simply re-state that, when in Government, this Opposition took more than \$100 000 of taxpayers' money and placed full-page advertisements in the newspapers about the distribution of job creation money to people who, in some cases, had applied for it two years or three years previously, and left us, when we came into Government, to face the problem of finding that many of the applications did not conform with the guidelines laid down by the Federal Government. Having been paid—

Mr Hassell: What absolute nonsense.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —by the State Government—

Mr Clarko: What about Curtin House?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What about the Whitlam Government?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr O'Connor: Who paid Troy's air fare east? Did you pay Troy's air fare east?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me give the Opposition some advice—

Mr O'Connor: We do not want advice from you.

Mr Hassell: Keep it to yourself.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is no wonder members opposite do not win elections. They will not take advice.

Mr Clarko: You have won only two out of nine.

The Speaker: Order!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If members opposite wish to win the Mundaring by-election—and I do not concede that they can—

Mr Clarko: Don't bother to tell us. We do not want to know from you.

Mr Bertram: You will never learn.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: They should get out there and fight it fair and square.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Hassell: You would not believe he could say it. No wonder he was on the silver screen.

Mr O'Connor: He ought to be a clown in the circus.

Mr Clarko: Try another Curtin House trick.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Fight the by-election fair and square; develop some loyalty to your leader; and place before the public in Mundaring some positive and constructive policies. Then I dare say members of the Opposition will poll more votes than they would in the present circumstances. However, I doubt they will poll enough votes to win.

LAND: AGRICULTURAL

Clearing Bans: Compensation

258. Mr D. L. SMITH, to the Premier:

What action is being taken by the Government with respect to compensation payments to south-west farmers whose land is subject to clearing bans?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Mr Speaker—

Mr Hassell: Now he has got an easy one.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I receive much more difficult questions from my own side of the House than from the Opposition.

Mr Hassell: You wrote it out yourself.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have said previously, and it stands repeating, that question time is leavened only by the quality of the questions from the Government side.

Mr Clarko: Why bother to say it again? It is wrong.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In reply to the member for Mitchell, the Primary Industry Association—

Mr Hassell: Drafted by adviser number 375.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —and the Government agreed today on the basis for a preliminary inquiry into compensation payments to south-west farmers whose land is subject to clearing bans. I have assured the PIA representatives that the Government has no intention of denying any farmer rightful compensation. However, in the present difficult financial circumstances, the Government has an obligation to assess the fairness and efficiency of all programmes. Concern has been expressed about the size of compensation payments and interest arrangements.

A senior officer has been appointed by the Government to begin the preliminary inquiry. He is Dr M. Wood, assistant director of the policy secretariat of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Dr Wood is an expert in public administration. Dr Wood will work closely with the PIA which has specialised knowledge of the situation.

The clearing bans were first introduced in 1979 in south-west water catchment areas to control rising salinity. While the Government is worried about the major financial problem its predecessor has created with the scheme, it is acting to bring this under control. The Government intends to ensure that farmers whose land is affected by clearing bans are treated with scrupulous fairness—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Government intends to ensure that farmers whose land is affected by clearing bans are treated with scrupulous fairness—

Mr Clarko: You said it again. Perhaps you do not know what "scrupulous fairness" means.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Government intends to ensure that farmers whose land is affected by clearing bans are treated with scrupulous fairness.

Mr Clarko: You keep saying that. You must say it to yourself in the shower—"scrupulous fairness". You keep yelling it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Mr Speaker, this is a fairly serious matter about which—

Mr Clarko: It is a Dorothy Dix question. Why did you put it out through all of your media men?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —a number of questions have been raised by the media, and certainly by a number of people in agricultural areas who have expressed doubts. I am trying to clarify, for the benefit of the Parliament, some aspects of the matter; yet the Opposition does not want to hear that clarification.

Mr Blaikie: But you put the letter out.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: And the assistance from the PIA will help to ensure a speedy and fair result.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT: FEDERAL

Number: Increase

259. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

I address my question to the Minister responsible for electoral reform—

Has he protested to those members of the Federal parliamentary committee who belong to the ALP, who recommended an increase in the number of members of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, and who embarrassed him considerably because he recommended the opposite in Western Australia?

Mr Bertram: Not at all.

Mr TONKIN replied:

I refuse to answer a question from a member who cannot give the correct title of a Minister.

Mr Clarko: You are the Minister who cannot keep house.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS: DIET PRODUCTS

Side Effects

260. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

It is a fact that recently a complaint was received from a housewife concerning some disturbing side effects she suffered after using Total Image diet powder.

Mr TONKIN replied:

Yes. A housewife from Willetton has reported to me that she became quite ill some 14 hours after using this product. She claims that she experienced head-

aches and became weak and very depressed after commencing a diet involving the use of Total Image diet powder. This organisation is going to some pains to convince the public that its product is quite safe. I think it is appropriate however, to alert the public to the fact that the diet powder has caused some considerable distress to this housewife. For all I know, there may be others who have also experienced these unpleasant side effects after using this product.

