

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 26th April, 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.00 p.m., and read prayers.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL YEAR

Alteration: Petition

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [2.03 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition from some school teachers of schools in the North Metropolitan Province objecting to amendments to regulations 171 and 193 of the Education Act, 1928-1977, which were published in the *Government Gazette* of the 29th September, 1978, and requesting the return to the status quo prior to the introduction of the amendments. It is as follows —

To the Honourable the President and the Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

We, the undersigned, object to the proposed alterations to the school year as contained in amendments to Regulations 171 and 193 of the Education Act 1928-1977 and published in the *Government Gazette* of the 29th September, 1978.

We ask that the school year return to the status quo prior to the introduction of the amendments mentioned above.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest considerations, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition contains 573 signatures and bears the certificate of the Clerk that it is in conformity with Standing Orders of the Legislative Council. I move—

That the petition be received, read, and ordered to lie upon the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

The petition was tabled (see paper No. 152).

CLOSING DAYS OF SESSION: FIRST PART

Standing Orders Suspension

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [2.09 p.m.]: I move—

That during the remainder of the first period of this current session so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in any one sitting and all Messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith and to take precedence each day before the Address-in-Reply.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [2.10 p.m.]: I want to oppose the motion and put the views of the Opposition. I know this motion normally comes before Parliament in the dying hours of a session to expedite the passage of important Government Bills, and under normal circumstances that motion, when it is moved, has the concurrence and support of the Opposition.

However, in terms of the business that has been brought before this Chamber, I think this is very early in the session—despite the rumours that it will be short—for the motion to be moved. I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Leader of the House when he said the other day he would give us every assistance and would not use this motion frivolously, if and when it is carried; but I go on record as saying it gives the impression to the public at large and to people who believe in parliamentary democracy that this place is used only as a rubber stamp. I think it is a far better proposition to adhere to previous procedure and move this kind of motion towards the end of the session.

I have seen a list of some of the Bills which might come up, but the motion now before the House is extremely open-ended. I reiterate that I have no reason to doubt what the Leader of the House said; but be that as it may, Bills can be shot down to this Chamber from the Assembly and, with all the best intentions in the world, with the carrying of this motion the Leader of the House would have no alternative but to proceed with those Bills.

Perhaps even at this early stage of the session I could have readily acceded to the motion had I been told, "These are two important Government Bills and the reason they must go through in this session is that certain machinery must be put into effect." The first Bill that comes to my mind is the Supply Bill; if that comes in we must go along with it. I am not arguing about that, but I have seen a list of Bills which may or may not be required to go through this House in one sitting. I and members on this side of the House would feel much happier if we knew the precise reason for moving this motion so early in the session.

If Bills go through the House in one sitting and are passed in the second or third week of the session, it gives a very bad impression to people outside. Whether the Opposition comprises 20 members or one member, it is the Opposition's job to examine all legislation, to bring forward points which require clarification, and in some cases to oppose the legislation outright and go on record as doing so. Surely we will not have a repetition of the situation where, very early in this Parliament, in fact on the first day of the session, the House sat at 4.30 p.m. and concluded at 11.00 a.m. the next day. I am sure the Leader of the House does not have that in mind, but I still do not like the way the matter is being handled, because in its present form the motion is too open-ended. I will not say it is open to abuse, but at any given time for any reason whatsoever we could have a succession of Bills which would require our sitting for 24 hours or *ad infinitum*.

The motion is in accordance with the Standing Orders but I do not think it should be moved so early in the session without our being supplied with a good explanation. I have no objection to such a procedure in connection with the Supply Bill, but I would prefer that a motion such as this be moved towards the end of the session, and even then we should know to which Bills it refers.

On those grounds, I oppose the motion.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [2.15 p.m.]: I believe that the fears expressed by the Leader of the Opposition are groundless. I have heard this motion moved on many occasions in this Chamber during my long period here, and at no time has any Minister or any Government taken advantage of it to make it difficult for the Opposition to seek an adjournment in regard to particular legislation.

The D. K. Dans: I think I outlined that; I agreed with the Leader of the House.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I cannot remember an occasion that the Leader of the House did not agree to an adjournment sought by the Opposition.

Although I do not say that the Opposition would do so, if this motion were not moved, the House could be kept sitting for unreasonably long hours. That is the reason for moving the motion. By agreeing to the motion we will permit the easy passage of any small Bills which may be introduced. I am sure that the House will agree to the motion.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [2.16 p.m.]: I rise to speak on this motion now because, although we are fairly certain of the end result, I do regard it

as a quite serious matter, and one which probably ought to excite the attention of the House. I am pleased Mr Dans and Mr Baxter have seen fit to discuss it, and we must take very serious note of Mr Baxter's comments, because he is the most widely experienced member in the House. He has been a private member for a long time, but he has also held the position of Chairman of Committees and that of a Minister in the Government. Nevertheless, the point raised by Mr Dans is quite legitimate.

We must ensure that the proper will of the House is pursued, despite Standing Orders. Quite rightly, our Standing Orders lay down that the Address-in-Reply is pre-eminent, because it is important that every member should have the opportunity to be heard in regard to his own electorate. So, traditionally the Address-in-Reply has been regarded as important, and I believe it continues to be important. I know that within this Chamber some diverse views are held on this point, and although some people think otherwise I happen to believe that the Address-in-Reply ought to retain its present position. Time was when the Address-in-Reply was regarded as being pretty well sacrosanct, and amendments moved to it are not usually carried. Sometimes amendments so moved appear to be frivolous, and usually they have no hope of success.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: There has never been a frivolous amendment moved from this side.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Perhaps the present Opposition has never moved a frivolous amendment, but I have been in Opposition twice, and I am prepared to say that some such amendments have been moved. So I will bend over backwards—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not go too far—you may not get up again.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: —and I will say that the present Opposition is absolutely beyond reproach, but if one reads *Hansard* one will see that my remarks are true.

The point I am making is a valid one. Where a Government has an absolute necessity to have legislation passed, it could be prevented from doing so by maintaining the very protections that ought to maintain the rights of individual members of Parliament.

Mr President, I might suggest that this point could be looked at some time in the future. It is important that the Government be able to pursue its business, but it is important also that the rights of the Opposition remain sacrosanct. I happen to have twice been a member of the Opposition in this House, although it is unusual for a Liberal

Party or National Country Party member to find himself in that position in this State.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I know within the Standing Orders the Opposition has the machinery to keep a Bill here for a week.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is right.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We do not do things like that, irrespective of any motion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I was prepared to move the motion in a very specific form, listing the Bills. Of the six or so Bills on the notice paper, I believe only three fall into the category of urgency.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You can understand my confusion when I was assured in another place that there were two Bills.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we could find ourselves caught up in a position where the Standing Orders make it very difficult, if not impossible, to carry out our programme. The Leader of the Opposition said that it is early in the session, but I would like to point out to him that we have only nine sitting days after today. We could have been in the situation that this motion was not necessary. However, members will be aware that for the first few weeks of this session both the Whips—Mr Masters and Mr Cloughton—have been at their wits' end to find people who were ready to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate. Some members are not prepared to make their speeches despite the long break between sessions.

So, it is not the fault of the management of this House or the management of the notice paper that we have to move this motion. All these factors have combined to make it difficult for the Government to complete its programme. I sincerely trust, in the interests of the general management of this House, that this motion to suspend the Standing Orders is carried.

Mr President, I know it is unusual that I should spend so much time on such a motion.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am glad you did.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: However, the point raised by the Opposition was a perfectly valid one, and the points I have raised in contradiction are equally valid. I believe on balance that the Government's view must prevail.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16	
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. O. N. B. Oliver
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. Margaret McAleer	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. N. McNeill	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. G. E. Masters
(Teller)	
Noes 7	
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. F. Cloughton
Hon. R. Hetherington	(Teller)
Pairs	
Ayes	
Noes	
The Hon. A. A. Lewis	The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
The Hon. I. G. Medcalf	The Hon. Grace Vaughan
Question thus passed.	

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SEVENTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 24th April, on the following motion by the Hon. N. F. Moore—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

May it please Your Excellency: We the Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

THE HON. W. M. PIESSE (Lower Central) [2.26 p.m.]: Mr President, I too would like to congratulate the Hon. Norman Moore on moving the Address-in-Reply motion. I was particularly pleased to hear him put forward the case of people living in country areas.

I wish to discuss a matter which has bothered me for some time. I believe this State Government should take a long, hard look at a proposal for a \$2 000 tax rebate for dependent wives with a view to making a firm representation to the Federal Government. I mentioned this matter on the 29th March and, at this stage, I wish to take this opportunity to point out some of the reasons for putting forward such a proposal.

Many women in the work force today—particularly in my electorate—would prefer to be at home, bringing up their families, at least until their children were all at school. However, because of financial commitments already entered into, it is not possible for these women to opt out of the work force.

When young couples marry these days, it is usual for both husband and wife to continue in the work force for a certain time, with the aim of saving sufficient money to purchase their own home and some of the everyday comforts that we in this age have come to accept as our right.

I can see nothing wrong with this. I believe the ownership of one's own home and perhaps a motorcar and modern electrical appliances such as a washing machine are necessities in this day and age, and should not be regarded as luxuries.

The fact remains, however, that many young couples who have entered into financial arrangements to purchase some of these items now find themselves in a situation where the wife must continue to work in order to keep up the payments. This is due partly to inflation, partly to higher interest rates, and partly to the higher cost of living. Although we are told that the consumer price index is not rising as fast in this State as perhaps it is in other States, nevertheless the cost of living in Western Australia is still too high to allow these young women to stay at home with their families.

Having said that, I would also say I absolutely uphold the right of any woman to remain in the work force if she so desires. However, I know there are many women presently in the work force who would rather be at home with their children.

I noticed an article in *The West Australian* of the 23rd April in which the Federal Treasurer (Mr Howard) was questioned about the possibility of raising the present tax allowance for spouses from \$597 to \$2 000 a year. Mr Howard said that, although he was in sympathy with the idea, it would cost the Government annually \$1 500 million in revenue, thus indicating he felt the proposal was impossible of implementation.

I do not believe this cannot be done. I believe this country has some very astute accountants, not the least among them being our own Premier, and I believe if our top accountants gave their minds to this problem they could find a way of raising the tax allowance for dependant spouses without causing hardship in other areas.

In order to get this matter into proper perspective we must look back to when and why the tax concessions for a spouse were first introduced. It was in 1936 that the then Commonwealth Government introduced an amendment to the taxation Act which allowed a tax concession for a dependant spouse employed at home and dependent on her husband. In fact, it was applicable to either male or female spouses.

The concession was allowed, provided the spouse did not have a separate income greater

than £50 per year. The concession allowed was £50. The most important thing about the inclusion of this amendment in the taxation Act was the reason for its introduction. That reason was the recognition of domestic responsibility. I repeat: domestic responsibility.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Do you know why they abolished child allowance?

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I do not wish to speak about that at the moment.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That would help.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I wish to speak about domestic responsibility being the reason for the tax allowance being introduced. Today at different times we hear arguments about just whose responsibility domestic responsibility really is. We seldom ever hear any recognition of the value of that responsibility.

In 1963 the deduction was £143. In that year £2 000 per annum was a pretty good income; it was above the average. If we consider the ratio of £143 to £2 000 we can see it is very different from the current ratio of figures where the allowance now is \$597. I suppose a comparable income to that £2 000 in 1963 now would be \$10 000.

There have been several schemes put forward to enable women to withdraw from the work force and remain at home. One of these schemes was that women should be paid to stay at home. I am absolutely against this and I think a great many women would find it unacceptable.

However, the possibility of a realistic increase in the rebate of income tax for a married couple does have possibilities. While a rebate of \$2 000 may not be sufficient incentive for a great many women to leave the work force the main thing is that it would open the door for some to leave. It gives them the option of remaining home if they so desire. It would be a good starting point.

Neither do I agree with the philosophy that this scheme implies that married women are being singled out as the cause of unemployment and that they should leave their jobs in order that other people might have them. This idea is frequently expressed throughout the community but I do not think it is a just one. Nevertheless, I think we must recognise the fact that every married woman who leaves the work force leaves a vacancy for someone else to fill. Because of this it may well be that the amount stated by the Federal Treasurer of \$1 500 million lost in revenue may not be the case. If each job is filled by someone else it may very well release the Commonwealth Government—the Social Security Department—from having to pay to a new employee a dole payment. A new employee will

certainly be paying income tax to the Government. So things could very well even out quite nicely.

Quite apart from the effect on the unemployment scene, I believe there is another very valid reason for having a closer look at raising the tax rebate for dependent married women to \$2 000. It could be seen as a beginning to recognising the value of having one parent in the home full time. There is no doubt about the value of that. Having one parent at home full time, particularly when there are small children involved, may make all the difference between those children growing up in a house or growing up in a home.

I know we have a great many single parents who simply have to go to work to support themselves and their children. However, the fact that we cannot fix everyone's problems in one fell swoop is no reason for not attempting to fix some problems.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We would agree with you on that point.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: A realistic tax rebate of \$2 000 for a dependent spouse would also help to give recognition to those couples making a personal commitment to marriage as a partnership. Because of this I cannot support the statement of the National Women's Advisory Council which appeared in the Press on the 26th February, a portion of which I shall quote, as follows—

"While the proposal at first sight may appear attractive to some women, the rebate wouldn't be a \$40-a-week bonus for women but a once-a-year rebate for their husbands", Mrs Beaurepaire said.

"The proposal is of no benefit for married women already at home or for single parents".

I have said already it would be no benefit to single parents, but it would be of benefit to married women already at home. From a reading of that quotation I think it is apparent the council tends to see marriage not as a partnership but as two people, each running separate business enterprises. I know in some instances, unfortunately, that is the case; but it is not the case everywhere and I do not believe it is the case in the majority of marriages—certainly not in country areas where of necessity marriage is a partnership. What benefits one partner benefits the other.

If this nation is to have anything to celebrate in the next 150 years, Governments and their advisers must cease looking only at what might be

termed "political gimmickry" and have a harder look at the long-term benefits for the nation. In this case I see the long-term benefits as the recognition and encouragement of the close-knit family unit, which is the strength on which this nation was built.

