

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, 23 August 1983

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

*Select Committee: Standing Orders Suspension.*

**HON. D. K. DANS** (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.08 p.m.]: I move—

That Standing Order No. 15 be so far suspended as to enable the motion standing in the name of the Hon. I. G. Medcalf to be resolved finally before the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Question put and passed.

## Motion

Debate resumed from 2 August.

**HON. D. K. DANS** (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.10 p.m.]: The concept of a committee system is one which has been widely adopted throughout the western world and possibly none is better known than that adopted by the Australian Senate some 13 years ago. I believe that situation was brought about by the constant prodding of Senator Lionel Murphy.

The Hon. Ian Medcalf, in presenting the motion to this House, gave a good account of the historical situation in relation to the appointment of committees and that which applies in the Australian Senate. Much of that information can be obtained from *Odgers Australian Senate Practice* which devotes a comprehensive chapter to the subject of committees.

Over a period of many years the call has been made by members in this Chamber to institute such a system, but it is strange that successive Liberal Party-Country Party coalitions in this place have ignored the plea until now.

I recall the Hon. Margaret McAleer, when moving the Address-in-Reply motion on 25 March 1976, strongly recommending the setting up of Standing Committees, and she presented her case very well. In addressing myself to that motion on 30 March 1976 I supported the honourable member's remarks, and I quote from my speech on page 16 of *Hansard* as follows—

Before I refer to some items in the Governor's Speech, may I place on record my appreciation of some of the points made by the Hon. M. McAleer in her reply to that speech. Miss McAleer will be aware that I would not agree with all the comments she made, but I am certainly interested in what she said concerning the setting up of standing committees, not only of this Chamber but, indeed, of Parliament in general. I am sure everyone is aware that if Parliament, as an instrument of our democracy, is to remain and flourish, then committees will have to be set up in the very near future. This will retain confidence in the institution of Parliament.

With just a little consideration, one will realise the great amount of time these standing committees could save Parliament. More information and expertise would be available to this Chamber, and the fact that people would be able to put their point of view before committees from time to time would certainly allow us to make decisions based on the views of the people at large. That is essential in the future and, indeed, it is essential right now. However, I am not one of those who expect these rather dramatic changes to be made tomorrow, next week, or even next month. Suffice it to say that despite the fact we believe we probably influence the course of human history, it is really the other way around—the will of the people is exerted on us as well as on society in general. The will of the people, in the long term, and indeed in the short term, brings about the changes which are so vital for the survival of the system under which we live. For these reasons I hope the Government will pay some heed to the call made by the Hon. M. McAleer in her Address-in-Reply speech.

Further on I said—

The other side of the coin is that a system of standing committees will involve more members of Parliament in the decision-making processes. When I use the term "members of Parliament" I mean all members in this Chamber who are not members of the Cabinet. As I have so often been reminded by Mr MacKinnon, the Cabinet is the Government. Some system of standing committees is essential because at the present time the confidence of the people is being eroded and the role of members of Parliament is being downgraded. I often have the feeling that at worst we are highly paid messenger boys, and at best we are highly paid welfare and social workers. Many of the

problems we handle could be better handled by people trained in welfare and social work.

I do not want to quote all the debate, but those members who were in the Chamber at that time know very well that the then Leader of the Government in this Chamber quickly put Miss McAleer's proposals to rest in a few sentences. I will not continue to quote that debate because members can read it themselves. It seemed strange to me, of course, that when Miss McAleer made that very excellent suggestion, which was supported by my excellent speech and suggestions, the matter did not even hit the deck.

Suddenly we are here today discussing a motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition—times have changed! What has caused the change? The cause is that the Government for the last nine years is now in Opposition and its views have changed dramatically.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: Rome was not built in a day.

Hon. D. K. DANS: At that time, the Leader of the House said—

Before I refer to some other items in the Governor's Speech, may I place on record my appreciation of some of the points made by the Hon. M. McAleer in her reply to that speech.

I have just quoted those two.

While I do not intend changing my views, I would like to provide one more quote from that debate simply to demonstrate the amount of interest displayed by the then Government on this important question. On 4 May 1976, in his response to that debate—and I quote from page 695 of *Hansard*—the then Leader of the Government had this to say—

Miss McAleer raised a matter which has been under consideration and which has certainly been debated from time to time. I refer to the appointment of committees. The honourable member is certainly within her rights in expressing her views and nobody would dispute that. However she will be aware that the matter has had searching examination over a long period of time. I do not propose to express my support or otherwise for what the honourable member has said; nor will I take such action in relation to the remarks made by anybody else in the course of this debate.

So the Leader of the Government just wiped me off like that, as much as to say that the fact that Miss McAleer had a very good idea—expressed a very democratic principle—and I supported it,

well, that did not impress the Leader of the Government one little bit.

I suppose when the Leader of the Opposition gets to his feet again he will say, "But it is a little different now; there is a new leader, and I have a different view". However, as I recall the situation in 1976, no Government member supported the Hon. Margaret McAleer's suggestion. I would like to emphasise what the then Leader of the Government said—

... nor will I take such action in relation to the remarks made by anybody else in the course of this debate.

It is now 1983 and that happened some seven years ago. Perhaps the conservative parties in this State are starting to move very slowly towards the vital issue of a democratic Parliament. I hope so. That was certainly a rebuff to my remarks on a committee system; but more to the point the then Government showed a complete disregard of the proposition of one of its own members. I emphasise that although it was all right for the Hon. Neil McNeill to wipe me off like that, it was not all right for him to also wipe off the Hon. Margaret McAleer without referring to his members.

As I have already indicated, it appears to be the attitude of the Liberal Party that the committee system is not worth worrying about while in Government, but is highly desirable when in Opposition.

The matter was raised again by my ministerial colleague, the Hon. Joe Berinson, when speaking to the Address-in-Reply motion on 1 April 1981. I quote from page 378 of *Hansard* of that date where the Hon. Joe Berinson said—

Allowing for all the conditions and limitations in the way of the comprehensive system of Standing Committees here, it appears to me that there is still a very important potential for Select Committee references on specific topics, on a much more frequent and deliberate basis than at present apply.

There is no point in my suggesting a comprehensive list of subjects which would be amenable to organised inquiries in this Chamber. Our resources would be exhausted long before the list. However, to give just some examples of the sort of question which would justify our concentrated attention rather than the periodic spasms which we now apply may I suggest the following—

the proliferation of shopping centres and the novel burdens which lessors are now imposing on lessees—many of

them inexperienced small businessmen.

That situation continues to be a burning issue to this day, more so than it was in 1976, and more so than it was in 1981. The Hon. Joe Berinson continued—

Public Service superannuation and its interaction with other conditions applying to the Public Service;

Hon. I. G. Medcalf: That is pretty relevant at the moment.

Hon. D. K. DANS: Yes, and I will have a few words to say about that. Of course, with the current furore raging over the tax on superannuation and other matters, it is the sort of subject that could be inquired into by a Select Committee or a Standing Committee of this House. The Hon. Joe Berinson continued as follows—

... education, with particular reference to aspects such as the conflicting claims on staff-student ratios in this State and the ramifications of the teachers' campaign for time off from classroom teaching;

While some of these problems may not be as important now, some of them still remain, and I agree they would be very good subjects to be investigated by committees.

The next area which the Hon. Joe Berinson suggested for investigation was preference to unionists' provisions in industrial law. We all know that the Hon. Gordon Masters did not put that matter to a committee and he came up with the wrong answer. In fact, on that question, the Hon. Gordon Masters did what no trade unionist or any captain of industry has ever been able to do—he united the whole trade union movement. The Hon. Gordon Masters managed this without the assistance of a committee, and he managed to unite the employers also.

Hon. G. E. Masters: Never mind, you're fixing it up now!

Hon. D. K. DANS: Not only did he unite unionist with unionist and employer with employer, but also he united unionist with employer. It was a magnificent example of how one man, with a bit of grit and determination, could do what others could not do.

Not only did the Hon. Gordon Masters unite these people and get them to take unified action, but also he got them together in unity of purpose. How much better might he have succeeded had he had a committee to assist him?

Hon. G. E. Masters: I hope you are not leaving early tonight.

Hon. D. K. DANS: No, I am not leaving early tonight. In his list of subjects which he considered suitable for investigation by committees, the Hon. Joe Berinson went on to say—

... energy conservation programmes in Government departments and instrumentalities, and so on.

It will be immediately apparent that a number of the possibilities I have suggested are in areas which are often dealt with by way of inquiries conducted by persons who are outside the Parliament.

Many such topics, however, raise essentially political questions on which the members of the House would certainly be no less qualified than others to offer advice, and in important respects, better qualified.

In many cases the Select Committee process could assist in the development of consensus recommendations. Even where they do not do that, even where our party differences were reflected in recommendations, the different approach would still have served the invaluable purpose of equipping its members with a certain level of expertise. That would be in highly desirable contrast to the well-intentioned amateurism which we are so often forced to apply under present circumstances.

The effectiveness of the work engaged in by the members of this Chamber is essentially in the hands of the members on the other side. They are the majority. It must be they who are prepared to refer appropriate items for committee consideration and to provide such committees with their essential supporting facilities.

Only they can test whether the public interest would be better served in this way than by the ritual forms which now consume so much of our time and energy. Speaking for myself, I have no reason to doubt that it would.

Members of this Government support entirely any such system which would further the effectiveness of this Legislative Council as a House of Review—something that has clearly been absent under the existing undemocratic laws for the election of members to this House. It is an indictment on this House that we and our predecessors have been forced to discharge our duties under such conditions. I pose a question as to the reason for this sudden and urgent need to introduce a system of Standing Committees after nine years of Liberal Party-Country Party coalition Governments, a period in which we as an Opposition were ex-

pected to review legislation pushed through this Chamber with indecent haste and without regard to our limited numbers. Suggestions for more democratic methods of dealing with the business of this House were then totally ignored.

The present Opposition has more than twice the number of members we had, but evidently it is not experienced enough to do its job. The point I am making is that we had to do our job for nine solid years with nine or 10 members and with no Select Committees. The fact is that we did our job very well, and that is the reason we are on this side now.

Hon. Robert Hetherington: Hear, hear!