EDUCATION: STUDENTS

Gifted and Talented: Programme

261. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What funds are currently allocated for gifted and talented children's programmes in Western Australia?
- (2) What funds, if any, are currently allocated for distance education?
- (3) Would the Minister detail Federal and State allocations, if applicable?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (3) I thank the member for some notice of these questions. However, during the time after his question was received in my office, it has not been possible to have the detailed figures taken out of last year's financial statement which referred to the programmes about which he is asking. I will have that information extracted and sent to the member by letter.

The allocations for the current period, of course, will be in the Budget which will be presented to the Parliament by the Treasurer in a few weeks. After the Budget has been presented, I am prepared to extract the comparable figures with regard to the 1983-84 financial year and send those to the member by letter.

WOMEN'S INTERESTS

Women's Advisory Council

262. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Premier:

I refer to the Government's decision to appoint a women's advisory council to enhance the contribution of women in decision and policy making, and ask—

Are any other steps available to the Government to directly increase the involvement of women in community decision-making?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The most obvious means is to increase the number of women involved in the Government's decision-making process. A survey of the number of women involved in the hundreds of Government committees, boards, and authorities reveals a relatively small number. This mirrors the under-representation of women at all the top levels of the community—in government, business, and the professions.

In an effort to increase the involvement of women, the Government is moving to establish a women's register. This will include the names of women suitably qualified for appointment to Government bodies who are willing to be appointed. The Government has widely circulated a letter from me inviting nominations for the register. It has gone to many women's and community organisations.

We will be pursuing a policy of appointing women to Government bodies wherever possible to redress the imbalance.

Obviously we will not appoint women exclusively to these bodies, but we will seek to appoint them whenever we can.

We are also surveying Government departments and authorities to see how many women are employed at senior levels. The survey is not complete, but initial returns suggest that the number is very low. We will be looking for ways to improve this situation too.

It is sometimes difficult for an Opposition becoming the Government to be seen to be a variation on the theme of its predecessor. I must admit that sometimes people say to me, "There is not much difference between your Government and the last Liberal Government".

Mr Blaikie: There is a big difference.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am trying to make a point. The financial circumstances and the context in which a Government works make it very difficult to be different in terms of expenditure. However, one area in which we can claim a marked difference is in the matter of women's policy.

Rightly or wrongly, and electorally popular or unpopular, the Government has adopted a positive approach to what

it perceives to be the interests of women within our community. I serve notice on all members who may be interested, or who may not be, that we will continue with this policy for the full period of our Government.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT: FORMER

Interstate Trip

263. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Did the Government contribute in any way to the costs of the previous member for Mundaring (Gavan Troy) in his trip to the Eastern States to make representations, I understand, to the Federal Government in relation to a wine tax?
- (2) If so, are that cost and the cost of the letter sent by the Deputy Premier the first steps in this Government's professed support of Government funding of election campaigns?
- (3) If so, will the Opposition be granted equivalent funding?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I will answer part (2) first, and I hope the Opposition might start to see some sense in the matter.

- (2) In the final stages of the last election campaign, who can forget the letter that the then Premier sent to every small business operator in the State?

Mr O'Connor: And paid for by himself.

Mr Clarko: That did not work. Try another tack.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that previously—

Mr O'Connor: It was reprinted out of the Parliament.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I see no reason to address the question of whether that is the case. I am not sure.

Mr O'Connor: I am.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I accept the assurance given by the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, at the time, it was my understanding that the then Government had used public funds to pay for the mailing. It is my clear understanding from discussions with Government officers, that in the compilation of the list of people to

whom the letter should be sent, many hours of work were put in.

Mr Bryce: That work comes free?

Mr Parker: They had Government officers correcting the Liberal Party policy speech.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know about that. I do know the Government employees do not come free. I was told that when the former Premier wanted to send a letter to small business people, it proved to be a difficult statistical task for the Government officers entrusted with sending it to decide to whom it should be sent.

It proved to be a very arduous, long-lived, and expensive process. I will instruct the Treasury to investigate the matter and to assess the cost of the time the officers spent on compiling that list. I guess I will then send the bill to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MacKinnon: Answer the question.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am answering the second part of the question. I will ask the Treasury to assess the cost of the time involved in doing that work. I do not doubt that it was perhaps an oversight if the more direct costs were paid by the Leader of the Opposition.

(1) and (3) In reply to the matter of the air fare for Gavan Troy to see Mr Keating or his officers—

Mr MacKinnon: Plus expenses in general.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —the only request I can remember is a request in respect of a witness involved in the Court of Disputed Returns, and that was not for a fare to Canberra but to Brisbane. It was not an air fare for anyone in Government, any member of Parliament, any political candidate, or any party to the Court of Disputed Returns. I understand the request was for costs involved. The Government had previously decided that it would support the cost of the parties involved in that Court of Disputed Returns. That is the only request I can remember. I cannot recall any request being made by Mr Troy or any approval being granted for any expenses involved in his going to Canberra to talk about the fortified wine tax. To the best of my recollection, that trip was made when Mr Troy was no longer a member of Parliament.

Mr O'Connor: That is correct.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: There would be no question of expenses being paid for someone who was not a member of Parliament. If any expenses were paid, they would be demanded back. Any expenses paid to Mr Troy when he was not a member of Parliament would be demanded back from him. I do not have any recollection of his asking for or being granted any money for his trip to Canberra.