I hope this State Government will make a firm recommendation to the Federal Government to increase the tax concession for a dependent spouse, male or female, to a realistic figure in recognition of domestic responsibility.

My next comments relate to the controversial clearing controls as have applied to catchment areas in the south of the State, a great deal of which is in my area. Unfortunately, it is a fact that a number of farmers have been badly disadvantaged by these controls. Nevertheless, again, I make no apology for voting for these controls. I believe the Government did the right thing and I am pleased the guidelines have been re-written. I am also pleased the Minister and his department have made it clear that they do not intend the guidelines to be treated as rigid rules, and that they will be progressively reviewed on the basis of experience and the results of research.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They were altered marginally just before lunch.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I am pleased to hear that.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was to do with poisonous plants and trees for renewing fence posts.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: That was a very contentious issue which was not fully understood and caused a great deal of anxiety.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mind you, I have had great trouble getting sensible suggestions from farmers and their organisations in the affected areas.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: This is understandable when it has been such an emotional issue.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is understandable, but it still makes life difficult.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: True enough, but we must remember what the Prime Minister said—that life was not meant to be easy.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: But not quite as difficult as that.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: Everything is relative.

On the matter of research, I believe the whole of the south of the State should be examined to ascertain just what percentage of tree growth we

have left; and I mean "the whole of the south of the State", because it is a fact that on farms which were cleared around the turn of the century, and on which shelter belts and areas of virgin bush were left standing for whatever reasons, as the years have progressed, the trees have thinned out. Very often no trees are left at all in those areas, and this has happened mostly through natural causes such as lightning strikes, fires, old age, and degeneration. Whatever the cause it is unfortunate that the trees are gone and have not been replaced.

In view of the knowledge that the salt content of our water supplies has become acute, even to a dangerous level, and in light of the fact that there has been an increase in the area of salt-affected land, the Government must do something more than to impose clearing controls on certain catchment areas. I know that some shires in the south have introduced their own tree nursery systems whereby they are supplying each of their ratepayers who desire to take up the offer up to 10 trees for free and an almost unlimited number of other trees at a very nominal cost. This plan should be extended to all shires, with or without Government assistance, to get it off the ground, the point being that every landholder in the south of the State would readily be able to acquire trees from a source within easy distance of the property he owns.

If all landholders in the south could be persuaded to replant at least one-tenth of the land they own with indigenous trees and keep them well established it would be possible to ease the clearing controls to permit owners in the catchment areas perhaps to clear up to possibly 90 per cent of the land they own provided they do not clear it at a rate of more than 10 per cent per annum because that rate of clearing under those conditions would allow for careful monitoring of the effect on the water supplies and the encroachment of salt on the land.

I wish members to note the fact that I have mentioned indigenous trees by which I mean wandoo, blackbut, powderbark, and marri. The reason I mention them is that I am somewhat unhappy about any further extension of the planting of pine trees. I realise that pines give a comparatively quick return and do appear to grow very well in most areas in which they have been planted, although some of the trees have been replaced three or four times due to drought, fire, and so on.

The pine trees do have certain disadvantages or drawbacks and one of these is that they need to be planted fairly close together, and as a consequence no pasture can grow underneath

them; whereas with indigenous trees there is some grass cover. It is not the grass about which I am concerned, but that our indigenous trees do help with pasturing and with the fostering of the ecological system which helps to preserve the land itself.

Also, pine trees have an exudate which tends to kill off soil microbes and natural fungi with catastrophic results, whereas indigenous trees do not have this effect. In other words, native trees can be grown and removed for timber or for any other purpose, and then the land can be utilised immediately for some other crop or for more trees. I understand this is not the case when pine trees have been grown. Indeed, from my experience I know this is not so.

Furthermore, in the matter of the effect of rain which actually falls in these areas planted with pine trees, it is known that the pine trees catch a great deal of the rain in their foliage so that water never actually hits the soil, and in some areas this has a detrimental effect on water and soil conservation. Other trees which might be encouraged for general planting could be nut trees, because they also grow very well in the south of the State and pasture grows successfully beneath them. In addition they give out no poisonous exudates. They are deciduous trees and so allow light to penetrate to the pasture. They produce a renewable cash crop each year and the timber of course can be used. In fact it is very valuable, as is the walnut wood of which there is a great shortage throughout the world. Another valuable advantage about indigenous trees, or nut trees, is that they do not have to be harvested all at once, as is necessary with the pine trees otherwise they get past the stage of harvesting.

All of us are aware that the Forests Department is carrying out extensive trials into agro-forestry, which, in effect, is the growing of trees in conjunction with grazing of sheep or cattle or the harvesting of oats and lupins underneath the trees. I am pleased the trials are being carried out and will be even more pleased when some well researched recommendations are made regarding agro-forestry.

I have one other matter to mention before I leave the salt problem. I was very interested to read in *The West Australian* on the 23rd April the following article—

SALT-LAND COSTS

The Federal Treasurer, Mr Howard, was asked whether he would give tax deductibility for farmers' costs in salt-land reclamation and salinity prevention.

He told a WA delegate, Mr R. G. Pike (MLC, North Metropolitan), that he did not know enough about the subject to give an intelligent, comprehensive answer but he agreed to consider the suggestion.

The Government's options on revenue were highly restricted. Later, outside the conference, Mr Pike said he had asked the question because salinity was a very serious problem for Australian farmers and particularly those in WA.

A tax-deductibility scheme for land reclamation would encourage farmers to make an immediate start on this vital work.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: *The West Australian* did not report me correctly. I went on to say that I was aware that limited deductibility was already available.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I am aware of that, but in case some members are not I will read another article which appeared in the *Farmers' Weekly* of the 16th November, 1978. It reads as follows—

Salt land reclamation cost is a full tax deduction

Expenses incurred in combating or preventing salt encroachment on land used for primary production are an outright tax deduction.

This was confirmed by Mr McBean of the Australian Taxation Office this week.

The *Farmers Weekly* had published this information earlier this year but there appears to have been some confusion in the minds of primary producers, or taxation officials, over the validity of claims on salt control and prevention.

However, the deduction would only apply if the land had been used by the taxpayer for some years for primary-production.

Salt prevention would generally represent no more than an expense encountered in the ordinary course of carrying on a business, Mr McBean said. It was designed to restore to the land some of the qualities lost as a result of primary production.

This expenditure would qualify for outright deduction in the year in which it was incurred in terms of section 51 (1) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

However, similar expenditure by a person who had only recently bought the land appeared to be of a capital nature.

As expenditure of a capital nature it would not be deductible under section 51 (1) but would qualify for deduction over a period of 10 years.

It would qualify for deduction at a rate of 10 per cent a year over 10 years under section 75A as expenditure incurred in the preparation of land for agriculture.

Because there seemed at that time to be some confusion as to whether that was, in fact, a true statement, my colleague (Mr Gayfer) wrote to the Taxation Office and has very kindly given me permission to quote from that letter and the reply he received, in the hope that there will not be further confusion in the Press or anywhere else in relation to taxation deductions for salt land reclamation. The letter Mr Gayfer wrote reads—

Dear Mr McBean,

I am enclosing a photostat of an article appearing in the *Western Australian Farmers' Weekly* of November 16th, 1978.

As I have had some experience in the exactness of reports through the media could I please request of you to confirm if in fact the substance of the article is correct.

The reply from the Taxation Office, dated the 19th December, 1978, reads—

I refer to your letter dated 14 December, addressed to Mr McBean, asking confirmation of the substance of an article on salt land reclamation expenditure in the *Farmers' Weekly* of 16 November 1978. The substance of the article is correct.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) M. T. Healy

Deputy Commissioner Of Taxation

In view of the fact that Mr Pike did not know about this matter, and particularly in view of the fact that Mr Howard seemed to know nothing about it, I am wondering whether the people representing this State in the Federal Parliament are aware of the situation in Western Australia and whether they are putting forward the problems the people in the country areas of this State are experiencing. I leave that matter for further consideration.

I would like to mention two other matters very briefly. I give support to one of the matters Mr Lewis mentioned; that is, the anxiety about an animal, said to be a cougar, in the Noodearrup area in the south of the State. At last it appears this matter is being taken seriously. At last people have come forward and, without fear of being laughed to scorn, have told of the sightings of this animal and the destruction that has been caused.

I mention the matter because I have been told by someone who saw this animal—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think it would be more accurate if you said there was a determination to come forward and prove it did not exist.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: As the Leader of the House will have it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There is no possibility of its existing, of course. It is a figment of the imagination.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: That may be so, but a person has told me he saw a completely strange animal fitting the description that has been given, and that person was not drunk and is not stupid.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It has been seen from Cape York in Queensland to Cape Leeuwin in Western Australia over many years, and never has one been shot, with all the good shooters around.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: That is true.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: You will shoot one on your first expedition.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: I wonder whether the Leader of the House has ever tried to shoot cats around his house.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I have actually shot cats.

The Hon. W. M. PIESSE: Congratulations! They are very hard to shoot. However, there is some cause for anxiety about whatever it is that is causing the depletion of stock in that area.

The other matter I wish to mention has been talked about previously in this House; in fact, it was one of the first matters I raised when I came here. I refer to the deplorable state of Donnybrook Hospital. It is a surprise to everybody that it has not yet been put into a reasonable condition. I will leave it at that, again saying I hope I will see the Donnybrook Hospital made into a reasonable medical facility before another year has passed.

Mr President, I support the motion.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [2.56 p.m.]: I would like to support the motion before the House, and in doing so offer my contratulations to His Excellency the Governor on the manner in which he presented the Speech and the Government's programme for this session of Parliament.

I would also like to congratulate the Hon. Norman Moore on his speech when moving the Address-in-Reply. It was unfortunate it did not receive the publicity it deserved. It was a very

good speech which emphasised the importance of new technologies to the area he represents. He is a young, progressive member who is obviously able to grasp these matters very clearly, and his study of them indicates to him—and, following his speech, to the rest of the House—the benefits that can be gained from modern technology. These changes, which are now occurring every day, would be of enormous benefit to his province in improving communications, education, and so on.

Members of the Opposition, on the other hand, have so far made a number of speeches which, to say the least, lack lustre. They are normal in their criticism of the Government and the Governor's Speech. They have suggested that perhaps the Government is not very progressive and that the Governor's Speech gives very little indication of what we are trying to do. That is totally incorrect. Members of the Opposition are obsessed with sniping at a Government which, without a shadow of doubt, is recognised as the best State Government in Australia today. I know that statement is open to argument; nevertheless in it is a fact. Anyone who travels around Australia today will recognise that the Government of this State, particularly under the leadership of Sir Charles Court, is very good indeed. I think Mr Cooley, by way of interjection just now, agreed with me.

We are entitled to expect from the Opposition constructive rather than destructive criticism. Surely it is the Opposition's job to try to find fault where it can—which I realise is very difficult—and be constructive about it. But it appears to me the Opposition has only been destructive. It has offered no real alternatives or solutions to the one or two problems we know exist today.

The major problem as I see it—and it appears the Opposition agrees with me—is unemployment. I make no apologies for saying I am very concerned indeed about the unemployment situation. Argument has taken place on both sides of the House in relation to the number of people who perhaps prefer to be unemployed. I will not go into that today, whether it be 1 per cent or 40 per cent. My concern is that, even if 200 or 300 people who wish to work and play their part in the community are unemployed, it is a very serious situation; but we are talking about several thousand of such people.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: A great many people are looking for jobs.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course, and we are very concerned about the situation. We

understand the social problems, the heartaches, the worries, and the anxiety of young people who are unemployed, and certainly of married couples, both of whom may be unemployed. Obviously a great deal of despair and misery is caused to them.

So, we do share the concern of the Opposition on this point. We do see it as a grave risk to young people, particularly those who remain unemployed for a number of months and, perhaps, a number of years. The risk is that they may never seek employment, and even if they are successful in obtaining employment they might not wish to remain employed. Such people run the risk of expecting the Government to keep them. I would say that in many cases they may be regarded as wards of the State.

I see this as a rather major problem. I believe any Government must take initiatives and must try to rectify the problem. Of course, we are concerned with the problem and with the dangers we see in it. It behoves all of us to work together in this regard, and to try to create employment wherever we can.

The point has been made, perhaps by Mr Cooley and one or two members of the Opposition, that we are happy with the unemployment situation and have tried to create unemployment in some areas. It has been said that we are doing this to keep some pressure on the work force and—if one likes to use the term—to create a pool of unemployed.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is part of your policy.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is not part of our policy, and the honourable member knows it.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It was stated by your leader.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have just pointed out the humanitarian side of this problem. Let us look at the economics side. This nation pays out in unemployment benefits \$1 000 million a year.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is a pittance.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying \$1000 million is a large sum of money. This amount could finance the building of many hospitals, schools, roads, and railways. The fact is \$1 000 million is really going to waste, but it would not be wasted if these people were employed. I agree we have no choice but to pay out this money. At the present time I do not say the Government pays these people too large an amount, and I am aware that whatever they are paid is just sufficient to keep them.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Why not talk to your friends in industry in an effort to get them employment?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The point is at least \$1 000 million a year is paid out in unemployment benefits. If these unemployed people were working they would be earning wages and paying taxes. The amount they would pay in taxes would, I estimate, be at least \$500 million a year. So, we are talking about a direct loss to the Federal Government of \$1 500 million a year, and that constitutes half the national debt.

We can see this is a serious economic problem. Any Government that is concerned about the economic situation would obviously try to overcome the problem if it could, and work towards creating all the employment possible. We should bear in mind that all parties, including the party to which Mr Cooley belongs, desire full employment. The only argument is how we should go about it. Mr Cooley has said he believes the Government should undertake more projects and tasks.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I did not say that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The honourable member said the Government should spend more money on projects, as his friends have said so frequently. They have said the Government should spend more money and undertake more projects. However, all this increases the deficit which must be paid for in the future.