Hon. D. K. DANS: I am reminded of a recent debate on another simple proposal to bring our sitting times into the twentieth century and the outcry that occurred because this Government could even contemplate breaking with tradition. However, we are now faced with the situation in which a majority of members elected by a minority of electors will no doubt have their way whether we like it or not. I can do little about that but express concern at certain aspects which the members of the proposed Select Committee will need to consider and to give advice upon in its report to the House.

I refer principally to the composition of Standing Committees—which may need the involvement of most of our members—and the time available to participate in committee meetings. Apart from the restrictions attached to Standing Orders, and particularly Standing Order No. 350 which does not allow meetings during the sittings of the House, there is a problem associated with country members, and that, as you would be fully aware, Mr Deputy President (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth) is something dear to the heart of the present Opposition. We have heard so much about it. As pointed out most forcibly in this Chamber by the Hon. Mick Gayfer recently, country members can serve in Parliament only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and then mainly in the evening and late afternoon. I am sure members will recall the Hon. Mick Gayfer making that statement just a few days ago.

Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Are you suffering from a bit of sour grapes because South Fremantle lost?

Hon. D. K. DANS: That was a very traumatic experience for me.

On the occasion we debated the sitting hours of this House, the Hon. Mick Gayfer said that the balance of the country members' time on those days is required to attend to accrued office business, party and committee meetings, and research on legislation. On the remaining four days

it is necessary to service their electorates. It would appear it is a concession that they attend sittings of Parliament!

The honourable member's remarks were well supported by the Hon. Ian Pratt and the Hon. Tom Knight, and it is interesting to note that of the Opposition members—including the Hon. Mick Gayfer and the Hon. Tom McNeil—16 of the 21 members are classed as country members.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Including Mr Masters, presumably.

Hon. D. K. DANS: Excluding the President, the Opposition will be able to contribute four members to serve on any proposed Standing Committees. That is the only conclusion I can come to after listening very carefully to the Hon. Mick Gayfer: Only four city members will be available. The other 16 will be out doing all the things that Mr Gayfer said they had to do, and I do not dispute what he had to say. If I take as being correct what Mr Gayfer had to say, members opposite will have only four members to serve on these committees if the committees are to conduct their meetings at times other than the sitting times of the House. Notwithstanding the fact that Standing Orders preclude Select Committees meeting during sitting times and also taking into account the very fine contribution of the Hon. Mick Gayfer in outlining to the House all the duties that befall country members, we will be back to just four members from the Opposition.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. D. K. DANS: It will be a very hard row to hoe for those four Opposition members.

Other points to be considered include the cost of establishing committees and the provision of necessary staff facilities and resources. Noting that circumstances favour members opposite, the appointment of a Select Committee as envisaged by the motion is a *fait accompli*. But if nothing else this will provide us with an opportunity to have a firm resolution adopted, as no doubt members opposite will wish to participate in such a system and will find the time necessary to do so.

This is really the crunch. If members opposite can find the time necessary to participate in these committees—and that means more than the four members Mr Gayfer managed to shave it down to—perhaps they can find the time to come to Parliament at 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons and 10.45 a.m. on Thursday mornings. Members opposite cannot have it both ways. The argument advanced by the Opposition and excellently backed up by the Hon. Mick Gayfer convinced this House of its merit; the House determined that because of the propositions put to it by Oppo-

sition members, the hours advanced by the Government were not appropriate. Government members accepted that; they had to. But if on the other hand members opposite are to turn all that around again, I will have to scratch my head and ask: What is wrong and what is right?

Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You really do not want another debate on the hours, surely?

Hon. D. K. DANS: Not just yet.

Hon. Tom Knight: We were indicating that we were prepared to work at night.

Hon. D. K. DANS: I assure the Hon. Tom Knight that we are very much prepared to work at night time, daytime, and morning time; so, the member is giving us nothing.

Hon. Tom Knight: You indicated that it was to allow us to get home, but we said we did not have homes to go to here and that we were here to work.

Hon. D. K. DANS: I am sure the Hon. Tom Knight can do better than that.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: I am sure you can do better than you are doing.

Hon. D. K. DANS: While questioning the motives of the Opposition, it is necessary to indicate that our involvement in any resultant proceedings is essential if the proposal is to proceed. What I have been saying is this: We do not really oppose the setting up of committees. In fact, it is something that was pushed into the Senate by the then Senator Murphy. I am on record in *Hansard* as supporting the idea. Miss McAleer is on record as proposing such an idea. No doubt many other members of different political persuasions have put forward the idea also. As recently as 1981 the Hon. Joe Berinson proposed a similar idea, but on that occasion it was rejected. Not only were the Opposition's proposals rejected, so too were the proposals put forward by Government members.

Today we have a motion before us moved by the Leader of the Opposition to reverse all that, notwithstanding the fact that Mr Gayfer proved beyond any shadow of doubt in an earlier debate that the Opposition will have only four members available to participate in any committee. I have known the Hon. Mick Gayfer for quite some time and I know he is a man of extreme honesty and integrity, so his propositions put forward earlier could not be wrong.

Hon. I. G. Medcalf: You admit you were wrong about the hours of business?

Hon. D. K. DANS: I do not. We accepted the will of the House, and the person who convinced us even more than the Leader of the Opposition was the Hon. Mick Gayfer. But now the Oppo-

sition is very courageously advancing this proposal, even though only four of its members will be available to be members of any committee set up. Without declaring myself at this stage, I would like to hear how the Opposition is to provide this House with the necessary personnel to man these committees in view of the statements made, particularly by the Hon. Mick Gayfer. There is validity in what he has said in that there are 16 country members out of a total of 21 members opposite.

Members opposite might think it appropriate to amend the Standing Order that prevents a committee sitting while the House is in session, because if what Mr Gayfer and other Opposition members said is correct, it will be a very hard row to hoe for those four Opposition members appointed to serve on any committees established. If members opposite find that those four members cannot handle the committees on their own and it becomes necessary to bring in country members, we must accept that their electoral responsibilities will be neglected. That is the sum total of the Opposition's arguments.

HON. P. G. PENDAL (South Central Metropolitan) [5.37 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and before I get on with the burden of my remarks I take this opportunity to comment on some of the matters raised by the Leader of the House. I note in particular that it is a pity he has adopted the attitude he has, particularly in so far as the accuracy of his comments is concerned.

The Leader of the House made some considerable play of the remarks made in, I think, April 1981 by the Hon. Joe Berinson, who was at the time a member of the Opposition. What Mr Dans or his adviser forgets is that long before that—

Hon. D. K. Dans: My adviser had nothing to do with this. I happened to be in the House when those things occurred.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: By his interjection Mr Dans now accepts total responsibility for the mistake he has made, because the sequence of events is, as anyone who cares to check will ascertain, that the matter was raised at the insistence of the Hon. Bob Pike and was referred to a Select Committee of the House in late 1980, which action subsequently led to the establishment of the Standing Committee to which the Leader of the Opposition referred and to which the Leader of the House referred in passing.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Check *Hansard* again.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Even if there is to be some dispute between the Leader of the House and me on that point, on the next point there can

be no dispute. I refer to the creation of the first permanent and significant Standing Committee in the entire history of this House, a Standing Committee which came about at the insistence of a Liberal Party member while the Liberal-National Country Party Government was in office; of that there can be no dispute. A pity of this debate is that it has now become a question of some form of one-upmanship.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Why have you changed your mind?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I will get to these matters in a moment if only the Leader of the House will be patient. But the point must be clearly understood: There is no validity in the claim made by Mr Dans that there has been a great reversal in the attitude of the coalition parties towards the subject under discussion, because that very important matter to which I have just referred occurred when a Liberal-National Country Party Government was in office and when the Hon. Bob Pike pressed the issue. It was following these efforts, which were predated by the efforts of the Hon. John Williams, who now heads the Standing Committee on Government Agencies and after the speech made by the Hon. Margaret McAleer and the speeches of several other Opposition members as well, that the Standing Committee was established.

The third point of which Mr Dans needs some reminding is that he appears to have forgotten the different functions of a Standing Committee and of a Select Committee.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I am fully aware of the different functions.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Then the Leader of the House is hoist with his own petard, because the record shows that between 1980 and 1983 not just one Select Committee was established by this House—the impression given by the Leader of the House is that there was none—but in fact probably more Select Committees were set up in that three-year period than in any other comparable period in the history of the Parliament. Five or six Select Committees were established in that three-year period.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: None was established to examine legislation.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I will come to that.

On that third point alone Mr Dans has, perhaps unwittingly, misled the House, because in that three-year period many Select Committees were set up, at the very time when the Liberal-National Country Party represented a majority coalition in this Chamber in Government. Therefore it took the persuasive powers of members of the coalition

parties, the back-benchers, to have the Government of the day establish Select Committees.

The Hon. Sandy Lewis did this on several occasions when he felt a need existed for a Select Committee to inquire into national parks, or into youth, sport and recreation, or into other matters.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Heavy committees.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It may be that the Minister for Mines who now interjects finds those subjects not important.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Not controversial.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: They were important to the members who saw a need for those Select Committees. It is notable that one of the members on the Government benches now who took the least amount of interest in any committee work was the present Minister for Mines.

Hon. Peter Dowding: I was not invited to participate.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: That is understandable. At least it can be said that the Leader of the House has a track record of commitment to this principle. It can also be admitted that the present Attorney General had some commitment to the parliamentary system by wanting to see a stronger committee system in operation on a permanent basis. He is on record as having taken the trouble between 1980 and 1983 to research the matter and even to serve on the original Select Committee inquiring into Government agencies and on the original Standing Committee established after I moved a motion in this House about 18 months ago.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Did that investigate legislation?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: That shows another fundamental ignorance on the part of the Minister because we do not merely have Standing Committees to look at narrow parts of the House's activities.

Hon. Peter Dowding: I know why you don't want to answer the question.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Indeed, if the Minister for Mines cared to update some of his knowledge, particularly in respect of some of the thinking that has come out of the British Parliament in recent years and other Parliaments around the world, he would find that there is a great range of activities upon which party committees can concentrate, scrutinise, and report to the House. Committees do not need to relate merely to legislation, as he suggested by interjection.

Hon. Peter Dowding: They do not do either under a Liberal Government in the upper House, do they?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: From my own point of view I am happy to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and indeed even to support some of the remarks made by the Leader of the House because I observed 18 months ago when I moved the motion to commence the permanent scrutiny by way of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, that it should not be the only Standing Committee. I interpolate here to say that I take no great personal credit for that because the work was largely done by people to whom I have already referred, such as Bob Pike, John Williams, Margaret McAleer, and others. I happened to be in the right place at the right time. The point I made on that occasion was that I would be disappointed if the Standing Committee on Government Agencies were to be the end of the line and I argued as persuasively as I knew how to call the House's attention to the need in the short and medium term for us to be looking at other forms of scrutiny by way of permanent parliamentary committees.

To some extent those people who have put their faith in those ideas in the past have seen some of their dreams come true, because Mr Medcalf's move in this respect is a natural follow-on to what happened in the 1980-1983 Parliament, which saw the appointment of the Select Committee and then, the establishment of the Standing Committee. The Hon. Ian Medcalf's move now gives us the opportunity to take that second important step towards—if I may say it without offending people—broadening the horizons of our members and making the Parliament a more vigorous forum.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Only when you are in Opposition.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In March of 1980 Professor Gordon Reid, a Western Australian, commented in that month's issue of *Quadrant*. He spoke about some of the shortcomings in the House of Representatives in the Federal sphere. It is important for people to remember that Professor Gordon Reid is not merely an eminent academic in his field, he is also a person who had some personal experience as an officer of the Federal Parliament prior to embarking on what was to be a distinguished academic career. With that dual background in mind he had this to say when he was drawing on his experience about the lower House of Federal Parliament—

Unlike the Senate, the House of Representatives, notwithstanding the vast increase in its formal responsibilities since its creation in 1901, has barely changed its method of operation.

I ask members to bear in mind whether there might not be some parallel with this House.

Referring to the House of Representatives, the article continues—

All of its legislative work is still conducted in plenary session where party contests and party discipline are strongest and where conflict and bitterness are intensified by extensive use of procedural devices such as the gag and the guillotine. Ninety-nine per cent of all legislation is initiated by the Executive Government (private member legislation is infrequent) and in spite of an average of about 100 bills each year not one bill in seventy-seven years has ever been referred by the House to a smaller committee for its committee stage. There is a gross congestion of the parliamentary timetable and a consequent diminution in MPs' effectiveness and public esteem.

Hon. Peter Dowding: We have not noticed it here, Mr Pendal.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I wish the Minister would shut up and listen. I would be the first to suggest that a strong parallel exists between what Professor Reid was saying about the House of Representatives in February 1980 and what could be said about this or other Houses of Parliament, around Australia.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is ridiculous. That is absurd.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I put it to members that comments of that nature by Professor Reid bear a lot of thinking and deserve some consideration. Further, I put it to the House that to implement what Mr Medcalf is now suggesting may well help reduce some of the ignorance shown by some of the interjectors so far. Perhaps more importantly, the implementation of this proposal would help reduce some of the bitterness and division that sometimes is apparent in the debates in this Chamber. A good example of the strength of that argument is the Standing Committee on Government Agencies itself. In respect of what members of that committee can or cannot agree upon, I think it is fair to say that all members of the committee, whether they be Liberal, Labor, or National Country Party—prior to Mr Baxter's retirement—would agree that the committee has been able to go about its work and on most occasions make recommendations with a complete absence of any bitterness, division, or one-upmanship and point scoring that we often find on the floor of this House. If nothing else, the move of Mr Medcalf will achieve that.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Come on! Grow up! Why didn't you say it last year when you were in Government?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I wish the Minister would shut up.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Peter Dowding: You suddenly had some time to think about it after the election, did you?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I am talking about the Standing Committee on Government Agencies itself.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Why didn't you establish another one last year?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I wish we could establish another committee to get rid of the Minister for Mines. That would show a lot of progress on our part. People like Mr Berinson, Mr Hetherington, Mr Baxter—

Hon. Neil Oliver: Mr Tonkin?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I am talking about members of this House. Those men were able to display a sense of unity of purpose without being corny about it—

Hon. Peter Dowding: Sounds like a creep-crawly to me!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: —and to bring down unanimous recommendations in that Standing Committee.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You were in Government for nine years and you didn't do this. This has just suddenly occurred to you, has it?

Hon. A. A. Lewis: You have heard the answer to that.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The Select Committee set up by Mr Medcalf's motion will result in some good coming out of the whole thing.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Again some of the interjections would indicate, just as some of the comments that were made during the lead-up to the establishment of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies clearly showed—Mr Dans is quite correct—that that concept which was shared by a number of members at the time, certainly a majority or enough to have it passed, was not necessarily shared by all members of the House. I remember being criticised at the time by members of my own party who, in good faith, presumably, could not see the value in either Select Committees or, certainly, Standing Committees. Whether they could have been persuaded to the contrary in the meantime, I do not know, but certainly they held a view, presumably conscientiously,

that the Standing Committee system somehow or other usurped the role of the House. It was an argument that I never accepted, but it was held in all good conscience by some people.

But it is not only a question of helping to overcome any sort of prejudice against these committees from members within this House. I put it to the House that we also have the problem of overcoming the prejudice against this sort of Standing Committee from within the Public Service. Public servants, particularly senior ones, in matters of this kind have their thinking very much moderated or shaped by their own Ministers because, after all, it is their Ministers who are members of Parliament and who are in a position of having in-built prejudice or bias towards anything that will upgrade the significance of the Parliament. In fact, most members of the House will have to come to grips with this fact over the years: public servants themselves will have to be persuaded towards the idea that the Standing Committee system is as good for them as it is for the Parliament or the members who comprise the Parliament. I suggest that that in-built prejudice will not be overcome in a short time. Like Ministers, some of those senior public servants see this development as a slight on their professionalism or their competence, but nevertheless, it is one that they could be persuaded to accept.

The Select Committee will have to ensure that the recommendations that come back to this House are practical and capable of being implemented within the confines of the available resources.

Hon. Peter Dowding: And suspend Government policy. Is that one of the criteria?

Hon. A. A. Lewis: What rot!

Hon. Tom Knight: You could get up and speak.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You want to use the numbers. That is why you didn't bring it up last year.

Hon. Tom Knight: Why don't you get up and talk about it later?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It is surprising that the Minister interjecting is the Minister who performed least of the activity in this regard in those first three years. That speaks for itself, but I suggest Select Committees will have to be careful on this point of resources.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Why didn't you take another look at gambling last year?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Tom Knight: There was a committee.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Was there? Of the House? Grow up!



The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Mr Dans has carefully touched on that, although I do not accept his suggestion that only four members of the Opposition will be available.

Hon. D. K. Dans: That is what Mr Gayfer said last week.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I will even disagree with Mr Gayfer. Does that make the Minister feel any better? We are trying to have a decent debate.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Gayfer was telling fibs last week?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: We need to have presented to the House recommendation that are capable of being implemented within the confines of not only the resources of members of Parliament who may ultimately serve on future committees, but also the resources under the jurisdiction of you, Mr President, and the Clerk.

Hon. Robert Hetherington: Treasury resources.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I will accept that. In other words, it is no good coming back with a recommendation that we have a constitutional affairs committee, a scrutiny of Bills committee, or a public accounts committee, and all those other orthodox committees which are set up in Parliaments around the world. We simply do not have the resources to cope.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Liberals who vote for public accounts committees get into trouble.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Before the tea suspension, I was attempting to make the point that if the Select Committee is appointed, if nothing else, it ought to be realistic in the recommendation that it brings before the House, and I mean realistic in the sense that it must bring back recommendations that are capable of being implemented within the confines of the resources available to this House both by way of members and support staff, and, as the Hon. Robert Hetherington interjected, by way of finance.

It may well be that collectively the House would like to see a constitutional affairs committee, an expenditure review committee, an environment standing committee, or more scrutiny on the natural resources of this State. The fact is, however, that we have a relatively small House—

Hon. Peter Dowding: It is going to get smaller with a bit of luck, too.

Hon. W. N. Stretch: The quicker you leave the better.

Hon. Peter Dowding: See if you are prepared to knock that one back.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Do you want to tempt us?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: —and to that extent, the Select Committee must be realistic, and in my opinion it must choose those areas that are most appropriate for us to scrutinise on a permanent basis; otherwise we will find the old story of spreading the resources too thinly across a wide range of interest areas and probably getting very little result for the taxpayers' dollars.

I would suggest also, in establishing the criteria for permanent Standing Committees of the Parliament, the Select Committee ought to look at the point of not competing against any Standing Committee that the lower House of this Parliament has in existence. It would be a fruitless way to spend the taxpayers' money merely to duplicate the work being done in that House.

Throughout this debate, and indeed, in the debates that took place between 1980 and 1983, frequent reference was made to the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee.

Hon. Peter Dowding: But Mr Pendal, you didn't take this position last year. What was wrong with you?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. E. Masters: He is just playing to the gallery—don't worry about it. He will be quiet later on.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I challenge Mr Dowding on this point. As a Minister of the Crown, he seems to be taking a great interest now in a matter which he ignored totally while he was on the back bench.

Hon. Peter Dowding: It is a matter you ignored totally while you were in Government—that is more to the point.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I challenge the Minister for Mines to produce a reference in *Hansard* of the last three years where I have said anything inconsistent with what I am saying now.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Your party did not say this last year.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I happened to have been a member of the Select Committee that recommended the establishment of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Big deal!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: As a result of that, I was appointed a member of that Standing Committee. If the Minister thinks my actions between 1980 and 1983 are not consistent with the stance I am taking tonight, I suggest, as I said earlier, that he

does not understand what we are debating tonight.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Did you move this in your party room last year, or did it slip your memory?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In the first three years of the Minister's presence in this House, he was one of the few members in this party who took no interest in the subject whatsoever.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You were in Government, and you did not debate this motion last year. What was wrong with you?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I made the point, before the Minister for Mines interjected—and his interjections tonight, strung together, would constitute a 20-minute speech in themselves—

Hon. G. E. Masters: They would not make much sense though.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I referred to the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee which was established by the previous Government as a non-parliamentary committee. I might say that that was a decision with which I disagreed. I was a back-bench member of the previous Government and I said publicly that I disagreed with what that Government did in constituting the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee as a non-parliamentary committee. If I recall correctly, it had as its inaugural chairman, Professor Gordon Reid. The current chairman is the former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Sir Ross Hutchinson.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You blokes must go to sleep when you are in Government. You know you never raised these things then.