We on the Government side believe the only way to provide full, long-term, and permanent employment is to create a stronger economy and a responsible economy—one that instills a great deal of public confidence. I am referring to the private sector, which is the biggest sector in providing employment, and not to the Government sector.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You have cut wages.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is not true at all. It is a responsible attitude to contain wages, to face the market, and to ascertain what it can and cannot bear. Many world leaders in the trade union movement recognise there must be a limit to wage rises.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Tell me how will we be able to create jobs in the 1980s, when it is predicted that by the year 2000 only 2 per cent of the work force will be required to produce our needs.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition got that. He must have plucked it out of the air.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is not plucked out of the air.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He is talking purely about the field of agriculture.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Look at the Hudson Institute projection.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Only a few days ago Mr Cooley stated he would never oppose any wage rise. I say this is an irresponsible attitude.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Wage rises properly determined.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Cooley did not say that. His attitude is irresponsible. I do not think he meant to go that far; I think what he meant was that he would be prepared to support any responsible wage rise.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You and members of your party would not knock back any pay rises.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: In fact, our party did knock back pay rises. The honourable member has said he would support wage rises for himself; this is a most irresponsible attitude.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Properly determined by the tribunal.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: He did not say that, but he might have added that later.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Cooley would not think about going outside arbitration to obtain rises.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The loss of \$1 500 million a year is too much for any State or the nation to bear. We have seen an enormous loss in production and in overseas markets, and the cost is inestimable. It has been stated we can produce but cannot sell the products. However, if we produce competitively under good management we could sell on the world markets.

In the home market we see the problem of reduced consumer spending because of the large number of unemployed.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You are at variance with the views of your Prime Minister.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have a right to say what I think.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He was reported differently in the Press.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not care how he was reported in the Press. I have a right to say these things in this House; that is the difference between the party to which the Opposition belongs and my party.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't you remember the occasion when we were dealing with the Liquor Bill?

Several members interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am pointing out to members the cost of unemployment to the nation, and the loss in taxes and in production through unemployment. Obviously there is a loss to the private sector through low consumer spending. I am talking about the sale of houses, furniture, cars, etc. If there was full employment the situation would be improved and we would have a much stronger economy. I have listened to the speeches of Mr Dans for five years; I do not think I have missed many.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you learn anything?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am waiting for the day when he makes a speech in which he offers encouragement to the public. I am concerned with his attitude; I consider him to be a doomsday man.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If members opposite were dinkum and wanted to tell the public the truth they would say that 200 people at Dampier will lose their jobs through the closure of the pellet plant in the next couple of weeks.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: How can I say that?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think that would be right.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying we as a Government want full employment, and the only way to achieve full employment is to have a strong private sector. No useful purpose is served by the Leader of the Opposition putting forward depressing ideas. I have not heard him say, "We will do this to create employment. The prospects are good."

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Evidently you have not read my speeches. I have said I would support any real effort that is made to generate the economy.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Does the honourable member not think a real move to improve the situation is to offer encouragement to the people, instead of being a doomsday man always reflecting on the sad side? He does not offer any encouragement or support.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You people are the Government.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Does the Leader of the Opposition not think, as a responsible Opposition, it should offer some constructive ideas, instead of destructive thoughts? The difference between Mr Dans and Sir Charles

Court is that Sir Charles is always optimistic and firm in his resolve that the State will go forward.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Now we have 40 people seeking employment for every job vacancy.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have not missed many of the speeches made by the honourable member. I am still waiting for the day when he displays optimism and says his party will support Government initiatives.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You should give them jobs and not words. You are just following the old tried and tested pattern; keep talking, tell lies, tell lies, and then the people might believe you.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not think I have told any lies today. I am sorry that Mr Dans uses that sort of language.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You have played the fool.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It is a sad thing the Leader of the Opposition is able to take this attitude.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You say you will create 1 000 jobs, and I will ask leave to get up and support you. I am not going to give your spurious policies respectability. I have no intention of doing that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Dans should give himself respectability by trying to be constructive. I am not criticising him for his ability to speak or his knowledge, because I have agreed—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You should read what Mr Hawke said about your party.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am impressed by the way the Leader of the Opposition is able to put words together, and I am impressed by his great knowledge. I am depressed that he is not definite and more responsible in encouraging the public to greater efforts.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: If you stop telling lies about us, we will stop telling the truth about you.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Dans can say anything he likes about me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Not you personally. You know that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not worried. We have plenty of time. I am not going to be sidetracked by the Opposition. I will be constructive.

The Opposition, as I said earlier, is constantly bemoaning the unemployment situation—and rightly so. I have said I agree with the Opposition. I am very sad at the situation. However, the plain

facts are that the Opposition in this House—and I again point to Mr Dans—has failed to respond to Government initiatives for the sake of increased employment.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What Government initiatives have we failed to respond to? Tell me one.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will quote one matter. There was opposition from the Opposition benches—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And that is what we are here for.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: —because we tried to introduce a woodchipping project. I would challenge members of the Opposition to say that they support woodchipping. I doubt very much whether they would. They are fence sitters.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Just a minute. You have the wrong Bill. You are talking about bauxite mining. We signed the agreement for woodchipping.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Opposition never fails to disparage the Government in relation to any of the big projects. This is unfortunate, because it means many thousands of jobs—

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is not true.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: What about bauxite? Let us consider bauxite mining, as Mr Dans has kindly brought that up. I would like the members of the Opposition to indicate now whether they support bauxite mining. Mr Dans certainly does. It is his policy.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It is all in *Hansard*. You can read it.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying Mr Dans's party is split on the issue. Mrs Vaughan said quite clearly the other day she was opposed to bauxite mining. She is a member of a party which is complaining about unemployment—

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: We are only against the expansion of bauxite mining.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: No; there was quite a clear interjection from the Hon. Grace Vaughan indicating that she is opposed—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Woodchipping or bauxite? Get it right.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying members of the Opposition are prepared to oppose projects which would create many jobs. It is a big thing when even one member of the Opposition is opposed to such a project. I wonder how many more members of the Opposition are

opposed. Perhaps Miss Elliott, by way of interjection, would indicate whether she is, in fact, opposed to bauxite mining.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Are you going to make the statement again that we are opposed to woodchipping?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I did not say that. I said the Labor Party was opposed to woodchipping until a member of the ALP in the south-west realised that if the project were lost he might well lose his seat.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: As the Government, we signed the agreement.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am talking about bauxite mining. Some members of the Labor Party do oppose bauxite mining. A great number of jobs is involved in bauxite mining. I am glad that the Hon. Grace Vaughan is in her seat now. She would confirm that she is opposed to bauxite mining. That is recorded in *Hansard*.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Of course, I am.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I did not quite catch the remarks of the Hon. Don Cooley.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Do you agree with unlimited bauxite mining?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course, I do not. I support controls. This Government has imposed controls. There is a necessity for control and a careful watch to be kept on bauxite mining.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Funny joke!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Members of the Opposition are deluding themselves when they suggest the Government would not take that attitude. We are a responsible Government. We are responsible for promoting projects, and we are responsible in trying to achieve as many permanent jobs as we possibly can.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: You are desperate.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not desperate at all. We will go to the public, and the public will make up its mind as it always has done. The public will go for Sir Charles Court and his Government the next time. It is unfortunate, Mr Cooley will not be here to see the considerable benefits the State will gain when the Court Government is returned.

I will move onto another topic. I am disappointed in the Governor's Speech in one particular area. That is the area dealing with labour and industry.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You cannot be disappointed in something in the Governor's

Speech. You will get a bit of a beating in the party room!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The last paragraph in relation to labour and industry in the Governor's Speech reads as follows—

A wide-ranging review of the industrial legislation, including workers' compensation, is being undertaken.

That is a very small comment about a very important subject. I hope the Government is prepared and determined to take much firmer steps than indicated in the Speech.

I suggest a complete rewrite of the Industrial Arbitration Act. In the light of recent events, that Act needs consideration.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Commissioner Kelly has done that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Commissioner Kelly has submitted a report, and obviously it is under consideration by the Government now.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Well, what are you complaining about?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am just saying what I think. I am suggesting a rewrite of the Act. There are some matters on which I hope the Government will act. Whether it does is another matter; but I am entitled to say in this House what I think the Government should do.

I believe one area needing some consideration is that of compulsory unionism. I am glad to see some members of the Opposition in another place have indicated they are firmly against compulsory unionism. There should be no preference clauses, and there should be no compulsion at all.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Where is it written into any Act of Parliament that there should be compulsory unionism?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Cooley knows as well as I do their methods of achieving compulsory unionism. I was not going to mention this subject, because I thought it would not be necessary. However, Mr Cooley has asked for examples of compulsory unionism. In the *Daily News* of the 11th April, there was an article headed "TLC accused of blackmail". That is the organisation of which Mr Cooley is a former president—and I am informed he was a good president. The article reads as follows—

A Trades and Labor Council move that would stop people buying cars from non-unionist salesmen was described today as "industrial blackmail."

"The vast majority of car salesmen will not be intimidated into joining the union by

this," Mr Murray Bogunovich, a spokesman for car salesmen, said.

That is compulsory unionism, when an organisation indicates to its members they should not buy from anyone who is not a union member.

Is that not trying to force somebody to join a union? Is not that stand-over tactics? Perhaps Mr Cooley would not support that kind of thing. I hope he would be opposed to the kind of statement I have just quoted. Would he say it is a bad thing to try to force car salesmen to join a union by that method. We have seen Mr Cooley in action in this House. He would encourage them; there is no doubt about that.

My areas of concern relate to preference clauses and compulsory unionism. I am firmly opposed to those practices. Mr Cooley knows that. In his speeches he has indicated quite clearly how he feels.

The Government has a responsibility to do something about picketing. We have witnessed some terrible situations in the last few weeks when stand-over tactics have been employed. There has been the obstruction of workers who have been trying to go to work, and of businesses which have been trying to carry out their legitimate business. This picketing has to be controlled.

Personally I do not oppose peaceful picketing. It is a reasonable way in which workers may demonstrate their concern about conditions or other matters.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: As long as they do not succeed.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not agree with the comment made by the honourable member. We are talking about situations where there is deliberate obstruction and intimidation. The general public abhor that type of picketing.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: What about the headline, "Picket Violence"? Who creates the violence? Who created violence in that case?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am glad the honourable member referred to the matter.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Who created the violence?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am talking about picketing and I am concerned about the violence in the same manner as 90 per cent of the members of the public are concerned about it. When we get the sort of headline, "Picket Violence", and Mr Cooley tries to indicate that the police are responsible for it—or I assume that is what he is indicating—

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Who created the violence?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The violence was created by the people lying on the fronts of the cars. They are the people.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Members of the Building Workers' Union.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The people we are talking about in relation to this headline, that is, the people lying across the cars preventing free entry and free movement, are the people causing the violence. Freedom of movement and freedom of choice are basic to our way of life in Australia and they are fundamental to Liberal Party policies. That is what we believe in—freedom of choice and movement.

The Industrial Arbitration Act should be amended to ensure that we have this freedom, which possibly we take for granted. The Act should be amended so that our freedom of choice and movement is protected. Mr Cooley asks who is doing this and who is doing that. If ever we wanted to look back on a demonstration of bad behaviour in this House we need only recall the recent behaviour of the Hon. Don Cooley. I do not believe we have ever heard a more callous and brutal speech from a member of his House. I certainly have not heard one that was more callous or brutal than the speech made by the Hon. Don Cooley on that occasion. At that time we were debating the legislation relating to essential commodities. It was a terrible speech. We saw the raised fist and heard the call of "scabs" every two or three minutes. This term may horrify the Leader of the Opposition, but it came through time and time again. That is what we are talking about when we refer to the intimidation involved in picketing. The word "scab" is not one which should be used in this place. I believe it is disgraceful that it should be used here.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You are too squeamish.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Am I, Sir, too squeamish? What about the people who are trying to get to work in their cars; are they squeamish? They have a right to attend their jobs.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Get on with a little bit of union bashing. It always gets you a few lines in the papers.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will not get reported in the papers. Then we heard the people

who dared to vote against the Labor Party being called "poor suckers".

Mr Cooley interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Would the honourable member cease inciting interjections and direct his remarks to the Chair.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I should like to point out the ALP seems to have lost track of the wishes of the work force and of its own union members. This is a tragedy. Perhaps some people are realising this at the present moment. A report was published quite recently which dealt with managers and workers and referred to them as being at the crossroads. I will not go into great detail—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not, for God's sake!

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course, it makes the Leader of the Opposition touchy. It is the most damaging document to have been published in recent years. It contains some comments which would hit the Leader of the Opposition in the raw. The point I am making is, without a doubt, this report points out the Labor Party and the people responsible for voting for them—Trades Hall—

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: They are the people in my electorate.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: They are, that is right; but who selects the honourable member in the first place? Let us be fair about the matter. Members opposite have lost track—

The Hon. Grace Vaughan interjected.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am learning all the time as a result of the interjections of members opposite.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: What about quoting from the document?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Would you like to table the document later so that I can read it?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will not argue over a ruling made by the President. Of course, I shall table it. I will not slink out to my office and write words on a grubby piece of paper.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: You have done that before.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Of course, I will table the document. I have prepared a photocopy of it for that very purpose and I shall make it available at the end of my speech. This report was published by Sentry Holdings Limited and it is entitled "Managers and Workers—At the Crossroads".

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Who is the author?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Sentry Holdings Limited must obviously be the author.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Who is the author—Mr Thomas?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It may have been Mr Dans. I should like to quote from chapter 2 of the report as follows—

Compulsory unionism is not supported by workers or any category of leader with the exception of union leaders. And a majority of workers and other leaders feel that union leaders often seem to be looking for something to justify their existence.

There is no doubt that comment puts the situation in a nutshell.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Who wrote the report? Who is the author?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Leader of the Opposition should not try to sidetrack me.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am entitled to know the name of the author. You might have printed that yourself.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I did not print this report. It was published by Sentry Holdings Limited. I am quoting from it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am sure there is an author of it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is "A National Opinion Research Study Conducted by McNair Anderson Associates Pty. Ltd. In Association with Professor Roger Layton Of the University of New South Wales."

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will honourable members cease interjecting and carrying on conversations amongst themselves? Will the honourable member on his feet direct his comments to the Chair?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I shall bow to your wishes, Sir. I should like to quote the last paragraph on this page. It says—

Finally there is general agreement in all segments of the workforce that pressure for wage increases at present is not really supported by the rank and file.