Hon. G. E. Masters: How would you know? You have never been here.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are seldom here while a Minister, let alone while you were in Opposition.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I placed on record previously my reasons for believing that the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee ought not to have been a non-parliamentary committee as it was constituted by the previous Government. I made clear my objections in that regard and, therefore, I do not intend to repeat them again tonight. However, in my opinion, the Select Committee may well find it fruitful to look at the work of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee with the following objective in mind! The Select Committee might consider recommending that that committee be disbanded and reformed as a parliamentary committee, or that it might remain in its current statutory form with the provision that a least a permanent committee of this Parliament be appointed to it to study in detail the recommendations of the non-parliamentary

advisory committee. If nothing else, that would achieve the objective of ensuring that the activities of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee are not ignored conveniently or forgotten by this House or by another place.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Are you suggesting they have been before?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Yes, they may well have been.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Over the last nine years of Liberal Government?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: They may well have been ignored.

Hon. Peter Dowding: What were you doing in the joint party parliamentary committee room at that stage?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: That has taken the wind out of the Minister's sails. I am prepared to admit that the recommendations of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee may well have been ignored.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Well, come on, you had time enough to study it.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I do not know the answer to that, but I put it to the House that there is some validity in the suggestion that either the committee be reformed as a committee of the Parliament, or at the very least that a new and permanent Standing Committee of the Parliament be appointed to scrutinise the reports and recommendations of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee.

Some time ago—and I believe it was on your return from a presiding officers' conference, Mr President—there was circulated some information of the most recent Senate committee which, I think, was referred to as the Senate committee on the scrutiny of Bills. Some information was circulated by the officers of the House—

Hon. Garry Kelly: Which the Government ignored!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I wish Government members would be a little careful in what they say because this information was circulated only four weeks ago and if it has been ignored the member's colleagues are at fault.

Hon. Garry Kelly: I lost that one!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Even I, at my most critical, would not expect the Government to have done anything about that report in the last four weeks.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You would have to be tolerant—you were in power for nine years and did nothing about it.

Several members interjected.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You have been there too, Mr Ferry, and did nothing about it, so you can't talk. At least Mr Pendal said he disagreed with the Government.

Hon. V. J. Ferry: Don't wave your pencil at me, old chap!

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: As members are aware, the new scrutiny of Bills committee established by the Senate is, as I understand it, looking at two areas of concern within the upper House of the Federal Parliament. The first is any legislation that might trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, and the second is any legislation that might inappropriately delegate the Parliament's legislative powers. It is not without some irony or significance that the first of the terms of reference of the Senate committee on the scrutiny of Bills—that is, legislation that might trespass on people's personal rights and liberties—was one of the major criteria of the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee that was established by the Court Government as a non-parliamentary body several years ago.

Hon. Peter Dowding: What year was that?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It was after the 1974 election. I think the legislation was introduced into this House in 1975.

Hon. Peter Dowding: And what has it been doing since then?

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The Minister should know because only the other day he tabled the report of this committee.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is right, a report which your Government ignored.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I presume, knowing the full details of it, the Minister—

Hon. G. E. Masters: He would not even know the title.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Information about this Senate committee was contained in the circular to members and it was stated that the new Senate committee itself does not pass any definitive judgment or make any value judgments on legislation before the Senate. So from that point of view it cannot be argued that it is taking away the right of the Government of the day to determine policy. That has been used as a valid argument in the past where the Government of the day—of whichever political colour—is denied the right to implement those policy items to which it has some commitment. In this case the role of the Senate Standing Committee on the scrutiny of Bills, as I understand it, is merely to alert the Senate to a range of possible problems and to provide a check

list of clauses that need more consideration during the Committee stage of the Bill. Again that is important in order that the Government of the day does not have its rights and prerogatives taken away or, put another way, the right of the Government of the day to go to hell in its own way is protected.

Mr Deputy President (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth), in the final part of my comments I would like to refer at some length to the main issue of *The Australian Law Journal* of May of this year which dealt with the quality and the quantity of legislation, before the British Parliament, although obviously it is a matter that has some relevance to all Australian Parliaments. Certainly this journal saw some value in reproducing the material.

I shall quote several extracts from it. At page 255 the article refers to the former Federal Attorney General (Senator Peter Durack) who commented on "the colossal growth in recent years in the volume and complexity of legislation". My reason for quoting this, as it may seem to members to have no connection with the motion before the House, is the hope that, if the Select Committee is appointed, it will address itself to some of the issues raised in *The Australian Law Journal* of May this year. The article and the reports coming out of the United Kingdom opened up a new vista of areas to which a Parliament should properly address itself.

The journal refers to a number of areas which I will be the first to admit I have never thought of before. Because I think they are possibly quite novel and do not necessarily follow many of the traditional arguments we have heard up to this stage in this debate, the proposed Select Committee could do a lot worse than take them into account.

The journal goes on to refer to debates which were taking place in the House of Lords and, in particular, a debate that was opened by Lord Renton. The article read as follows—

... he called attention to the volume of legislation, including statutory instruments, to the desirability of repealing statutes which had "outlived" their purpose or had become unnecessary, and to the need to achieve yet more improvement in the quality of legislation.

In the past we have heard a good deal in this Chamber, this Parliament, and Australia generally about the quality of legislation, and perhaps we have not heard so much about the quantity of legislation.

Here is this eminent figure—I take him to be such if he has been quoted by *The Australian Law Journal*—suggesting that is something which should be looked at.

Hon. Peter Dowding: I get quoted in there too, you know.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: We look forward to the Minister for Mines bringing forward legislation which is consistent with what Lord Renton had to say. The article went on to say—

In the last eighteen years, there had been a “relentless” growth of legislation at a rate of over 2 000 pages a year of *Statutes at Large* in the United Kingdom, no less than 2 876 pages being added in 1980. There was besides the great length of the statutes, while there were about 14 000 statutory instruments in force.

Lord Renton then said—

Besides repealing clearly spent and obsolete laws each year—

Perhaps that is something to which we should pay more attention. To continue—

—should we not get rid of statutes, some which were passed in our lifetime and are taken for granted, which experience has now shown to be unenforceable, ineffective, unworkable, or even socially damaging.

That perhaps opens up the debate and makes its scope a little wider than the area to which we confined it from 1980 to 1983 when this matter was under discussion.

Lord Renton continued to talk about the style and quality of legislation and is reported as follows—

Lord Renton went on to attack the excessive detail of British legislation . . .

That rings a few bells around this place and it can be a criticism of this Government and previous Governments, because on many occasions in this House I have heard people of all political persuasions say that, in its sheer detail, legislation is too complex even for the legislators to understand half the time and frequently criticism is even made that the experts in the law courts and so on have trouble with it.

Lord Renton attacked the excessive detail of British legislation which led to “complexity, obscurity and uncertainty”. The article continued—

He declared that brevity is possible, and endorsed the recent plea of Sir John Donaldson M.R. that priority should be given to clarity and simplicity of expression.

I for one would commend that to the proposed Select Committee.

I would dearly love to see legislation come before this House, regardless of which Government is in office, that I have some chance of understanding in detail and, bearing in mind the comments I have just quoted, hopefully it should not contain too much detail.

The article continued—

If our Acts of Parliament cannot be understood even by clever experts it not only brings the law into contempt, it brings Parliament into contempt.

Again there is a lesson to be learnt from that.

Hon. Peter Dowding: There is a feeling of *deja vu* about those remarks.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The Minister should listen and perhaps he will learn something.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You will recall that was exactly what we said last year.

Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I have heard Mr Berinson refer to it and I agree with him. He has been able to debate the matter quite rationally, which is a bit more than the Minister for Mines is able to do.

On page 256 of the same journal Lord Denning put forward his views “as to the desirable criteria to be observed by statutes”. He said—

It comes to this, that language ought to be simple and clear.

In the past we have heard explanations in this Chamber and elsewhere that the very act of law-making makes it almost impossible to use simple words, and yet here is one of the foremost, eminent British authorities saying that language ought to be simple and clear. He went on to say—

There ought to be not long but short sentences. There should be a few commas and semi-colons in sentences. There should be simple words. There should not be too much detail. One of the troubles is that with the best of motives the draftsmen—

I ask members to bear this in mind. To continue—

—try to think of every contingency . . . It is impossible to think of everything that will happen in the future. All this ought to be in simple language expressing principles.

I for one am very encouraged to hear someone of the stature of Lord Denning make comments of that nature, because they tend to bear out what ordinary members of Parliament—if I may describe them in that way—have pleaded for in the past; that is, if we are to be asked to make laws

for the well-being of this State, at least let those laws be in a form in which they can be understood. It is possible that might mean one of the recommendations of a Standing Committee could relate to simplifying legislation. The idea is not quite as audacious as one would think when one takes into account what this man has said in terms of British legislation.

I return to the starting point: This motion entails taking one more tentative step along the path upon which we set out about 18 months ago as a result of the Select Committee which recommended the creation of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. The way in which that committee has worked over the last 12 months has shown that, regardless of their political persuasions, members are able to meet in a co-operative atmosphere away from this Chamber and bring forward worthwhile, bipartisan recommendations.

If the step we take by, hopefully, supporting this motion goes anywhere near achieving what that Standing Committee has achieved in a very short time, the period we have spent debating the matter today and in recent weeks will be time well spent. I hope, Sir, the concept that Mr Medcalf has explained will get the full support of the House and I certainly give it mine.

**HON. JOHN WILLIAMS** (Metropolitan) [7.55 p.m.]: Perhaps I am one of the few members of the House who, as was mentioned by the Leader of the House, has supported the establishment of a Select Committee system throughout my period in the House, which commenced in 1971. If the question is asked: What did we do in the last nine or 12 years—remembering we had two different Governments during that time—perhaps the answer should be, “Some of us were not believed as to the reason and need for committees”.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You can understand that in some cases.

Hon. JOHN WILLIAMS: Mr Dowding amazes me; he epitomises that old axiom that although a man may have gone to Hale School and university, education is no barrier to ignorance.

Hon. P. H. Lockyer: I could not have put it better myself!

Hon. JOHN WILLIAMS: In looking at the need, as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, for this Select Committee to examine the possible appointment of committees of the House, it should be pointed out that there is abroad a great move for Parliaments to reform their procedures. If we intend to reform our procedures,

perhaps we should try to understand what Parliament is about.

I refer members to an article which appeared in *The Parliamentarian* of April 1983. It relates to the Canadian Parliament and reads as follows—

The arguments for specific reforms are based upon one's understanding of the purpose of Parliament. For some, Parliament is primarily an institution for law-making. Its problems therefore emanate from Parliamentarian's frustration in the face of the executive and the bureaucracy.

Perhaps that explains the nine-year lag. To continue—

Reform of the legislative function involves changes to the confidence convention, more free votes and stronger committees, all of which increase the role of the individual Member of Parliament.

Others see Parliament's primary purpose as a public forum where the actions of the Government are scrutinized. The suggestions for change in the methods of examining departmental estimates and requiring a government response to committee reports are examples of the type of reform which should improve the effectiveness of this forum.

Parliament is also a representative institution in which individual Members have opportunities to raise matters of particular relevance to their constituents. Reforms in this area include changes in the way private Members' business is organized, giving them greater opportunity to voice local concerns . .

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to enable a democratic assembly to operate effectively and fairly. It is designed to protect the rights of all Members, and in particular their right to freedom of speech. It should permit the House to reach decisions on the issues before it, while allowing all sections of opinion to be heard. It should provide the machinery whereby the Government must account to the House for all its actions, measures, and policies. As time is a limited commodity, parliamentary procedure should ensure that the time available for parliamentary business is used as effectively and as fairly as possible.

If existing procedures fail in any of these objectives, there is clearly a need for reform.

That reform is now very apparent, not just in the Canadian Parliament whence that article emanated, but also in the House of Commons at

Westminster. We have always prided ourselves that the Westminster Houses of Parliament are the mother of Parliaments, including this one.

However, if one were to go now to that august assembly one would be amazed by the change that has come over the place in the past three years. Now the problem in that House is to get members to stay, because the original 11 committees set down in 1792 have been increased to 25 separate committees of back-benchers. In fact, 300 back-benchers are involved. When the committees were selected, the party Whips, the Ministry, and the Leader of the Opposition had nothing to say in their appointment; they were appointed by back & less benchers. It is significant to note that during the period of the last Government in that House more than 60 per cent of the committee chairmen came from the Opposition. Great concern has been expressed about the lack of debate on the floor of that House, and a lack of attendance by members because nearly 300 members are concerned daily with committee work.

It may astonish members of this House to learn the amount of work done by those committees. They examine the policies of departments and interview and examine under secretaries and Ministers of the Crown. They make short reports to their colleagues, reports which enable the work of the House to flow so much more freely than it ever did before. One needs only to consider the procedures adopted in this House compared with those adopted in the House of Commons: Here we have the first and second readings of a Bill and then the House goes into the Committee of the Whole. In the House of Commons, unless the matter before it be the Budget or something of that nature, specialised committees meet in the committee rooms to proceed with the Committee stage of the Bill as we know it and recommendations are sent to the floor of the House.

This procedure would assist Mr Gayfer and other members in the boat of country representation. The English Parliament sits on each day from Monday to Friday, but works for three weeks and then has two weeks off.

Perhaps the proposed Select Committee for this House will consider a complete reorganisation of our sitting times to the extent that they would be spaced out something akin to the spacing of the sittings of the Federal Parliament. Such a procedure might not suit us initially, but it would assist greatly in getting through the massive amount of work that we have and decreasing the number of amendments we must move to legislation, to adjust errors which seem to slip into this House from time to time.

The added attraction of these committees is that members would have a greater chance to participate in the operations of the Parliament. Our present method of government is now ancient, and it is wrong. As long as I have been here I have believed it to be wrong. Power should not reside with the Executive or the bureaucracy, it should reside in the Houses of Parliament from whence it emanated. Instead of backbench members feeling like a small appendage of the Parliament or having to run around at the behest of their masters or Cabinet Ministers, backbenchers could take a full and proper part in the designing of the State they would like to see in their future years and to be available for generations to come.

I hope the proposed Select Committee will consider the 25 committees of the House of Commons, and perhaps it will come to the opinion that those 25 committees would suit us perfectly well. An example of those committees are those which relate to agriculture, education, science, the arts, employment, energy, the environment, industry and trade, social services, transport, the Treasury, and the Civil Service. It has been found that not only do parliamentarians benefit from these committees but also, according to the article at page 57 of the journal for parliamentarians to which I have referred, civil servants have discovered suddenly for themselves a new role—a complete enmeshment—with members of Parliament understanding far better the role of the public servant, something which has been lost in this State over the last 10 years, and with public servants understanding the role of the parliamentarians. It is not a question of the public servant doing exactly what his Minister has told him to do, but rather a question of his ensuring that the policy dictated to him is carried out.

One could have been enchanted with the Cabinet system, which worked perfectly well in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when communication was a problem; but it is now time to look at the Cabinet system in our modern society, a system that with improved communications can make decisions and move quickly, and so much so that under a new system the Cabinet might update itself in order to be similar to a board of an industrial organisation.

The work that will be the charge of this committee will be onerous, although we know from certain pre-conditions laid down that the committee will have to report quickly. If the House adopts the recommendations made and the committee does its work properly, we might witness something else happen, and that might be the disappearance of the bitterness, enmity and, some-

times, hatred that exists between members of Parliament—all wrongly placed.

I have the right to stand in my place in this Chamber to expound my beliefs and the policies in which I believe. Members opposite have an equal right to defend and put forward the policies and propositions in which they firmly believe. Sadly, over the last three years for certain, and perhaps for the three years before that period, deterioration of the system has set in.

If a member supports a particular party he could become a man with whom others should not associate. We have witnessed the spectacle in the corridors of this Parliament of it not being the done thing for a member to talk with a member of his opposition. That has been petty childishness based on the proposition that debate could not be limited to the Chamber but had to be carried on outside, and that has been to the detriment of the Parliament. The Leader of this House would tell members that when he and I arrived in this Parliament some of the best lessons we ever learnt were learnt outside the Chamber, in the corridors, by talking with every member of the Parliament without the fear of somebody else reporting that we were seen talking to our opposition. What a heinous crime! It is the sort of attitude that a sensible working system would eliminate. The trouble with the whole of Australia today is the polarisation of groups by the misunderstanding deliberately fostered by some sections of the media for the benefit of increased sales.

I assure the Leader of the House—this would come as no surprise to him—that I fully support the proposition of the Leader of the Opposition that a Select Committee inquire into these matters. For once I am able to stand in this place to say quite honestly that I believe reforms should be instituted within this House, and say that without some penalty being attached to my remarks because, perhaps, they do not suit the theories of some politicians.

**HON. MARGARET McALEER** (Upper West) [8.10 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion, but will do so briefly because the subject has been canvassed extremely well.

From the remarks made by the Hon. Des Dans it is clear I have been a supporter for a long time of the committee system. Unfortunately it was clear also from his remarks that I was a rather poor and inept advocate of the committee system all those years ago, but might I say that perhaps the Hon. Des Dans was that himself.

Hon. D. K. Dans: We didn't win the day. We were both put down.

Hon. MARGARET McALEER: I am straying from the point only because the Hon. John Williams before us made many speeches about a committee system, speeches from which we all benefited greatly. When I spoke in my turn in 1976 I looked upon myself as carrying forward the work done in another House, as the Hon. Ian Medcalf has pointed out already, the work already carried out by Arthur Bickerton as the originator of the idea in Western Australia. Certainly Arthur Tonkin also had much to say on the subject.

The Hon. Des Dans said quite truly that he did not expect changes to be made in a day, in a week, or a month—all good things take time to happen.

The Hon. Phil Pandal pointed out very well that in the course of time all the interest that members have shown came together and we were successful in having appointed a Select Committee to investigate the appointment of a particular Standing Committee, which was formed and is functioning now. Perhaps it is true that the best days are yet to come for that committee because it is still getting into its full stride. There are always backbenchers in every Parliament where a committee system is tried—eminent backbenchers have not believed in it because they have thought, and probably quite rightly in their own cases, that they could do better work for their constituents and the country by staying outside the committee system in order to work on their own.

It is commonly said that Oppositions, in particular, favour the committee system, and no doubt that is true. It is true also that all backbenchers feel drawn to the committee system. Professor Gordon Reid, whose words have been so much quoted in this debate, as they are quoted elsewhere when this subject is raised, views the committee system as one way in which the Parliament can assist the Executive to scrutinise the bureaucracy because it is so vast and no small body of men, even Ministers with the assistance available to them, can be expected to carry out that scrutiny. In addition, committee systems are often employed to scrutinise the work of the Executive—the Cabinet itself. All sorts of combinations and permutations are possible within the committee system. While a number of them have been canvassed tonight, many have not, and that is why we are considering the establishment of a Select Committee to investigate all the various forms of committees that may be suitable for our House.

One point is important for this House to remember: Whatever Standing Committees are determined to be suitable for this House we should

remain flexible in our thinking about the committee system. With all good fortune we will try what is recommended by the Select Committee, but there is no need to suppose that will be the end of all things. We will develop the system and we will change our minds. So long as we remain flexible in our thinking we will be all the more successful.

Before I sit down I must say that country members are much maligned in regard to sitting hours, a point raised by the Hon. Des Dans. The thinking of country members in trying to retain some time during the weeks of sitting is with the hope in mind of having a more developed committee system, and the knowledge that unless they can keep some time free there will not be any time at all for committees to sit.

I support the motion.

**HON. H. W. GAYFER** (Central) [8.15 p.m.]: My remarks will be brief and will be mainly in defence of the character assassination which I almost suffered from the Leader of the House.

**Hon. D. K. Dans**: I said you were a man of integrity.

**The Hon. H. W. GAYFER**: When introducing the motion the Hon. Ian Medcalf moved that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report on: "(a) what committees of this house additional to those already in existence might be appointed with a view to the more efficient . . ."

I maintain that I have been consistent in this House and if some members opposite fail to see this I am afraid I must remind them of one or two instances. The first concerns a motion moved in another place when the first Public Accounts Committee was established, in, I believe, 1970 or 1971. I opposed that motion. The second instance concerns a motion moved in this House on 1 October 1980 in relation to the setting up of a Standing Committee to examine Government agencies. I, and two other members opposed that motion. Mr Dans did not. The members who opposed that resolution with me were the Hon. N. E. Baxter and the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon.