The Hon. Don Cooley should read this report. It would do him good. For some reason or other the Opposition has lost track of the wishes of the workforce generally—bearing in mind under half of the work force belongs to a union—and, in particular, the wishes of its own members.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Do you say a worker on \$150 per week is not looking for a wage increase?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is the honourable member saying that?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You are saying the rank and file does not want wage increases.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It is fair to say that many of these stoppages are against the wishes of the majority of the workers and union members. Somehow or other, workers and union members are forced or persuaded to strike, thus causing the stoppages to which I have referred. The workers incur enormous financial loss and despite the wage increases they obtain, in fact the total loss is never completely made up.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is how Christianity began. They lost a lot of people in the Colosseum, but they kept going.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am not criticising the actions of the trade union movement when it acts responsibly. However, I cannot treat the Hon. Don Cooley as a responsible member of this House when he makes comments such as the ones I have referred to in relation to the essential commodities legislation. But I believe the honourable member was carried away and upset on that occasion—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You upset him. What do you expect?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Members opposite seem to be mouthing the same old clichés and adopting antiquated ideas. They have to grow up, because union leaders all over the world are recognising that the strike action which has been taking place for many years is becoming outdated and there are better ways of solving industrial problems.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I have noticed that recently in the United Kingdom, the USA, and West Germany.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Union leaders in the United Kingdom are starting to talk about it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is happening in the USA also.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Frank Chappell, who is a prominent trade union leader, said he thought strike action was going out of date, it was old hat, and there are more responsible means of solving industrial problems. That is what we are all looking for.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I support that. You say I never support you, but I support that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will not pursue that matter, but I wanted to point out some particular matters about which I felt most strongly. I ask again that the Leader of the House convey to the Premier my wishes that the

Industrial Arbitration Act be rewritten and some of the points I have mentioned be incorporated in the new Act, because they are most important.

Another point I wish to discuss concerns something which is occurring in my province. I listened with great interest to Mr Tom Knight when he spoke about rubbish and waste disposal, and management. I thought he offered more to us in this field than anything I have heard previously during the last five years. Obviously, he has a great knowledge of the subject and has taken a great deal of interest in the problems, and carried out some investigations overseas. He has studied modern techniques adopted by many other countries, and he has studied the problems forced on them at first hand.

I think it is fair enough to say those problems have been forced on some countries because of their populations and the shortage of suitable land. Large cities have very little spare ground for the dumping of rubbish, and so techniques and processes have been developed which are far more advanced than anything we have thought of.

Mr Knight said equipment was used to produce power, fertiliser, and many other things and, in fact, money was being made out of rubbish. It is time that we in this State considered the alternatives available to us for the disposal of rubbish, particularly as Perth will have a population of something like one million people in the not-too-distant future.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I can tell the member I will be speaking on the same subject.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Then I am glad I beat Miss Elliott to it. It is important to consider that the processes used obviously are effective. Obviously, the methods used are of benefit to the community.

The cost of the equipment and the modern techniques is quite enormous, and I was staggered when Mr Tom Knight put forward a figure of \$30 million to \$40 million.

The Hon. T. Knight: That is small in comparison with what the cost will be eventually.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is right. I was horrified at the suggested cost of handling rubbish, until Mr Knight expanded the possibilities, and the income which would be derived from the control of waste disposal, and that perhaps some companies or even foreign Governments would be prepared to help in its initial financing. It seemed to me to be a realistic situation when Mr Knight suggested that perhaps a charge of \$1 per head could be levied on the people of Perth. That is not out of the question.

The point I am making is that it seems to me to be out of the question for any city, or any authority, to undertake such a project without some sort of Government guarantee or assistance. I hope my own State Government will look at any proposals put before it, and will try to assist wherever possible.

My interest arises mainly because of the development which has occurred in my province.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: In my province.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The proposal to build a massive rubbish dump in Helena Valley affects my electorate.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: It will not affect Mr Grayden's electorate.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am concerned with all electorates, and if the problem overlaps into Miss Elliott's province I will be happy to hear her views.

The proposal for the establishment of a rubbish dump is serious for the people in the community and, to me, it is totally unacceptable for the reasons I will put forward. There have been many suggestions that the pit is ideally situated and suitable for the purpose of rubbish dumping. At the moment the pit is of some considerable size and something like 750 000 cubic metres of sand have been excavated from it. It is a very large hole and is fairly close to Perth.

However, for all its advantages there are aspects which will be very dangerous to that locality. The proposal should be looked at carefully because it is on an elevated site. It is on the escarpment and overlooks the Perth area and the plains. The excavation has gone down to a depth of something like 20 feet, and equipment working in the pit is getting bogged even in the summer months. Bearing in mind the pit is on an elevated site; it is obvious that water cannot run uphill, so it must seep down. No matter what anyone says about a clay base, I cannot see how the water can remain in the one spot forever, so it will seep downwards.

One has to bear in mind also that the area receives a rainfall of 250 millimetres, 10 inches more than Perth. Another consideration is that the site is, in fact, a catchment area. The pit would be large enough to catch sufficient water for a small country town. Also, three creeks run out of the pit, and the site is no more than 200 metres from the Helena River. So, whatever the Public Health Department or the consultants say and whatever is said about the soil base, without a shadow of doubt there must be seepage because of the heavy rainfall.

The creeks run downhill through various properties, past some very pleasant houses, and into the river. Anyone who takes the trouble to look at the local maps will see the creeks indicated quite clearly; they are not insignificant. They are about 200 metres from the main watercourse, and that is of great concern, obviously, to the people of the area. It should be of concern also to the people of the metropolitan area.

It is probable the site will be used for a long time—possibly for 15 years or longer. With the use of modern methods the life of the pit could be extended to 25 years, so it will be a permanent site.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Has the Public Health Department cleared it?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: No. The fact is that without a doubt any run-off from the pit will pollute the Helena River, which is one of the main tributaries of the Swan River. The Swan River runs through the metropolitan area—Claremont, Dalkeith, Nedlands, down to Fremantle, and to the ocean.

Over a period of time the water from the pit will become a festering sewer. It will not be possible to filter the water which must run from the pit so it will be almost sewage which will go into the river. There is no way to control that sort of flow.

Another point which has not been raised recently, or at all, is that the site is situated only 400 metres from the Helena Vale School—which is in my province. Something like 137 pupils attend that school at this time, and I expect that figure will build up to 200 in the not-too-distant future. The Education Department is spending \$71 000 on new classrooms and toilets at the present time. I am sure that department will not be thrilled with the idea of a permanent rubbish dump within 400 metres of the school!

I have with me a "Brief to council's consultants", from the City of Perth. The brief reads—

Maunsell & Partners Pty. Ltd. have been engaged as Council's Consultants to investigate and develop a comprehensive refuse disposal plan for the immediate and long term requirements and the brief to the Consultants is as follows:—

"To produce by the 30th June 1979 a long range community waste management programme for the City of Perth".

In their investigations the Consultants are required to consider—

1. All proven waste disposal systems.
2. Suitable sites for locating such facilities.
3. (a) The most beneficial means of disposal having regard to all the environmental factors.
- (b) The most economic means of disposal.

I have read that brief to members, because I am concerned with two points in it. The first is the deadline of the 30th June, 1979, which I understand the Government has set. I believe that does not give Maunsell & Partners, or any other organisation, any chance to fully consider the alternatives or what can be developed in that particular area.

The other point I am concerned with is the reference to the most economic means of disposal. When we are talking about modern methods of disposal we are talking in terms of millions of dollars, as Mr Knight has so rightly pointed out.

I think the City of Perth will adopt the most economic means at its disposal in the short term; maybe in the long term it will plan a different process. However, the short-term proposal will be to dump the rubbish and cover it, as applied in the old system. Arguments have been advanced that the position will be different, and the rubbish will be compressed. I do not think that system makes any difference. The rubbish will merely be compressed in the Perth area with a consequent reduction in transportation costs. However, if the rubbish is compressed in the dump it amounts to the same thing. Whether or not the rubbish is compressed, it all goes into the tip.

I regret that a time limit has been placed on the investigation. I hope that will not be adhered to. I hope that in an extended investigation, if there is no alternative in the short term other than to adopt the old methods, the City of Perth will not use the sand pit at Helena Valley.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I hope it will not dump the rubbish at the Causeway site.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I agree there is considerable concern in that regard. We must search for an alternative, in the long term and not the short term. For the reasons I have given, I cannot accept the proposition that has been put forward.

I have been in consultation with the Minister concerned and the City of Perth, and I have written to them. I have received replies from both parties. I now refer to the reply I received from the City of Perth, dated the 12th April, 1979,

signed by Mr Edwards, the Town Clerk. One paragraph of the letter is as follows—

The Consultants are widely experienced in waste disposal management and I would be surprised and disappointed if their recommendation was crude landfill.

I hope the Perth City Council will not accept crude landfill, and some alternative which is acceptable will be found. If that is not so, the Perth City Council may be forced to consider the use of the Helena Valley pit or some other site. As far as I am concerned, the dump will never be at Helena Valley.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We will all support you on that.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Earlier Mr Cooley, who is not now in the Chamber, mentioned a name. Everyone is aware of the identity of the owner of the pit. I greatly respect this person; I am sure he will listen to what the public have to say and will give their representations the consideration they deserve.

The owner of the Helena Valley pit is reported in the *Daily News* of the 11th April, under the heading of "Dump plea to MPs" as having made comments on this matter. The report suggested the people in the area can dissuade the owner from offering 40 acres for a dump. The owner of the dump is reported as having said—

I would withdraw immediately if this was likely to cause a nuisance and inconvenience to residents.

I would defy anyone to say that it will cause a nuisance.

That is fair enough. Let me suggest to the owner of the land—and this should benefit the Perth City Council and anyone else who is considering the use of this land—there obviously are nuisances. If Miss Elliott wants to add to this list she is entitled to do so. The list of objections is as follows—

1. Roads are totally inadequate to cope with the proposed traffic which would be taking rubbish to the tip.
2. The pit is in one of the most attractive areas close to Perth on the escarpment and with a scenic drive close by.
3. The land is no more than 150 metres from the Helena River a main Swan River tributary.
4. There are three creek lines leading from the site through private property, some with dams coming from these creeks and into the river.

5. Leaching must occur into the river as water is already close to the ground level in the pit.
6. The site is 400 metres from the Helena Valley School, a rapidly growing primary school which could expect up to 200 pupils in the near future.
7. The eastern corridor report suggests the locality should be used for special residential purposes.

I think they should be taken into consideration and hopefully the owner will reconsider the position. Certainly the Perth City Council must keep them in mind. If the matter goes as far as the Minister I am sure he will throw out any proposal to establish a rubbish dump at Helena Valley.

With those comments I support the motion.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.05 p.m.

THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [4.05 p.m.]: I wish to commence my remarks this afternoon by dealing with a matter which I believe is creating quite a good deal of hardship to many people in the community, and I refer to the high cost of dying and the funeral industry.

Each year about 8 000 people are buried or cremated in this State, and about 6 000 of them in the metropolitan area. If we work on an estimate of approximately \$1 000 for the most basic and modest funeral in the metropolitan area, it means we are dealing with a multi-million-dollar industry.

Death affects every family, and when it does so it is a particularly painful experience for the bereaved. It is a time when the last thing that should be imposed upon the bereaved is a financial burden which many of them find almost impossible to bear. In many cases it is not easy for a widow or a bereaved family to find \$1 000 and, of course, this adds to the distress they already feel. A number of people join a funeral fund in the belief that it will cover the cost of their funerals when they die, but it is discovered afterwards that the fund covers only portion of the cost involved, and the family of the deceased may find that it has hundreds of dollars still to pay.

Members may remember in 1977 an Anglican minister—the Reverend Peter Harrison—from Southern Cross drew attention to the excessive cost of funerals when he assisted his parishioners to conduct private funerals or arrange for funerals for their loved ones for the modest sum of \$68. He was not merely concerned about the cost—although that was an important factor.

However, just as important he felt was the involvement of family and friends in the actual funeral arrangements. He pointed out that a funeral can be a very moving occasion and that those organising the funeral can feel closer to the deceased.

The Reverend Peter Harrison has actually drawn up a do-it-yourself guide for people who want to conduct funerals themselves privately.

At the instigation of this minister, the Anglican Church established a commission to inquire into funerals. This commission brought down a report to the thirty-sixth Synod in November last year, and in its findings the commission had this to say—the option of being definitely and practically involved in the burial should be available to any who want to exercise it.

It recognised that such practice happens on many occasions in the country, often of necessity. However, in the metropolitan area we have found a number of serious difficulties that at the moment make it all but impossible.

Legally it is quite possible for a person to arrange a private funeral; there is nothing in the law to say that one cannot do so, and a funeral was actually arranged privately at Karrakatta early this year. The Perth family involved supplied its own coffin, used a station sedan to transport the coffin, and conducted its own ceremony at the grave side. I must add that the family never became involved in digging the grave, because this work is carried out by the grave diggers employed by the cemetery board concerned. However, the commission was referring to the red tape involved which frightens off many people. The commission had this to say—

Firstly, an undertaker's licence is required by the particular Cemetery Board concerned, but it would appear that in the metropolitan area they are not ready to grant this indiscriminately.

I am informed that the Anglican Church and the office of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board frequently receive inquiries from people interested in organising a funeral themselves rather than using the services of a professional funeral director. However, it appears that most of them become discouraged by the catch-22 situation they encounter. For example, to obtain an undertaker's licence a person must prove that he can obtain a casket or a coffin, but to obtain a casket or coffin he must show the manufacturer that he has or will have a licence to conduct a funeral. Of course, all applications for a licence must be referred to the trustees of the board of

the cemetery involved, and in the case of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board the trustees meet only once a month. No doubt this same situation applies to all cemeteries.

When the church commission was inquiring into this matter it interviewed Mr Bulloch of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board. Mr Bulloch was asked this question—

Does the Board ever receive requests for burial/cremation from persons other than funeral directors?

To which he replied—

Occasionally, but when all the requirements and formalities have been explained to them, they have always employed a funeral director. No-one has ever got as far as applying for an undertaker's licence.