Again, on 24 March 1981 when the debate on the Government Standing Committee to examine Government agencies was resumed Mr Pike moved the suspension of Standing Orders, a motion similar to that which is now before us. I again opposed the motion. On that occasion my ranks had grown a little—I notice I was the only speaker at the time who opposed it—but Mr Dan's name was not with mine. He voted for the debate to be continued, which ultimately led to the establishment of that committee. The mem-

bers who voted with me on that occasion were the Hon. N. E. Baxter, the Hon. A. A. Lewis, the Hon. W. M. Piesse and the Hon. Tom McNeil. The ranks had grown somewhat. Later in that debate an adjournment of the debate was moved as a parliamentary ploy and only four members voted against the adjournment, which showed that I had lost ranks. The members who voted for the Ayes on that occasion were the Hon. N. E. Baxter, the Hon. Tom McNeil, The Hon. W. M. Piesse and myself. Of the 25 members who voted with the Noes, thus allowing the debate to continue, the presence of D. K. Dans was notable.

I can say only that my views in this House remain consistent and that is something to live up to.

I intend to vote against the forming of Select Committees for the reason I have stated in this House on previous occasions and at least I will be consistent.

I maintain that it is not absolutely necessary to have Select Committees for the same reason stated by the Hon. Phil Penda; that is, certain members of Parliament would have the ultimate say in the setting up of the committees.

Members are entitled to their views, but mine have been consistent along these lines. I have nothing against the House Committee and other Parliament House committees such as the Standing Orders Committee, the Printing Committee and so on. Indeed, I have supported these committees and I serve on one of them and have done for many years.

I might add that one of my arguments against this motion is that I believe a member of Parliament's time is fully taken up in the work of his electorate and to add the arduous work of sitting on a committee or a multitude of committees, as this motion could lead to, would intrude upon his time. Members will notice if these committees are set up that the willing horses will sit on them and we will see some sort of general activity go on.

For those reasons I oppose the committee system and I oppose this motion.

**HON. V. J. FERRY** (South-West) [8.21 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and in so doing I remind the House that the setting up of a Select Committee would result in its making recommendations to this House for further consideration. The committees which are proposed to be established would not have the power to inflict any recommendation on this House which was not the wish of the House. Therefore, this is a move for an exploratory com-



mittee which is deserving of the support of the House.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Why don't you tell them about the potato committee which was successful?

Hon. V. J. FERRY: I would like to but it has nothing to do with this motion.

This Parliament has the capacity to form one or two standing committees in addition to that which is already established. I would suggest that the proposed Select Committee might come up with a whole range of committees in order of priority for the House to consider. It may be six, eight, or 10 committees; but I cannot see many of them being added to the standing committees of the House in the near future. At this stage we are only examining the situation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the House.

Hon. V. J. FERRY: The comment has been made that with the proliferation of committees, debate in this Chamber may well deteriorate. I would hope that that would not be the case; members would be far more informed as a result of the committees and they would be able to make a meaningful contribution in that way.

One point has not been mentioned and is worthy of consideration. This is a State House and it is a State Parliament. It is somewhat common practice these days for State Parliaments to be under attack from various sources and as a State House and State Parliament we would do well perhaps to have a committee consider those matters which may erode or undermine the State Legislature. I hope that is one matter the committee will take into consideration.

I support the motion.

HON. FRED McKENZIE (North-East Metropolitan) [8.24 p.m.]: I am in somewhat of a dilemma in deciding whether I should support or oppose this motion.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I am thoroughly confused now.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: If one considers what has been said earlier in the debate there is a lot of merit in having committees of this House so that members have something to do.

Hon. Tom Knight: You have served on committees.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: I have served on two committees and regrettably one of them—I cannot speak on the other because the Government has not yet made a decision—on which we spent a lot of time—

Hon. D. K. Dans: And money.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE:—and money produced no results. The Government chose to ignore the recommendations put forward.

I note tonight that the Hon. Phil Pental has a new-found interest in setting up committees. He has been here for three years.

Hon P. G. Pental: How can you say that when *Hansard* will reveal my interest three years ago?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: His reason was to take some pressure off the Government.

Hon P. G. Pental: I will give you 20 minutes on the adjournment.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: The Hon. Phil Pental can speak for 20 minutes on the adjournment but I do not have to listen to him. I must say that the Hon. Margaret McAleer and the Hon. John Williams have for some time been promoting the committee system.

Hon. P. G. Pental: I acknowledge that interest for myself.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: Maybe the Hon. Phil Pental did, but nothing was done about it by the Government.

The fear I have and the reason for my dilemma is that I am wondering what is this new-found reason on the part of the Opposition. After the Hon. Margaret McAleer delivered her speech in 1971—it was a sound one which has been repeated here tonight in many forms—the then Leader of the House, the Hon. Neil McNeill said—

Miss McAleer raised a matter which has been under consideration and which has certainly been debated from time to time. I refer to the appointment of committees. The honourable member is certainly within her rights in expressing her views and nobody would dispute that. However she will be aware that the matter has had searching examination over a long period of time. I do not propose to express my support or otherwise for what the honourable member has said; nor will I take such action in relation to the remarks made by anybody else in the course of this debate.

In that debate the Hon. Des Dans indicated that there was merit in the Hon. Margaret McAleer's proposal, but the Government did not act and I dare say we would not have the motion before us now if a Liberal Party-Country Party coalition Government were in the other place.

Hon. P. G. Pental: How can you say that when you know the previous Government did act in relation to QANGOS?

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: That was one committee.

Hon. P. G. Pandal: It was a most important committee for years.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: It was set up to avoid embarrassing the Government. I wonder whether the motive behind this motion is an ulterior one in order to frustrate the Government's legislative programme. That is the fear I have.

Hon. I. G. Medcalf: That is a typical Government reaction.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: It may well be.

Several members interjected.

Hon. FRED McKENZIE: It is a gut reaction, too, and one must be suspicious because the Opposition had plenty of opportunity and it knows full well the record in relation to the Bills which came before this House during the Tonkin Government. Twenty-one of them were rejected and a number were amended. Now that the pressure is on, the Opposition is looking for a way out—to refer matters to a Standing Committee or a Select Committee in order that it can frustrate the legislative programme in relation to those matters outlined in our policy speech. It is those matters with which this Government wants to proceed in regard to its legislative programme.

For this reason I have sat here listening to what has been said and for a long time I have thought members in this House have nothing to do. It has been merely a rubber stamp for the Liberal Party-Country Party Government. I am fearful for what will happen in the future.

For that reason I oppose the motion.

HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [8.30 p.m.]: I did not intend to speak until the Hon. Fred McKenzie stood up. I would not even deign to deal with the Leader of the House because of the inane comments throughout his speech. Let me draw the attention of members to the committee about which Mr McKenzie spoke. I presume he spoke about a Select Committee inquiring into national parks.

The previous Government supported the concept of the establishment of the south coast national park from the D'Entrecasteaux National Park. However, the present Government, which has been in office for only six months, has laid all that aside, and for 12 months we will not have a decision on anything recommended by the Select Committee because the Government has set up, not one, but four committees with varying terms of reference. If Mr McKenzie criticises the previous Government for this, he should consider what his own Government is doing.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: One recommendation out of how many?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: One recommendation! All of our recommendations about the south coast are down the drain.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: They are not down the drain.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the honourable member to speak to the motion and stop talking to the Government Whip.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It would be a pleasure, Sir; but I have a duty to point out the fallacies in the comments of the previous speaker. He said that the previous Government took no notice of a Select Committee of this House.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: I will stand by that.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The honourable member can stand by it or sit by it. He is wrong, and he will be proved to be wrong, as time goes by.

If honourable members take notice of the answers I have received from the Leader of the House, they will find that Mr McKenzie—a very able member of that committee—will not have his response from this Government for at least another 12 months.

Committees are of benefit; I am sure the Hon. Fred McKenzie would agree with that.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: I did not disagree with that.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am sure Mr Hetherington would agree; I am sure Mr Berinson would agree; I am sure the Leader of the House would agree, because he learnt a lot about potatoes—he has often quoted to the House and to me privately his views on the time he spent on the Select Committee dealing with potatoes.

Everybody is running away from what the motion says. It is to consider whether we should have committees. Nobody has denied the benefit to members of a committee system.

A red herring was drawn across the trail by the Leader of the House who said that country members do not have time. Country members always make time; it is the members from the North Province who do not; but they do not seem to understand what this place is all about.

It is vital that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be supported for the benefit of the House and for the benefit of individual members. The matter should be looked into, and the motion should be supported.

HON. GARRY KELLY (South Metropolitan) [8.34 p.m.]: During his speech the Hon. Fred McKenzie said something about the Govern-

ment's being frightened that its electoral programme could be delayed and the Leader of the Opposition said that that was a typical reaction of Governments. That may be so; but in the present situation, where we have the Government in the lower House and a hostile Opposition majority in the upper House, the Opposition—

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Who said it is hostile? We have been very kind to you.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: —has the numbers, so that any time the Opposition—

Hon. I. G. Pratt: Outrageously kind to you so far.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Just listen until I have said it, and then members can interject.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. GARRY KELLY: At any time it wishes, the Opposition can refer Government legislation to a committee. If the House were elected democratically, I would have no objection to its having a Select Committee system; but while it is selected on the present rigged and gerrymandered basis, the people who make up the Opposition—

*Point of Order*

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I believe the member is dealing with the subject of a Bill in another place.

The PRESIDENT: I do not believe there is a point of order; but the member is wandering from the motion before the Chair. I suggest that he draw his remarks in some way or another towards the motion we are debating.

*Debate (on motion) Resumed*

Hon. GARRY KELLY: With respect, Mr President, the remarks I am making are fairly pertinent to the question of setting up a Select Committee system. In the case of the Senate, we have a proportional representation system in which the States are represented equally.

Opposition members interjected.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Within each State, we have one-vote-one-value.

Opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Talk about red herrings! Let us be practical about it—

Opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If honourable members cease their interjections we will reach the conclusion of the debate on this motion more quickly.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: The Senate was the price of federation. Without the Senate, we would

have had no federation; so let us get that one out of the way for a start.

In the 151 years of its existence, this House has never been a genuine House of Review but a House of privilege and power. Before 1979 or 1980, everyone used to say how palsy-walsy the atmosphere was, and it was not like the dreadful other place; but when the crunch came, the numbers were used. When Labor Governments were in office—

Hon. G. E. Masters: I do not think we have ever limited debate.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: One has only to look at the record during the three years of the Tonkin Labor Government.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest to the honourable member that he relate his comments to the motion. He is talking about an entirely different subject, and he should speak to the motion. I have given him much leeway.

Hon. GARRY KELLY: Thank you, Mr President.

I make the point that this House has never been a House of Review. In moving this motion, the Leader of the Opposition is trying to establish the review powers of this House by investigating the possibility of setting up Select Committees to inquire into certain legislation coming before the House. That was never done during the nine years of the Court-O'Connor Government. In fact, when the Hon. Margaret McAleer put up the suggestion that a committee system should be established, it was dealt with swiftly by the then Leader of the House, who did not act on any of the suggestions made by our present leader at the time.

The present Opposition has a vested interest in setting up this committee system, which will delay and frustrate the Government's legislative programme. It has not a genuine interest in the committee system or the rights of backbenchers.

This House is not a House of Review. It cannot be a House of Review when it is elected in the way it is. For those reasons, I oppose the motion.

HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [8.39 p.m.]: It is disappointing to hear the way the previous speaker regarded the motion. It is a shame that Government members are caucused in this way.

I will not delay the House; but it appears that the move by the Leader of the Opposition is excellent, and I commend it.

On page 524 of *Hansard*, the Leader of the Opposition put forward the reasons for the establishment of committees in the Senate, as follows—

- (1) The increase in the activities of Government;

We are well aware that the activities of Government have increased dramatically over the years. It is commendable that we are moving to inquire into the way the Parliament should operate. The Leader of the Opposition continued—

- (2) the increasing volume and complexity of legislation which cannot always be satisfactorily considered within narrow parliamentary timetables;

That is another commendable ideal. He continued—

- (3) present-day specialisation and the impact of the tremendous progress in science and technology;

- (4) the inadequacy of opportunities and means on the floor of the Senate to discharge fully Parliament's important duty to probe and check Government activities;

- (5) the lack of any formal follow-up procedure to examine citizens' grievances or requests, as expressed in petitions;

That is something we have never seen happen in this House. The Leader of the Opposition said further—

- (6) the need for more question and answer sessions with Ministers and departmental officers regarding Bills, policies, and administration;

That has not been considered before in this House. He continued—

- (7) the need to establish, through committees, formal channels of communication between Parliament and interested organisations and individuals;

- (8) the fact that Parliament is in session for only about half the year calls for a delegation to committees of power to continue inquiries, and the investigation of Government activities, during the period when Parliament is not in session; and

- (9) the need, in an increasingly expert society, for senators to be able to call upon scholarly research and advice equal in competence to that relied upon by the Government.

When the Hon. Margaret McAleer made her suggestion for similar committees on a previous occasion, the then Leader of the House and the Ministers of that Government were not amenable to an examination of a new form of committee system. This evening, with another Government on the Treasury benches, the most obstructive

speakers were the two Ministers. We heard one Minister responding to the Leader of the Opposition, and we heard the other Minister giving a major stream of interjections representing possibly the longest speech on the subject. The third Minister is very much in favour of the committee system, but unfortunately he was not present this evening.

Hon. D. K. Dans: How do you know that?

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: It is interesting to note that when the Hon. Des Dans spoke on the Address-in-Reply in 1976, he commended the suggestion of the Hon. Margaret McAleer. One other member from the then Opposition benches—a person for whom we had a great deal of admiration; the Hon. Grace Vaughan—dealt with that suggestion similarly. At the time there was a fairly strong move within the Labor Party to improve the committee system of the Parliament, yet not one other member of the Labor Party mentioned the subject.

I suppose "committees" is an unfortunate term. I find that at times a committee seems to be just a group of people working towards reaching a decision, having among them a person who may be brilliant and who proposes a solution, and then when a decision is about to be reached, the chairman puts the committee into recess in order that it may sit again. The word "committee" is not prone to stirring up great interest in people. Members such as the Hon. Garry Kelly and the Hon. Fred McKenzie think that committees involve extraneous debates and the frustration of any achievements that might be possible, but that is not the case. I challenge any member to disagree that keeping abreast of the complexities of government and the problems faced by industries having to comply with the laws and regulations passed by Parliaments throughout Australia today is almost an impossible task. A recent survey conducted to ascertain the laws and regulations passed over the last 20 years showed 16 631 Acts and 32 551 regulations were passed by the Federal and State Parliaments, giving a total of almost 50 000 statutory instruments created in 20 years.

The Hon. Des Dans has always been a member prepared to change; he has always said that we live in a changing world and that we need to learn to adjust. Whenever the Labor Party has changed a policy, he has said that the reason is that the party is able to move with the times. I have a great deal of respect for him because he shows flexibility. He has shown he is prepared to accept change. I have often discussed this matter with him.

Another problem involves industry complying with change. It should be noted that for every dollar spent on introducing those 50 000 statutory instruments, it has cost private enterprise over \$3 to comply with them. So I put it to members that with this motion we are looking at change in many ways; we are looking at the change in the method of examining legislation. Most of us admire the Federal Republic of Germany's parliamentary system, in both the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, and the way they examine legislation. They do not have the major debate which transpires in our Parliament with our Australian system of confrontation. Even in their current plenary session the "Greenies", who constitute only 15 people in the assembly of 465 people, have a right to equal representation on committees. I know Mr Dans has seen the Bundestag in operation; he has probably heard the sort of debate that takes place and the way legislation passes through the plenary sessions with very little opposition. The legislation passed is of a high quality. So the first part of the motion deals with expediting the passage of legislation through the Parliament.

Another part of the motion deals with the scrutiny of Government, and this is where tonight we have seen the Ministers back down. Not only have Mr Dans and Mr Dowding backed down, but previously we have seen Liberal Government Ministers back down. We need a system of examining the Ministry and their departments; we need to be able to scrutinise their operations. We as elected representatives should have the opportunity to question and to scrutinise the manner in which Governments expend and administer public finance. If that is what Mr Kelly believes to be undemocratic and wrong, let him say that to the taxpayers of this State.

The motion deals also with subordinate legislation. This House has sat for seven or eight days this session and on the Table of the House we can see over 200 papers which have been tabled. Ministers have tabled papers which constitute a group of regulations granted under various Acts of Parliament. We have of course a Legislative Review and Advisory Committee to scrutinise these regulations, but frankly as a member of Parliament I, like other members, have a responsibility to scrutinise all subordinate legislation.

Over the last three or four days I have been labouring through many tabled papers which I have asked the Clerks to obtain for me. I have been examining those tabled papers which affect particular areas with which I am conversant.

I challenge any member to tell me whether those 200 items tabled by the Ministers represent

the wishes of the people of Western Australia. I challenge members to tell me whether some regulations are not undemocratic and not in the best interests of Western Australians. I challenge members to say they have examined all the subordinate legislation. All this is part of their responsibility.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: What about the Legislative Review and Advisory Committee?

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: We have that committee, but at the same time it is our responsibility to know what has been tabled.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: At least someone looks at it.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The members of that committee are not elected representatives.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: But they are appointed by Statute.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: But can they disallow any regulation? How can our constituents know what is tabled? The only time we are aware of what is tabled is when a Minister seeks leave of the House to table certain papers. That is the only opportunity I have to ask the Clerks to select various papers that I request for examination.

If the Government believes this motion has an ulterior motive it is unfortunate that when in Opposition it did not believe that this was so. It is interesting to know that a very similar motion was moved in another place in 1973 by Mr A. R. Tonkin. He moved that a Select Committee be appointed to investigate the establishment of a comprehensive and effective committee system in the Parliament of Western Australia. In his winding-up remarks he congratulated a number of people, a large number of whom were Labor members. He thanked them for their contributions to that debate. Unfortunately in 1973 the Labor Party held a different view; it has now had a change of heart.

Hon. Garry Kelly: No, it has not.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: As Mr Dans has said, we have the ability to meet and accept change.

I support the motion.

HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [8.55 p.m.]: I support the motion. It is a correct duty of this House to use the committee system to examine a wide range of matters. I am very glad that the Leader of the House referred to the fact that both Miss McAleer and Mr Berinson have made speeches here supporting the need for a committee system to be more widely used. However, to make a speech saying we agree with something is all very fine, but it does not do anything about the problem. If, for instance, the Hon. Mr

Berinson had moved to establish a system of committees and the Government had then rejected it, perhaps there would have been some reason for some of the comments made by Mr Dans about our being in Opposition now and supporting the idea of a committee system.

It has been suggested that when in Government we did not support committees, but that is rubbish; obviously we did. Mr McKenzie knows very well that we supported the principle, because he has been involved very strongly with committees of this House. To say we would have rejected a proposal to establish committees is absolute rubbish, because we used committees.

All we want now is to set up a committee to investigate how best we can use a committee system. I cannot see how anyone can object to that nor how anyone can say that this cannot be reconciled to actions of the coalition when in Government; it is an extension of the same thing.

Mr Dans has suggested that country members have said that they do not have time to serve on committees; he has said that only four members would be able to devote time to committees.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I said Mr Gayfer said that.

Hon. I. G. PRATT: I doubt whether Mr Gayfer said that only four members would be available. I have not read that in *Hansard* so obviously Mr Gayfer did not say it—Mr Dans said it tonight.

As a country member who spoke in the debate referred to by Mr Dans I most certainly have not said that I cannot find time to serve on committees. I did speak against using more of our daytime in the House when we can use that time more effectively elsewhere and when we have the evenings, such as now, to debate matters in the House. Being a member of Parliament is a demanding job and we must be prepared to spend our nights and our days attending to necessary work.

Mr Dans has suggested that if we are to have a committee system we should agree to his previous proposal to sit at 2.15 p.m. on Tuesdays and 10.45 a.m. on Thursdays. That assertion is completely without merit. If we found it difficult to find the time to sit on committees we could simply change the sitting time for Wednesdays from 2.15 p.m. back to 4.30 p.m. We would then have time for committee work. I would be happy to go along with that idea and so provide sufficient time to handle committee work, which is so vital to the system of any House of Review. It is a role being used more often by upper Houses and it is a trend we should follow and make more use of. To have more committees would be in the best interests of

the people we represent and the Parliament of which we are part.