I must point out that this statement was made before this year when, as I said, a private funeral was conducted at Karrakatta Cemetery. However, when the commission was taking evidence, the situation was as Mr Bulloch stated. Mr Bulloch was then asked—

What is/or would be the Board's reaction to such a request?

His reply was—

It would first refer the enquirer to Part IV of the By-Laws dealing with undertakers and list the documents required before a funeral could take place. If an application for a licence was lodged, it would be referred to the trustees. They meet once a month, but the Chairman would, no doubt, call a special meeting if required. They would then have to make detailed enquiries about the applicant to satisfy themselves that he could and would comply with all the requirements of the legislation and the By-Laws. This would take some time and it seems unlikely that a licence would be granted in time to enable the applicant to conduct the funeral of someone already dead. For example, he would have to satisfy the trustee that he could obtain a hearse and a coffin and had the use of mortuary premises. Possibly he would be able to find a cabinet maker prepared to produce a coffin and if the deceased died in hospital, he might be able to persuade the hospital authorities to keep the body until all the arrangements were made.

There was nothing wrong with that answer by Mr Bulloch; he was perfectly correct and the board was perfectly correct in providing that

information to people who make inquiries. However, I want to make the point that I am sure the whole procedure could be simplified. When the whole process is analysed, it is not as difficult as it sounds. A number of forms must be filled in, and certain arrangements have to be made.

I think it could be made much simpler for people who do not want to avail themselves of the services of a funeral director.

In fact, I think the Government could consider instructing the Bureau of Consumer Affairs, the Karrakatta Cemetery Board or some other appropriate body to prepare a simple, readily understandable list for those people who wish to undertake the arrangements themselves.

Most people, including myself, I think, would prefer to use the services of a funeral director. At the same time, however, there have been general rumblings and complaints in the community of late about the fees charged by funeral directors. People just cannot understand why it costs about \$1 000 for the cheapest and most basic funeral.

My inquiries reveal that the lowest cost for which any undertaker will do the job is about \$650. This provides the most basic, modest funeral, and involves the provision of a casket, a hearse, and one mourning car. I might add that the casket used in this type of funeral is the cheapest that can be obtained. I am told the wholesale price of such a casket is \$61.90 for which I am also told the consumer is charged about \$220 by the funeral director.

On top of the funeral director's charges, of course, there are other expenses. The cemetery charges a minimum of \$285 for burial in a new grave; it costs less for cremation. To this cost must be added Press notices, floral tributes, the death certificate, church fees, and so on. In addition, the family must find money for the erection of a monument. So, the most basic burial carried out at the Karrakatta Cemetery would cost a bereaved family about \$1 000.

One aspect of the funeral industry of which many people are not aware is that, despite the apparent choice of about 13 funeral directors in the yellow pages of the telephone book, only six major companies are operating; all the rest are owned by them. In other words, the industry has become concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, thereby reducing real competition in the charges and services offered. This certainly is not in the best interests of the consumers.

A couple of years ago I obtained from the Administrator of the Karrakatta Cemetery Board a list of the funerals conducted at that cemetery for the year ended June, 1977. Some 12 funeral

directors were listed but, in fact, only six principal companies were involved. For example, the list names Bowra & O'Dea, Monahan's Funeral Services, and Horace L. Green as separate funeral directors when, in fact, the three companies are owned by Bowra & O'Dea. Since then, that company has also bought out Arthur E. Davies & Company Pty. Ltd. and Greens Funeral Services. The list also names Arthur J. Purslowe & Co. Pty. Ltd., Snell & Purslowe, and Mead & Purslowe Pty. Ltd. as separate companies when they also have the same proprietorship.

On top of this, I have become disturbed about things I have been told by people who have worked in the industry. For example, recently I was told by a person who was employed by a funeral director in this city that the representatives of that company were told to assess families' financial standing and, if it appeared appropriate, instead of quoting the correct prices for all coffins, the representative would show pictures of three different coffins and quote the price of the most expensive one. The bereaved family then would be asked which of the three coffins they would like for that price—even though I am told there would be as much as \$200 difference between the cheapest and the most expensive coffins.

I was also told that exploitation has taken place in another area; namely, the purchase by the bereaved family of glass-domed artificial wreaths. Quite apart from the fact there is an excessive mark-up on these wreaths, what upset this person was that families arranging burials in the lawn part of the cemetery were being sold these expensive glass-domed wreaths for placement on the graves when, in fact, the Karrakatta Cemetery Board does not permit them to remain there. Therefore, when the funerals are over, these wreaths are removed by board employees. No doubt, a bereaved family would purchase a glass-domed wreath in the expectation it would remain on the grave indefinitely. I am told these people are being sold glass-domed wreaths when the seller is fully aware they will be removed soon after the funeral.

Another matter which could be examined is whether there is a link-up between country and city funeral directors which is preventing a choice by country people of a metropolitan funeral director. I am told that in the country the local funeral directors have arrangements with city directors, and the family concerned are directed to a particular person's services when they might want to employ the services of some other funeral director.

The Government, no doubt, is aware that the New South Wales Prices Commission, at the request of the New South Wales Minister for Consumer Affairs, conducted an inquiry into the funeral industry in New South Wales. The commission brought down its recommendations for the control of the industry in November, 1977. In this comprehensive, 75-page report, the commission points out that many States of the United States of America and Canada have introduced legislation for the protection of consumers in the funeral industry. In another part of the report, the commission mentions that many other countries have introduced similar legislation. The report does not actually name the countries concerned, but I should like to read that section of the report, with which I agree. The report states as follows—

Funeral arrangements must often be made under extreme time pressures, by persons with little or no knowledge of the area in which they are dealing and whose bereaved condition may render them unable to exercise their normal care and business judgment. They do need some basic information to enable them to make a rational choice of funeral director and particular funeral services. It is a difficult problem, however and it is this disadvantaged position of the consumer that has caused so many countries to regulate their funeral industry.

After a lengthy investigation, the commission recommended the establishment of a regulatory body to control the funeral industry in New South Wales. It suggested that the regulatory body should have power to—

- (a) License funeral directors.
- (b) To nominate what basic facilities are required before a funeral director can be licensed.
- (c) To control and review funeral fund and prepaid funeral schemes.
- (d) To formulate a comprehensive complaints' procedure of an informal nature available to any customer who feels he has a good case but has been unable to obtain redress from the funeral director concerned.
- (e) To monitor prices and in that respect provide for annual returns showing costs to the consumer.
- (f) To review crematorium and cemetery fees.

- (g) To inform and give assistance to consumers concerning funeral costs and in that respect it is recommended that funeral directors give the person ordering the funeral a written estimate.

That is something which is almost impossible to obtain in this State.

We have a quite ludicrous situation in Western Australia in that section 14 of the Cemeteries Act appears to empower the trustees of each public cemetery to make their own by-laws for the following purposes—

For directing the position and depth of graves
...

For the fees to be paid for permission to dig or open a grave, or to make or open a vault...

For prescribing methods of disposal of the ashes of bodies cremated...

For convening meetings...

For undertaking funerals, and prescribing the charges to be made;

For the annual licensing of undertakers;

Prescribing the license fee to be paid;

Prohibiting any unlicensed undertaker from undertaking or conducting any funeral in the cemetery;

This next one is very interesting, Mr President. Section 14 gives these people the following power—

Regulating the charges of licensed undertakers for undertaking and conducting funerals;

I am not aware of any cemetery board which has taken that action. Section 14 continues—

Enabling the trustees to cancel an undertaker's license for breach of any by-law.

From my reading of section 14 of the Cemeteries Act, each cemetery board in Western Australia can draw up its own rules governing these matters. I wonder whether that should be the case, or whether some uniform controlling body, such as the one recommended in New South Wales, should be established in this State. Certainly, to my knowledge, none of the cemetery boards has accepted its responsibility in respect of regulating the charges of licensed undertakers for undertaking and conducting funerals.

Following the recommendations submitted by the New South Wales Prices Commission, the New South Wales Government established an inter-departmental committee to examine the

implications of those recommendations. The first step is being implemented in that a Bill is going through the New South Wales Parliament at the moment for the purpose of controlling funeral funds. In his first reading speech—they have first reading speeches in the New South Wales Parliament—on the 3rd April, 1979, the Minister for Consumer Affairs made the following statement—

... information given to the inquiry demonstrated that many practices by the industry were not in consumers' interests. It also demonstrated that there was cause for apprehension about the viability of some of the funeral funds. Complaints were also made about the frequent failure of funeral funds to meet the full costs of funeral services...

This is a very comprehensive, 86-page Bill which is not being opposed by the New South Wales Opposition.

I have tried to obtain information on whether there are any controls on funeral funds in this State. I found it very difficult to get any information as no-one seems to know much about it. I asked a question without notice of the Attorney General on Tuesday as to whether legislation exists in this State to cover the administration of funeral funds. The reply was that there is no legislation in this State dealing particularly with funeral funds. The Attorney General went on to mention the Friendly Societies Act and an Act governing Government employees. The final part of my question asked if the Minister could tell me how many of these funds existed, the names of the funds, and their assets. Of course, the answer was, "Not known".

My point is that it is an important matter as there are thousands of people paying regularly into funeral funds in this State. I do not know whether they have adequate protection and cover. The Government does not know and I think it is time an inquiry was undertaken. I am not suggesting there is anything wrong with the present funds, but we should take steps to make sure everything is alright. It is too late to take steps after something has already happened. We should ensure there is sufficient protection and legislation governing all funds. Although the Attorney General referred to the Friendly Societies Act, I imagine this does not cover private funeral directors who run funeral funds.

My point is there is no specific legislation covering funeral funds in this State. I think there should be. Certainly the report of the New South Wales inquiry reveals there should be specific

legislation and that Government has taken the matter seriously. It is putting through the Parliament an 86-page Bill. When that has been passed the next step will be for the Government to implement the recommendation regarding funeral directors and other aspects of the industry. I am told that this is in the process of formulation.

There should be consumer protection to cover the people in this State at a time when they are so vulnerable because of emotional trauma and grief. Most people do not wish to appear mean or disrespectful. They do not like to appear to be comparing prices by ringing up different funeral directors. They certainly would not want to have six or seven of these people calling at their homes and quoting different prices. As a result they find themselves paying hundreds of dollars more than they can afford.

In fact, it is fairly impossible to compare prices because, as I said earlier, one cannot get written information from the funeral directors; they do not send written information as to costs. The industry should ensure it justifies the charge for the service. The fullest information should be available in the simplest manner to ensure the bereaved people are not able to be exploited.

I believe cemetery fees also should be looked at. The minimum fee for a new grave at Karrakatta is \$285. This price jumped from \$210 in 1977 to the current figure in 1978, an increase of 26 per cent in one year. The funeral director's licence fee of \$25 did not rise by even one cent. If there is an increase in the costs to run a cemetery I do not think the bereaved family should have to bear them alone; the funeral directors also should be asked to contribute.

We should emulate the example set by the New South Wales Government and ask our Bureau of Consumer Affairs in the interests of consumers, to undertake a full inquiry into the industry. The bureau should be asked firstly, to investigate whether consumers are being overcharged by funeral directors for funerals they conduct; secondly, whether there is adequate protection and cover for contributors to funeral funds in this State; thirdly whether the level of cemetery or crematorium fees is justified; and, fourthly, what steps can be taken to simplify the procedure for arranging private, do-it-yourself funerals.

All these points should be investigated to ensure that Western Australians are not able to be exploited in this very important and sensitive area, and that they have access to the fullest information about the industry to which, as consumers, they are entitled.

The next matter I wish to deal with is rubbish disposal. I am particularly interested in the question of rubbish disposal; firstly, because of the discomfort inflicted on the unfortunate patients and staff at the Swanbourne and Graylands Hospitals because of the siting of the Brockway tip and, secondly, because of the proposal by the Perth City Council to offer \$200 000 to Mr Bill Grayden, MLA, for 40 acres of land in the Helena Valley to be used as a rubbish tip.

Already I have made my attitude quite clear on the question of the Brockway tip. I am meeting the Minister for Health tomorrow at the Swanbourne Hospital to discuss the matter.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: I have not had any indication of that meeting.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It was a meeting arranged by myself and the Minister, because I had expressed interest in the Swanbourne Hospital and Brockway tip. Has Mr Williams been expressing similar interest?

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Not recently.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is why Mr Williams has not received an invitation. The meeting has been arranged to iron out differences of opinion between the Minister and myself about the future of the patients in the Swanbourne Hospital, particularly Manning House, which houses the patients who have been most seriously disadvantaged by the pollution and other evils associated with the tip being right next door.

Another matter I wish to comment on and to which I give my full support is the attitude of the people in the Helena Valley and Boya areas in their opposition to the proposal that certain land in the area be used as a rubbish tip. They have every justification for being incensed at the prospect of the Helena Valley being turned into a rubbish tip, with all the disadvantages this could mean and which have been outlined by Mr Masters. I refer, of course, to the dust, smells, and visual pollution, etc.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I take it you are supporting Mr Masters?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am. The people in the eastern districts, the people in my electorate, have been asked to put up with pollution and smells long enough. I have previously raised the problems of the smells emanating from the Midland Junction Abattoir and other noxious industries in the area. It is a bit rough for the Perth City Council now to try to site a rubbish tip on their doorstep. Mr Masters also mentioned the serious danger of pollution to the Helena River. I understand drill tests carried

out on the land in question show it could leach. I appeal to the Minister for Health to reject any request by the Perth City Council to use this site as a rubbish tip.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I take it you would oppose the tip going to Burswood Island.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am very strongly opposed to the tip being established at Burswood Island. I think the time is long overdue for the establishment of a statutory waste disposal authority. Such an authority was recommended by the technical advisory subcommittee of the Metropolitan Refuse Disposal Planning Committee back in 1974. It is also the policy of the Australian Labor Party and has been for some years. The idea is backed by *The West Australian* newspaper, the Perth City Council Engineer (Mr Machlin), and the Perth City Council Town Clerk (Mr Edwards). Such a body should have been established long ago and it is now becoming an urgent matter.

We have seen in recent months the panic and nonsense associated with the disposal of the garbage from a major local authority like the Perth City Council. This council has 1 000 tonnes of rubbish to dispose of a week. First it was to be dumped at Brockway, then there were talks of Bold Park, but City Beach ratepayers soon put a stop to that. There was an insane suggestion by the PCC that it use Burswood Island, but sanity prevailed; there was a public outcry which had a good deal to do with that. We were back at Brockway. Then there was another change and we saw the headline, "Perth City Council to dump at Melville". Finally it went back to Brockway. Now the council is anxious to get the Grayden land in Helena Valley.

We have seen this disgraceful and irresponsible spectacle. The Government should be severely censured for allowing a situation to develop where a local authority as large as the City of Perth with 1 000 tonnes of rubbish to dispose of a week is permitted to get into such a position.

There are processing plants in other parts of the world using the technique of recycling and other processes which should be investigated for adoption in the metropolitan area. This has been referred to by Mr Knight, and I was interested in what he had to say. I believe Mr Masters referred to it earlier today.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: What do you mean by "believe"?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You heard him.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I too support this concept. There was a rather lengthy article in *The West Australian* of the 9th March by Professor

Michael Hugo Brunt, Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia. On recent sabbatical leave, he studied rubbish disposal methods in North America and Canada. In an article headed, "Reducing Costs by Recycling Rubbish" he dealt with the method known as pyrolysis. It is a long article and I have no intention of quoting all of it. The portion dealing with this method reads as follows—

Pyrolysis

Agricultural and industrial waste is a byproduct used to produce energy. Pyrolysis reduces its volume without air pollution, making clean-burning gases as well as storable solid fuels (carbon monoxide, hydrogen, methane, ethane, propane, butane, light and heavy oil fuels).

Pyrolysis is a burning process without oxygen and causes the chemical decomposition of solid organic matter and breaks down the complex organic compounds into simpler products. It has virtually no exhaust gas pollution and an extremely low sulphur content.

I have read that portion of the article so as to give members a brief description of what the process of pyrolysis involves.

The Hon. T. Knight: I quoted part of that article in my address.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: On the 7th March there was an article in *The West Australian* headed, "The Power in Rubbish". It reads in part—

A power station now being built at Aalen, West Germany, will be unique in the world as it is to be run on waste materials.

A West German engineer, Mr Karl Kiener, who designed the waste power station, said it would be the most economical and environmentally acceptable recycling method available.

He explained that it would be based on the pyrolysis (heat changing) method which also made it possible to recoup metal from waste.

Heated up to 500 degrees Celsius it will yield 10 million kilowatt hours of electricity.

Should we not be trying to kill two birds with the one stone? We have a waste disposal problem and we will have an energy problem very shortly. Surely to goodness instead of indulging in all sorts of nonsense by looking for areas so that garbage can be dumped under the landfill method we should be looking ahead. Why does the

Government not now do something about establishing a statutory authority which would have power to go around the world to examine these proposals, select the best method, and introduce it to Western Australia so that we can be in the vanguard of these scientific achievements for once instead of trailing the rest of the world?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Note some constructive criticism, Mr Masters!

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is all I have to say on that subject. I do appeal to the Government to put a stop to this nonsense and establish a waste disposal authority as soon as possible, giving it the task of selecting the best alternative to the landfill system which has created problems to residents and local authorities in the metropolitan area.

I now wish to deal with SHC accommodation for young families and aged persons. I am talking about flats and unit accommodation. Recently I had reason to visit an aged pensioner in Lockridge and because of the unusual numbering in the street I arrived at the wrong block of flats. It was a multi-storied building and while looking for the aged pensioner's flat I realised that I was in the wrong block. However, in my search around the flats I was accompanied by a small boy of about four or five years old who called himself Anthony. He was chatting away to me and his mother heard him talking to someone and came out to investigate, so I decided to have a talk to her about conditions in the flats.

I was absolutely horrified when I looked at the situation in which that young mother found herself. She told me there were quite a few young supporting mothers with pre-school children, some with two or three. But the three-storied block of flats had no fenced playground in the shade so that the children could play outside. The day I was there it was very hot and the only alternative for the young mothers was to keep the children inside all day every day.

I cannot imagine anything worse for the mothers and children. Many of the young women are in a depressed state anyway, trying to raise children on a supporting mother's benefit, which is on or below the poverty line. They cannot get out to work because of the unemployment situation, and they have little or no social life. Their situation is exacerbated by the fact that they have small children yelling all day and demanding attention, because no doubt they are bored and sense the frustration of their mothers. I cannot think of a worse recipe for disaster for the parents and the children in this situation.

If these supporting mothers must be accommodated in multi-storied flats, for goodness sake provide proper, safe, protected children's playgrounds where the children can get out to play and thus not be under their mother's feet. In this way the mothers can have some peace. Other communal facilities should also be provided so that the young mothers can get out of the flats and mix with other people.

When I eventually arrived at the correct block of flats where the pensioner gentleman was living I discovered another problem—the dreadful isolation of some of these pensioner flats. I am referring to their isolation from transport, shops, and other community facilities. The nearest bus stop was 10 minutes' walk away and the nearest shops were 15 minutes' walk away. I do not know that any of the residents in the flats owned a car. As I arrived an elderly lady was hobbling home from a pensioners' meeting held in the community hall. She had arthritis and arrived home panting and suffering discomfort because of her long walk.

Surely when siting aged persons' flats, the SHC should select a site as close as possible to transport and shops. I was very pleased to learn recently that the Bassendean Town Council had bought some old properties in the heart of Bassendean, because they are very close to all amenities—transport, shops, the library, and so on. This is what should be done instead of these pensioners being placed in the back blocks where they are miles from transport, the shops, the post office, and everything else.

Finally, I want to deal with a matter which I believe is the most serious facing the world today and Western Australia in particular. I refer to uranium mining and nuclear power. Once again I want to go on record in this Chamber as being strongly opposed to the mining of uranium in this State, to the building of a nuclear power plant here, and to the disposal of nuclear waste in Western Australia.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Do you object to enrichment plants?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I certainly do. I object to every aspect of the nuclear power industry. I do not want to have on my conscience all the frightful dangers posed to life on this planet from nuclear power.

For years the ordinary little people around the world, who care about human life and the quality of life and who have been protesting about the dangers of nuclear power and the problems which are being created for future generations, have been denigrated and ridiculed by the Sir Charles

Courts and Lang Hancocks of this world. They have been told that their fears about the problems of waste disposal, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and accidents in power plants were all nonsense. Since the potentially disastrous accident at the Three Mile Island station near Harrisburg those who were so smug and so sure of their positions, and so critical of the protesters, are now made to look rather silly.

The accident at Harrisburg has been called the worst commercial nuclear accident in the United States history. This is according to *Newsweek*.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: Who said that?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It was reported in *Newsweek* which is a pretty responsible journal.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Have you heard of a worse accident?

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: No. I wondered who could make such a statement.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: We do not know what happened in Russia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We do.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I do not want to play down the accidents in any part of the world—Russia, Sweden, the USA, or anywhere else.

To come back to this particular accident which was very serious—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Do you mean someone was hurt?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Let me finish.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: What do you want—blood?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Probably.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Not at all.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The leak of radioactive steam from the power station spread radiation 20 miles into the Pennsylvania countryside. Pregnant women and pre-school children within five miles were evacuated from their homes and everyone else was advised to remain indoors. At one stage the Governor was seriously considering evacuating one million people.

An article in *Newsweek* of the 9th April reads—

The accident, precariously close to a "China Syndrome" meltdown of the reactor core, cast doubt on the future of nuclear power just when oil is getting more expensive and scarce. And it showed once again how little scientists know about the dangers of low-level radiation—particularly the

possibility that even small doses can eventually cause cancer.

I wish to quote another article from *Newsweek* of the same date, if members doubt what I say.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I am not doubting you. I am wondering who the journalist is and where he gained his technical knowledge.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: In case members do not know what a "melt-down" is I will read a portion of the article as follows—

The greatest risk of all was a catastrophic "meltdown" of the sort fictionalized in a popular new film called "The China Syndrome." In theory, the experts said, the core could melt its way through the thick steel walls of the reactor vessel, penetrate the floor of the containment structure, contaminate the soil or hit a water pocket and send up gushers of radioactive steam and contaminants. If that happened, there might be thousands of deaths later on. "There is some risk of meltdown," Dr. Roger Mattson of the NRC told members of a Senate subcommittee on nuclear regulation last week.

Of course, we are now learning that there have been accidents in other power plants around the world, some quite serious, but they have been played down. Even before the Harrisburg accident there was a change in direction in the United States in respect of nuclear power. According to *Newsweek*, over the past five years utilities have cancelled more than 30 contracts for nuclear plants, postponed plans to build dozens more, and brought new orders for reactors nearly to a standstill.

In March the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission ordered the shut-down of five nuclear plants, because their safety systems were not strong enough to withstand an earthquake.

According to *The Australian Financial Review* of the 4th January this year, the United States is not the only country scaling down its nuclear power industry. The Japanese Atomic Energy Commission has cut back, the United Kingdom has not ordered a plant since 1973, despite earlier plans, and in West Germany progress has slowed down because of local opposition to every proposed site. In Sweden the Social Democrats were defeated by the Conservative Opposition, because they embraced an anti-nuclear policy.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I have already repeated myself on this subject. You are completely and utterly wrong.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: She often is.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Is the honourable member saying that the information in *The Australian Financial Review* of the 4th January this year is wrong?

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I am telling you that three of your colleagues and now you are wrong. You have all said that the Government in Sweden was defeated, but it was not.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The Social Democrats were defeated by the Conservatives, because the Conservatives embraced an anti-nuclear policy.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: How many times do you have to be told?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: For the benefit of our friend who will not accept facts—

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I have told you the facts before.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Well, you were wrong, weren't you?

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: No, I was not wrong.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: —I will quote from *The Australian Financial Review* of the 4th January, 1979, where in an article headed "Anti-nuclear fallout spreads" this was said—

In Sweden the Social Democrat Government lost office when its conservative Opposition embraced an anti-nuclear policy.

Does that make the honourable member happy?

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: I will not have an opportunity to speak to the Address-in-Reply again but I can quote *The London Economist*.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I will never convince Mr Oliver; he refuses to be convinced. Like many other members on the other side, he does not like the facts. I will continue quoting information I obtained from *The Australian Financial Review* of the 4th January in relation to the various countries which are scaling down their nuclear industries—

In Austria a national referendum aimed at preventing the start-up of a \$500 million nuclear plant at Zwentendorf, the nation's first, was successful even though the blocking proposal was fought by Prime Minister Kreisky as an issue of confidence . . . In Italy nuclear development is at a standstill.

Members will no doubt remember the recent trip of Mr Don Dunstan, the former Premier of South Australia, which he undertook to investigate certain aspects of nuclear technology. He took with him a number of people involved in the field, including a top consultant to the mining industry,

Mr Wilmhurst of Amdel. The trip covered technical and policy areas in Great Britain, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, and West Germany.

In his speech to the South Australian Parliament on his return, on the 6th February this year, he reported in effect that the unanimous findings of the group were that no method has yet been developed anywhere in the world to enable high level radioactive waste material to be stored safely. He also said he had established that controls on the spread of the plutonium economy were grossly inadequate.

Despite all this, the Premier continues his ostrich-like stance by insisting that the Government is determined to press ahead with uranium mining and the establishment of a nuclear power station in this State. We have also had hints that we might have some waste deposited here.

Amendment to Motion

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Therefore, I wish to move the following amendment to the motion—

That the following passages be added to the motion—

However we wish to inform Your Excellency that in view of the dangers to mankind inherent in the development of the nuclear power industry we are strongly opposed to—

- (1) the mining of uranium in this State;
- (2) the disposal of radioactive wastes in this State;
- (3) the establishment of a nuclear power station in this State.

THE HON. G. C. MACKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [5.06 p.m.]: I wish to oppose the amendment because it is completely selfish. It represents an attitude of greed and selfishness that is almost beyond belief. Here we are, a people who happen to be among the wealthiest on earth; we happen to be endowed with coal in very large quantities. Therefore we can look to having not a great many problems with regard to our future energy supply. Along with other advanced countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, we can use vast quantities of energy. We can sit here in debate with a tremendous amount of light all around us, and all of it coming from fossil fuel. We can go home, turn on switches right, left, and centre, and get power for everything.

I would hazard a guess that the honourable member who has moved the amendment has in her home virtually every electrical labour-saving device it is possible to buy or imagine, and every one of them is used with gay abandon. Every time the switch goes on the pollution of the atmosphere is deliberately increased by that particular person. I would bet that little or no thought is given to those in the world who are battling to develop their nations in order that they may have some measure of the power which this nation uses and which everyone in this House uses. Small children in those nations could not even imagine walking from room to room switching on lights, fans, and a whole host of electrical appliances.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: And with only a thin sheet of plastic to protect them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am not talking about the dangers. One can buy safety devices if one likes. The point is we can use power in a way about which people in many parts of the world, grown-up adults, would have to think three or four times.

I believe I have some appreciation of this problem. When I was a lad, power cost 1s. 6d. a unit in the country town in Western Australia where I was born and where members of my family still reside. It was a gas-producer power station, which went "boomp, boomp" day and night. The light bulbs in the house were practically all of 25 watts, and if one left a light on when one walked out of a room one was in real trouble. So I have some understanding of the problems with a shortage of power.

I have quoted on a number of occasions what was said at a big conference on conservation by a very famous statesman from the Indian subcontinent. He said in effect, when speaking to a group of American, Canadian, and Australian people, "From where you sit on a comfortable chair, with a full stomach, wearing one of your several suits of clothes, you can talk about pollution and danger from that source; but where my people and I sit on the ground, with an empty stomach, and the only robe we possess clutched around us, we cannot afford such luxury; and indeed we would welcome some degree of the very pollution and danger of which you speak."

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Was that in relation to uranium?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Any sort of fuel, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am trying to connect what you are saying to the amendment.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The amendment relates to stopping our mining of

uranium which we would be sending overseas in order that people elsewhere could have the sort of power they wish to have.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Nice cheap power, in other words.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Not nice cheap power, and again the Leader of the Opposition knows it. He should not try to be funny. I do not know any way in which anyone can get nice cheap power, but at least some people can get power. The Hon. Lyla Elliott talks about stopping the production and sale of uranium. She therefore means stopping the building and production of nuclear power generating plants. I wonder what will happen in those advanced countries when one day someone walks in, turns on a switch, and remains in darkness because there is no power.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That person will get a new globe.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: During her speech the honourable member spoke about waste disposal. She quoted one individual whose name I cannot recall—

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Professor Hugh Brunt.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: She gave no indication of his qualifications.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I did.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: He is professor of architecture at the university.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have quoted in this House an individual scientist and had people say to me, "Who is he? Why should we take that fellow's word for it?" Why should we suddenly change our pattern on any particular thing, no matter what it is, because some man in Germany says that country has a better system?

The Hon. T. Knight: He is the Professor of Architecture at the WA University.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The person she mentioned was from overseas. In connection with uranium, we have a statement that somewhere or other the local people are objecting violently to uranium.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Wouldn't you, if you had an accident like the Harrisburg incident on your doorstep?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: No; frankly, I would not. I read about Harrisburg in the newspapers. It was said Harrisburg was in imminent danger of a nuclear explosion. We read that sort of rubbish in the newspapers.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: A melt-down.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: There was also talk of a melt-down, which I will accept.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: And a leak.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: And a leak I will accept.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: There can still be thousands of deaths with a melt-down.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have been in situations where there were thousands of deaths, and they are tragic. I doubt that anyone in this Chamber has been closer to mass death than I have.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I would not like to trade that one around.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The Leader of the Opposition has been practically everywhere. I will allow that he has been in that situation more often than I have. I know how disastrous it is. But it is the common lot of man to die, I suppose. The one advantage of growing old is to contemplate the terrible alternative.

To illustrate the sorts of false statements that are made, let me quote again as follows—

FOR the first time, a government has been brought down by a dispute over nuclear policy. Many people, at least in the Western world, think of opposition either to nuclear arms or to nuclear energy as a phenomenon of the left.

This is too simple a view, as is vividly shown by the resignation on October 5 of the Swedish Prime Minister, Mr Thorbjorn Falldin.

A doughty anti-nuclear crusader, Mr Falldin was also the head of his country's first non-socialist government since 1932, and his fall leaves the door wide open for the early return to power of a Social Democratic Party which wants to see Sweden equipped with more nuclear energy per head than any other nation.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: I am talking about the initial stage when the Social Democrats were defeated by him. He lost because he did not honour his pledges to the people.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is no good Miss Elliott waving her finger at me and making lengthy interjections; the information she gave to the House simply was not right. I continue to quote as follows—

The collapse of the Falldin coalition was followed three days later by a related event in the West German State election in Hesse.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: There is no need to read on.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Hetherington is condoning the fact that the Hon. Lyla Elliott was selective in the information she gave to the House. What he is saying is that she can tell us about a series of events up to a certain time, and then go no further. She can show the action but not the reaction. That is the sort of nonsense the honourable member goes on with, and I do not think we should accept it. The fact is that Sweden is headed for a fair amount of nuclear power development, and the Hon. Lyla Elliott was saying it is not.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Mr President, am I permitted to make a personal explanation?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The member cannot do so while I am speaking.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Well, the Minister is misquoting me.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The member may make an explanation afterwards. I do think it is about time that members who have been here as long as Miss Elliott has been here, knew the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Here comes the school teacher again.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is not that; I am exasperated.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: What do you think you do to us when you misquote us?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the Leader of the House proceed?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes, Sir. What Miss Elliott was saying is that although we have a resource which is capable of being used for the generation of power in what looks like becoming an energy-hungry world we should turn back the clock and not produce it. That attitude is shared by people across the whole spectrum of politics; and the article about the Swedes really indicates just that. I suppose it is anybody's guess whether in the ultimate we will go through a period of banning the mining of uranium and then finally accepting it. However, the fact is that at the moment the views, pro and con, range across the spectrum of political parties and, indeed, they range within the political parties. There are unions in Australia which support the mining of uranium, and there are those which do not support it. For what it is worth, my own view is that the time will come when we will inevitably mine uranium and use it, and we will go through a period in which the type of nuclear power station that we have come to know and

understand so very well over more than a quarter of a century will become comparatively commonplace.

In my opinion, in time we will move out of that era into an era of the development of some other form of energy, whatever it may be. I suppose the common guess today is that it will be hydrogen energy produced by a comparatively simple process.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: In conjunction with sea water.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: And solar; the three combined.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I agree, and probably the process will be fairly simple. However, I understand from those who are advanced in the field of science that we are a considerable distance away from that.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: There is not agreement on that; some scientists argue that we are quite close to it if we try.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Even that terminology is debatable, of course.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Yes, that is what I am saying.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: One could talk in terms of "quite close" meaning 50 years or 50 days.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I am talking about 10 years.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It could be argued that in 10 years we will still see the necessity for nuclear power stations. My guess is that the development of hydrogen power to the extent where it can fuel large-scale power stations will take a lot longer than 10 years, and in the meantime we will have to use nuclear power.

Another aspect of this, amongst those I wish to mention, is that when one reads the amendment to the Address-in-Reply moved by the Hon. Lyla Elliott one gets the impression that the establishment of nuclear power stations is comparatively new, or that this form of energy is in its infancy. One gets the impression that the Harrisburg problem was relatively unforeseen, and was a dreadful situation.

I recall speaking to the Director of Conservation in this State (Mr Porter) who told me that he first visited a nuclear power station in the early 1950s—20-odd years ago. He said at that time nobody working at such plants in the United Kingdom was very worried about the situation; and people there still are not worried about it.

I would think in terms of actual damage done to persons it is more than likely—in fact, probably factual—that more damage has been done to persons and more lives have been lost in the boiler rooms of conventional power stations and ships as a result of burst boilers than in the case of Harrisburg. As far as I know no-one was killed there.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Not yet, in any case.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am not aware of any measured case of a person being injured by radiation at Harrisburg. Most of the articles I read in the Press about Harrisburg struck me as using scaremonger tactics in the extreme. Maybe there was a great danger of a melt-down and whatever problems that incurs; I am not certain of them.

However, I have been handed an article from the publication *Fortune* under the heading, "The Deadliest Form of Energy" from which I quote as follows—

The human cost of generating electric power with coal, as compared with other fuels, is enormous. The length of the colored bands represents the highest estimate of the number of fatalities that a single 1,000-megawatt plant of each type might be expected to cause annually, from a range of estimates gathered by the American Medical Association. Included are deaths from occupational exposures (e.g., mining and transport), environmental effects (e.g., air pollution and radiation), as well as the risk of death from accidents (e.g., at nuclear plants).

If one pauses for a moment and considers the history of the generation of power from coal it becomes obvious that it is extremely unlikely that deaths and injury caused by nuclear power plants will ever equal the number of deaths and injuries which have occurred as a result of the mining, transport, and production of power from coal.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Do you know they were making plans to evacuate nearly one million people from around Harrisburg?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I do not know that; I know the newspaper said that somebody ought to be making plans.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: The Governor was making such plans.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: They considered it; that is the difference.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I know that the Governor—he would be the equivalent of the Premier of a State of Australia—said he was

giving consideration to it. I doubt very much whether any plan was made.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The mayor evacuated about 100 000 people from Harrisburg.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Therefore, I am not sure of what Mr Cooley is suggesting.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: That is an indication of their concern.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is an indication of the thoughts of the reporter who wrote the article. I was not there, so I do not know the situation. I have read articles about calamities at which I was present, and I know the difference between being there and not being there.

Let us go back to the real danger situation. If we had considered the danger of coalmining when Watt first rushed in and told his mother about the steam lifting the lid of the kettle, we might not have stopped the production of energy from coal. A tremendous number of deaths have occurred from underground gases and collapses in mines.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: There is no comparison.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Miss Elliott says that because the death and destruction as a result of radiation and blast from nuclear bombs tend to horrify people. I suppose it was a matter of the luck of war that the nuclear era was opened with the dropping of a bomb at Hiroshima. I know nowadays it is the fashion to look with horror upon the dropping of the bomb at Hiroshima. I share that horror.

However, I must admit I did not share that horror on the morning the bomb was dropped. I had just been diagnosed as having malignant tertian malaria, commonly known as blackwater fever, and I was not in much of a position to know what was going on. Ross Ambrose, a Perth lawyer, stopped by and told me a new-fangled bomb had just been dropped at Hiroshima. He said, "The war is over; it can't last." I was carried out on a stretcher, and when I came to two or three days later the war was, in fact, over.

I would say the dropping of that bomb was responsible for saving the lives of those prisoners of war who survived, because I happen to know the plans the Japanese had for them when Mountbatten's force arrived. Therefore, we looked upon that nuclear bomb from a slightly different angle in those days; and perhaps that has coloured my thinking.

The Hon D. K. Dans: It coloured mine at the time.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I bet it did.

The Hon D. W. Cooley: At that time we all had a feeling of relief.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is right; the horror came later. Nevertheless, we ought to be able to accept that coalmines have been the tombs of many miners. They have been just as disastrous as runaway trains which have killed many people, and boilers which have burst and scalded men working near them. However, the advances we have made as a result of the production of power from coal have outweighed the disadvantages. In the same way, the fact that one could build a power station and produce energy by nuclear means must outweigh the fact that a bomb could be produced, and people could be killed. We are being irradiated every day. Indeed, it is not very long since the average person who wore a wristlet watch that was illuminated so that it could be seen in the dark was being irradiated more than any worker in a nuclear power station. That fact was just not known. It was discovered in the fullness of time. The discovery was made in a horrible way, because the people who painted the figures on the dials of wrist watches used to lick their brushes, and they all died of cancer of the mouth. Dreadful! That was the fault of nobody. The fact was that nobody knew; in the same way that a little boy is at no fault when he obtains a fulminate of mercury detonator and drops it, or hammers it, and blows himself to pieces. That is not the fault of the man who discovered fulminate of mercury.

It would be totally absurd for us to accept an amendment of this type. It is just not on!

In 1969 I was the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna and also the Minister for Health. I was invited by the Government of the United Kingdom to visit that country. I was inspecting hospital services in the United Kingdom. Because of my interest in wildlife, I was taken to visit a wildlife reserve on the west coast. Like so many things in England, that reserve was quite magnificent and, at the same time, quite odd.

The reserve was situated on a large farm, which the farmer was still working. There was swamp land on the farm. The land ran out to a point in the ocean. Situated on the point was a very large building with a large, slender chimney stack. There was a charge of 10 shillings for a person or for a car to enter the farm. There were birds on the swamp land, and the wildlife people hired the farm because of the attraction of the swamp land for the birds. There were hides in which one could sit to photograph the birds.

The Power Generation Corporation of the United Kingdom leased the point of land which ran into the sea because it was an ideal spot for a nuclear power station. The nuclear power station was situated right in the middle of a wildlife reserve. The farmer ploughed his fields close to the station, and the birds flew around the station. Nobody in the district bothered about that situation. It is only in the last five years, since all the emotional reaction has gone on—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Scare tactics.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I take it that people are genuine in their fears. People born since the war think of the bomb in an isolated fashion. They think that every nuclear power station is a ticking time-bomb which could blow up and destroy the country totally. Of course, that is just not so.

The point we must bear in mind when we discuss these sorts of things is that we are talking about producing power at an affordable level; that is, cents per unit. We are talking about the tremendous benefits that would flow to the ordinary working man. We always should remember that the wealthy people—and that includes everyone in this Chamber by world standards—

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Lots of other standards, too.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: These people can always afford the sorts of things we are talking about. There is not anyone in this Chamber today who could not afford some sort of power generation plant in his home, or who could not ensure that he had light. One could certainly buy a very large gas lamp if one could not afford a generating plant.

There is no-one in this Chamber who could not afford to buy his food and have it prepared in some way or other. He could buy all the necessary things. The only way the ordinary working person can enjoy these sorts of benefits is by the provision of cheap power. One of the methods by which the benefits of modern science are distributed to all the people of North America, the United Kingdom, practically all of Europe—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I enjoy listening to you; but you did that chapter about 10 minutes ago.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have to impress this on all members, because they do not seem to understand it. This problem worries me terribly.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: We have not had much to go on.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: If we did not have cheap power, people could not enjoy the benefits of modern living. The only ones who could enjoy such benefits would be the very wealthy.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Provided they can afford the appliances.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Does Mr Cooley personally know anyone who cannot afford the appliances?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: I know people who cannot afford luxury items, yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Of course, people in India and such places could not afford such things unless they had a source of cheap power.

It is absolutely imperative that this amendment be defeated. I know it will be defeated. I believe that it falls into the category of the motions about which I spoke earlier today.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You are saying it is frivolous?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: It is frivolous in the sense of being an amendment to the Address-in-Reply motion. It would not be frivolous were it put up as a serious motion on its own. As an amendment to the Address-in-Reply motion, yes, I think it is frivolous.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We might settle for both.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I think this debate is taking place at the wrong time. It is taking advantage of a situation that exists. It is one of the sorts of things that sooner or later lead to a change in the practice of the House. It is similar to the situation we spoke of earlier, when Mr Hetherington agreed about the wrongful use and the frivolous use of questions. That leads to a curtailment. I believe implicitly that this sort of amendment on this sort of occasion will lead to a curtailment of the rights involved.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That sounds like a threat to me.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: For that reason, the amendment ought to be defeated.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [5.37 p.m.]: It was somewhat disturbing to hear the last remarks of the Leader of the House. On other occasions he has spoken on similar lines, that such-and-such a procedure of the House should not be used for a certain purpose. One of those matters related to the Appropriation Bills at the end of the year when the debate was traditionally used for the raising of matters of importance.

There has been a constant movement by the Leader of the House and the Government to lower the position of this House of the Parliament as a place in which matters of public importance can be debated. That is a very serious trend which is developing.

I was very concerned earlier this afternoon when the Leader of the House suggested that the Parliament, in his view, is no longer supreme. That was the old philosophy of our Parliament; but it now seems that the Government is supreme, and that its will must be taken note of at all costs, even if it means that debate must be severely curtailed. I do not think that is what the Leader of the House meant; but perhaps he was not expressing clearly what he intended.

This is an important amendment which concerns a matter of vital importance to the State of Western Australia. The sorts of arguments used by the Leader of the House have little relevance to the people for whom he was claiming to be concerned.

When one speaks about the poor nations of the world, one should recognise they are the last ones to benefit from nuclear power generation because of its extremely high cost. That is an extremely costly form of power generation. It is no wonder that the highly developed, industrialised countries such as Japan and Sweden have been involved in the development of nuclear power generation. That applies particularly to countries with limited sources of fossil fuels and other sources of power generation. It is understandable that countries like Japan—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Many other countries have developed nuclear power plants and are using them—India and China, for two.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The Minister is drawing the long bow when he speaks of many other countries. Undoubtedly some of the major industrialised countries are moving to nuclear generation.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Other countries are following.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: It is difficult to think of any outside of the major, western, industrialised countries—other than India, for example.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: That is a good example.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: That is about the end of it. Mexico and Brazil are tending to nuclear generation.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: India is an interesting example.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: India went into it when the dangers of nuclear power generation were not understood at all.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: They are certainly going ahead still.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Cut it out.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Members of the Government want to hide their heads in respect of the very high dangers associated with this source of power. The Leader of the House spent a good deal of time in trying to talk down the seriousness of what took place in Harrisburg.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver interjected.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I do not want to be rude to Mr Oliver, but if he keeps gabbling away like that I will have to be. He will have an opportunity in a moment to rise to his feet and make a speech. I hope he will be good enough to save what he has to say until then.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: Tell him to belt up!

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The fact is that if Western Australia entered into uranium mining, which would be completely unwarranted, that could mean a relative loss of jobs in the State. Certainly there is no need for this State to accept the role of waste disposal. Certainly there is no need for us to go into nuclear power generation.

On figures which previously have been quoted, one employee in the uranium mining industry costs an investment of \$500 000, whereas to place one employee in the manufacturing industry costs \$20 000. If we are considering providing employment for our citizens, the investment dollar is spent far more wisely in investment in manufacturing industries.

We certainly do not need to contemplate uranium mining to provide employment, because that industry is a low employer of people.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: How are you going to drive the machinery? You have to have power.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: On the figures given by the Government in this House, which I will quote—

The Hon. W. R. Withers: It has no relevance to the debate.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I asked a question in this House about power generation in Western Australia. That power is required to drive the machinery. I wanted information on the things needed to provide electrical energy.

I asked a question relating to a study on coal reserves in this State. The Minister said that little was being done at the time. However, I asked a

question of the Attorney General on the 11th October, 1978. It is question 350. The Attorney General replied, in part, as follows—

It is not necessary at this time when the amount of extractable coal already demonstrated is estimated to be sufficient to supply the State's needs for the next forty years.

That figure was given last year and it was based on known coal reserves when in fact no comprehensive study of coal reserves had been carried out in this State. We did not know at that time whether, in fact, there were coal reserves which were undiscovered.

Apart from that, all members will have noted the announcement that the New South Wales Government is to sign a contract with an alumina company for the installation of a \$500 million alumina refinery. It would be a great achievement if such a refinery was established in this State, bearing in mind that this Government has committed Western Australia to continue with mining bauxite. I imagine the Premier would have felt the utmost chagrin that the company had had the gall to go to what he would term a socialist-governed State, instead of coming to Western Australia which he regards as a free enterprise area.

When talking about nuclear power generation, the Premier should be seeking co-operation from other States instead of always criticising and condemning their policies. He should be actively seeking co-operation with other States so that if Western Australia has the alumina a reciprocal arrangement can be worked out whereby bauxite or alumina is shipped to the refinery in the Eastern States and the same ships return with coal to a refinery here. That is not an unusual situation. It is very common to use ships to take raw materials from State to State. It is an old idea and it is just as effective now as in the past. It has been very effective with Australian Iron and Steel.

Such an arrangement would be far more satisfactory than setting up a nuclear power station in Western Australia. We do not need a nuclear power station and all the problems which go with it. We do not need to invest vast sums of money in such a project. That money will be taken away from the valid projects which should be set up in this State and would provide work for Western Australians.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: Are you talking about a smelter or a refinery?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was referring to a refinery.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: I was just trying to be helpful.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am endeavouring to make a brief speech, therefore, I am ignoring interjections. I do not mean to be rude. If there is a small run-down in the manufacturing industry of 5 per cent, it has been quoted that 50 000 to 60 000 jobs could be lost in Australia. Likewise, to take the situation in the reverse, if we increased manufacturing industries by 5 per cent, there would be a vast rise in employment opportunities in this State.

I have mentioned most of the matters I wished to cover. All members, including myself, possess vast volumes of information and publications covering the question of nuclear energy. Like others, I could quote at length from articles such as the one I am holding which is written by Denis Hayes. He is an energy specialist with the Worldwatch Institute in Washington. Unlike the Leader of the House, I believe it is important to quote one's authority. I would not criticise anyone for doing that. It is easy to stand up and pluck a figure out of the air, saying it is an authoritative figure. It is simple to quote the comments of someone who is not regarded as authoritative. However, Denis Hayes, and the institute he represents, are serious investigators and researchers in the field of energy. The article is entitled, "The Coming Energy Transition" and it is contained in *The Futurist* of October, 1977. On page 303 Denis Hayes makes the following statement—

Some inherently dangerous sources can be permitted unchecked growth only under totalitarian regimes.

It is obvious that is the case with nuclear power generation, which is favoured by regimes that are prepared to accept and disregard the dreadful risks associated with it. The Leader of the House referred to the situation in Russia. He said, "What have we heard about what takes place in Russia?" Of course, we have heard nothing about the incidence of leakages and the failures which have occurred as a result of the development of atomic energy and nuclear power in Russia. Unfortunately, that is true also of the development of nuclear power in the western world. These matters have been hidden and the facts have not been made known. The public is unaware of accidents which have occurred and the costs involved.

The cost of producing one kilowatt of nuclear power is approximately \$1 000. That is greatly in excess of the cost associated with providing equivalent energy from other sources.

I should like to quote briefly from this article. On page 304 the following statement appears—

For two decades, we have pursued a chimerical dream of safe, cheap nuclear energy. That dream has nearly vanished. Nuclear fission now appears to be inextricably bound to weapons proliferation and to a broad range of other intractable problems. Every week new evidence buttressing the case against nuclear power is uncovered; every week worldwide opposition to nuclear power grows stronger. Nuclear fission now appears unlikely ever to contribute a large fraction of the world's energy budget.

The Leader of the House referred to poor countries and the manner in which their energy needs can best be met. This certainly cannot be done using high-cost facilities associated with nuclear power generation.

I support the amendment.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans (Leader of the Opposition).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [5.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Reclamation of Salt Land: Tax Deduction

THE HON. R. G. PIKE (North Metropolitan) [5.57 p.m.]: I rise and shall be brief in my comments on the adjournment debate. I should like to refer to a matter which the Hon. W. M. Piesse mentioned in her comprehensive Address-in-Reply speech. The Hon. W. M. Piesse made reference to a question I asked as a Western Australian delegate to the recent meeting of the Federal Council of the Liberal Party of Australia which was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Perth last weekend. I did, by way of interjection, indicate that the question as reported in *The West Australian* was incomplete. Obviously based on the fact that the question was incomplete, the Hon. W. M. Piesse quoted it in her speech in order to make a point. That point needs to be clarified.

The full question I asked the Treasurer was as follows—

Will you please give consideration to allowing a full tax deduction to all farmers for all money expended on salt land

reclamation and prevention in the year of expenditure?

The additional statement made when I asked the question was—

I am aware that at present some tax deductibility is available.

The point is a very important one and it is for that reason I seek to clarify it.

The Hon. W. M. Piesse in her presentation went on to impute that I had a lack of comprehension of the fact that some tax deductibility is available. If this question highlights anything it highlights the problems of incomplete reporting.

Briefly, the unfortunate issue really is that whereas the Hon. W. M. Piesse has emphasised what is allowed as a tax deduction, so also did the question; but, as a Liberal, I tend to emphasise what is not allowed and to seek to make it also tax deductible. In order that the record is perfectly clear I should like to read a letter addressed to myself from the Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia and signed on his behalf by Mr Michael MacKellar. It reads as follows—

Dear Mr Pike

The Treasurer has asked me to reply to your recent personal representations on behalf of Mr David Scott, Secretary of the Warwick Apex Club concerning a resolution passed at the 1978 State Convention of the Apex Clubs of Western Australia which sought an income tax deduction for the full amount expended, in the year it is incurred, on salt land reclamation.

As the Commissioner of Taxation is responsible for the administration of the income tax law I asked him for his comments on this matter. The Commissioner advised that, in certain circumstances, the concession sought is already available to persons in the business of primary industry. He explained that a deduction for expenditure incurred in the reclamation of salt-encroached land or for the prevention of salination of the soil would fall for consideration under two separate sections of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

One of those sections, the general deduction section, allows a deduction for all losses and outgoings incurred in gaining or producing assessable income or necessarily incurred in carrying on a business, provided that the losses and outgoings are not of a capital, private or domestic nature. The other section provides a deduction, over a period of

ten years, for certain capital expenditure incurred in respect of land used for the business of primary production.

Where a taxpayer has used the land over a period of years in primary production, and then incurs expenditure to either prevent or combat salt encroachment, such as the construction of interceptor banks, he would be entitled to claim an outright deduction. The view is taken that the expenditure would have been incurred with the intention of restoring to the land any of its former qualities that may have been lost over the years. It would be accepted that such expenditure is of a revenue nature, being in the normal course of business, and, as such, would have been deductible in full in the year in which it is incurred.

On the other hand, similar expenditure incurred by a taxpayer who has only recently acquired the land would be, generally, of a capital nature and would therefore be excluded from the general deduction provisions of the income tax law. It may, however, qualify for a deduction, over a period of ten years, under the other section mentioned by the Commissioner. As he explained, capital expenditure incurred in preventing and combating salt encroachment, other than expenditure on items which are subject to depreciation, constitutes an allowable deduction over ten years, one tenth of the expenditure being allowed in the year in which it is incurred and one tenth in each of the succeeding nine years of income. Entitlement to the deduction over those nine years is dependent upon a business of primary production being conducted on the land either by the taxpayer or by a person who leases the land from the taxpayer.

To further extend this concession, and make all expenditure incurred in combating salination of the soil fully deductible in the year it is incurred, would require an amendment of the law. Whether the law should be amended is a matter for the consideration of Parliament. Accordingly, I have arranged for your views to be listed for consideration when the relevant provisions of the law are next under review.

Yours sincerely
M. J. R. MacKellar

That is for the record; now for the argument. I will refer to a letter written and quoted by the Hon. A. A. Lewis, whose view I support. A paragraph of that letter reads—

The person that decides on this method can get a total deduction in the year of expenditure.

The reference is to engineering methods, interceptor banks, and suchlike. And this is the guts of the proposition. To continue—

Unfortunately the person who decides to reclaim by other methods, such as fencing off the area and planting salt tolerant species, is only allowed to claim over a period of ten years, and I believe is doing a job equal to the person who is putting in banks etc.

In essence, the problem is highlighted by two points. The first point is that made by the Hon. A. A. Lewis when he said that a farmer who has provided salt land treatment, and has owned the land for a number of years, still is not able to claim for some fencing and the planting of salt tolerant species except over a period of 10 years.

The Hon. Win Piesse has made the point that there is confusion. Obviously, the Taxation Department needs the benefit of the view of a person like Sandy Lewis. Another point which needs to be emphasised is that where a person has recently purchased land and expenditure is needed on that land to prevent salt encroachment, or reclaim salt areas, the purchaser will only be able to claim a tax deduction over 10 years. Where a farmer wishes to dispose of his land to an intending purchaser, that purchaser is not allowed to claim for salt treatment which would be made in the future except over a 10 year period. Because of this, when one looks at land valuations and the value of properties to be sold, the value of these properties would be less in the eyes of the intending purchasers and, I believe, a disadvantage to the sellers.

It is clear that a competent explanation is necessary. There is a conflict of opinions. I re-emphasise the point, as I did by interjection: We are totally aware that tax deductibility is available to farmers in some situations.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.04 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ROAD

Meekatharra-Wubin

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

- (1) Will the Minister advise whether there has been any deterioration in the condition of the Midland-Meekatharra road between Wubin and Meekatharra since the closure of the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line?
- (2) If there has been a deterioration does the Minister consider it to be slight or heavy?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No deterioration other than normal wear and tear.
- (2) Answered by (1).

EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT

Aboriginal Teaching Aides

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

- (1) How many Aboriginal teaching aides are employed by the Education Department?
- (2) Are they employed under the same conditions as other teaching aides?
- (3) If not, what is the difference in their terms of employment?
- (4) Who pays their wages?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) 50.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The Aboriginal teacher aides are paid from the Aboriginal Advancement Commonwealth Grant.

WATER SUPPLIES: CATCHMENT AREAS

Land Clearing: Timber Burning

63. The Hon. W. M. PIESSE, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) In the Minister's reply to question No. 45 on the 11th April, 1979, would he

advise if the figures quoted included approvals for burning up timber already down?

- (2) If so, how many approvals were granted for burning up timber already down?
- (3) How many hectares were included in the figures for burning up timber already down?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Total approvals—137.
- (3) Total area—6 684 hectares.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Minimum Hourly Rate

64. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Are government departments required to pay a minimum hourly rate for adult males or females employed by them on a casual basis?
- (2) If so, what is the minimum hourly rate for a worker employed on a full-time basis?
- (3) For those employed for less than 16 hours weekly, and who do not receive public holidays, annual or sick leave, is any loading added to the rate payable to the full-time employees?
- (4) If so, could he please supply details?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Government workers employed on a casual basis are paid a minimum hourly rate.
- (2) The minimum hourly rate for a worker employed on a full-time basis depends on the classification of the worker under the appropriate award.
- (3) A casual rate loading is added to the normal rate payable to full-time employees in order to determine the rate of wages for casual workers who do not receive other benefits of full-time employees.
- (4) The standard loading for casual work is 20 per cent.