I support the motion.

HON. TOM KNIGHT (South) [8.59 p.m.]: I support the motion. Since I have been in Parliament I have discussed this matter with many older members of Parliament and I have indicated that I agree with a committee system. Unfortunately I have served on only one committee. It was a joint party committee and I must say that the contribution made to that committee by members opposite well and truly justifies the extension of this sort of thing.

I must disagree with the statement made by Mr Gayfer wherein he said he opposed the committee system because it meant he would not have enough time in his electorate. A committee comprises some three, five or seven members and not the 34 members who constitute this House. The committee is in a position to bring people forward to give evidence which individual members are not able to obtain. The report is put before this House and tabled for the benefit of every member, which means that those members not serving on the committee have time to attend to their electoral duties.

The Leader of the House (Hon. D. K. Dans) also raised my name in this evening's debate, but I think he did so to deliberately confuse the issue; he said that only four Opposition members would be available to serve on committees. That is how he read it, but as I see it, a committee system will give country members more time to spend in their electorates because they will not waste time running around chasing up the many and varied things that members have to follow up in a total House and parliamentary concept, as against their electoral duties. These are totally different from the point I mentioned when discussing the subject of the sitting hours. With the previous sitting hours I had time during the day to spend on electoral matters on behalf of my constituents and I was able to be in my electorate on Mondays and Fridays. I also served on a Select Committee, but it was not a full-week-at-a-time situation over the total time of the recess. We fitted in what we had to do during the hours Parliament was not sitting.

It is advantageous to the House to have a committee putting together the facts and figures regarding a particular subject and examining them on a joint party basis, often without conflicting views. Eventually the committee will bring forward its report and every member will concur in the findings. This saves a lot of time which would otherwise be spent sitting in this House with 34 people speaking and arguing the matter. It is

much better for members to sit back and read a concise report presented to the House by a Select Committee. The argument put forward by the Hon. Mick Gayfer has no foundation because the committee system would give him more time to spend in his electorate. The argument put forward by the Leader of the House in regard to sitting hours is incorrect because the proposed system would mean that we would not have 34 people wasting their time. We would have a committee for the purpose of preparing something for the benefit of this Parliament and the people of Western Australia.

I support the motion.

**HON. TOM McNEIL** (Upper West) [9.04 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion by the Leader of the Opposition and at the same time to clarify some remarks made by the Hon. Mick Gayfer. I do not want to appear to members to be changing my mind. When the original motion came forward 18 months ago I thought there were reasons to disagree with the Hon. Bob Pike's motion that a committee be formed for a certain purpose. In his speech tonight the Hon. Mick Gayfer clarified the statement by pointing out that the Hon. Sandy Lewis, the Hon. Win Piesse, the Hon. Norman Baxter, the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, and he had at various times opposed particular aspects of the motion. I honestly believe, and have done so since I have been in Parliament, that we could perhaps more fully utilise the time we have in this place by looking more carefully at legislation. I can see no reason for not having a committee system operating to the benefit of this House.

I do not intend to say that the Hon. Mick Gayfer is not making himself available for committees; however, some of the more far-flung country representatives will find difficulty in making their time available. I see merit in the Leader of the Opposition's suggestion for a committee system involving closer study of some legislation coming before the House.

I therefore express my support for the motion.

**HON. I. G. MEDCALF** (Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.06 p.m.]: An awful lot of red herrings have been passed around the Chamber by some Government members during the course of this debate. I say that because I listened with astonishment to the Hon. Fred McKenzie's remarks. I usually ascribe to him the fairest of motives, but he was most unfair in the comments he made regarding the Hon. Phil Pandal when he said that gentleman had a new-found interest in the committee system. Phil Pandal was one of the great advocates of a com-

mittee system as you, Mr Deputy President (Hon. John Williams) have been. Although he has not been in this House as long as you, Mr Deputy President, like you Mr Pandal has advocated a committee system ever since he came to the Parliament. He certainly advocated this on a number of occasions. He in fact served on a Select Committee which was appointed in 1980 to consider whether or not a committee on Government agencies should be set up. That committee was very similar to the one proposed now. It was a committee to see whether a special committee should be set up, similar to this committee, to see whether other special committees should be set up.

So in 1982 when we were in Government and this House had passed that motion, the Hon. Phil Pandal subsequently moved for the establishment of the Standing Committee and he was an inaugural member of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Certainly it is not correct—it is most unfair and quite surprising—for the Hon. Fred McKenzie to make those comments.

I also listened with some astonishment to the Hon. Garry Kelly, and to the suspicion which came out of every word he uttered. He seemed to think that every word that I said when introducing this motion some two or three weeks ago was simple, abject hypocrisy. If he were to take the trouble to read what I have said—I am not sure if he was present and heard what I said because he rather indicated that he did not know what I said—he would see that I put very firmly the many good reasons that a committee system would strengthen this House of Parliament in its review function.

He said to me that I was giving to this House a kind of mail-listed review function. Of course, I am not doing anything of the sort. The House has always had a review function. I draw members' attention to the motion because I am surprised that it does not appear on the notice paper. The motion is simply that we inquire into and report on what committees should be set up in order to bring about the more efficient, proper and orderly despatch of the business of the House, including the support of its review and investigatory function; in other words, to endeavour to perfect its review and investigatory function; to improve its performance. I make no secret of that; it is what we are trying to do. Is anything wrong with that? If the Hon. Garry Kelly were here, no doubt he would be able to indicate whether he thinks there is anything wrong in perfecting the review function of this House. I cannot for a moment believe that any member

would think that was the wrong thing to do. That is the object of this exercise.

I am not accustomed to making long speeches as I did on the introduction of this motion, but I meant what I said. Members who have been here a reasonable time know that I do mean what I say and I measure my words as carefully as I can. When I make comments to the effect that I believe something will assist us in carrying out our duties as members of Parliament, I mean that; I do not mean anything else. I am surprised that a member could be so—

Hon. D. K. Dans: Suspicious?

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I will not say what I was going to say. I am surprised any member could misinterpret my words to the extent that the Hon. Garry Kelly did. He has misinterpreted them and, frankly, I hope his knowledge of the procedures of the House improves as time goes on. I express that hope in all earnestness and sincerity because his knowledge is not very good at the present time.

I did make the remark that one does look at things differently when in Government as opposed to when in Opposition.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I accept that.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: There is no point in shillyshallying. Of course it is perfectly true. Government Ministers are very busy people who, for the most part, are preoccupied from morning till night. They work very long hours and many days of the week, more than five, and they do not really have time to think about a lot of the work of the House. It is true that Ministers do become suspicious of the activities of committees. It is not sufficient to say that only Liberal Governments become suspicious of the activities of committees because Labor Governments do, too. The attitude of the Hon. Peter Dowding exemplified that. No-one could say that his interjections tonight were friendly or well disposed to this motion. They were indeed most hostile interjections which indicated to me his hostility to the motion and his hostility to committees.

Hon. Garry Kelly: It might be more to the timing.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I am sorry Mr Kelly was not in his seat when I was commenting on him. I do not propose to repeat those comments; he can read them in *Hansard* in due course.

Hon. G. E. Masters: They will only upset him.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: When members get into Government they do not like the activities of committees. I will quote from an article in *The Financial Review* of 6 May this year in which

there appears a statement by a former Federal Minister that the Federal Government would not proceed with the committee system which was in its election platform. I will not read it all, but if required, I will table the document. It reads as follows—

THE Federal Government has backed away from reform of the parliamentary committee system.

Before the last election the Australian Labor Party had proposed making substantial changes to the committee system, to strengthen the system and extend its coverage to virtually all areas of government.

However, several ministers are understood to have had misgivings about the proposed changes and on Wednesday night, the Special Minister for State, Mr Young, announced the committees to be established would be the same as those that existed in the previous Parliament.

Later the article suggests that they might at a later stage proceed with the proposal. The article continues—

It is because of this it appears that several ministers have got cold feet on the proposed changes.

I am not suggesting there is anything strange about that, but it is true that Governments do not like being scrutinised or having people look over their shoulders. It is perfectly true that Oppositions find it easier to move these motions than Governments do; but it does not mean that when in Government we did not have a committee system. We had many committees. The Hon. Fred McKenzie served on one or two committees and other members served on many others.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: All I want you to say is that you are not going to frustrate the legislative programme. If you can say that, fair enough. I am not disagreeing with committees.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. John Williams): Order!

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I will say what I want to say, not what the Hon. Fred McKenzie wants me to say.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: I realise that. You haven't even asked me.

Hon. Peter Wells: Now, now, Fred, that's not like you!

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I did not hear that interjection so I will not comment on it. When in Government we supported many Select Committees; indeed, I cannot think of a Select Committee which was put before this House that we



did not support. Three years ago we supported the special committee which was set up to see whether we wanted a committee on Government agencies. This is the corollary of that. This is the follow-on of that, as the Hon. Phil Pandal said.

I point out to the House that we have never before had an identical proposition before us. If it is true to say that we never put this particular provision before the House when we were in Government, the same could be said of the Tonkin Government or of the former Opposition, the present Government.

The former Opposition of this House never put before this House a motion such as the one we are presently dealing with. It never discussed with us whether we should have such a motion. It is true that certain odd speeches were made, one by the Hon. J. M. Berinson on the Address-in-Reply, which Mr Dans quoted and thereby saved me the trouble, because I had it ready for my reply.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Sorry about that.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: It is all right, I will not go through it again.

Certain members spoke in favour of committees, but there was never a motion before the House except one in 1980 put forward by a Government member, Mr Pike, to set up a committee to see whether we could justify having a QANGO committee—to use that colloquial term. It is not true, however, to say we have never supported committees. It is true that certain former members of this House were strongly opposed to committees. Mr Gayfer said that he was opposed, and still is. Mr Dans quoted the Hon. Neil McNeill who said during an Address-in-Reply debate that he was not in favour of committees and would not do anything about it.

It does not mean we are all opposed to committees. Indeed, I challenge anyone to quote any statement I have made in which I rejected any such proposition as the present one. I challenge anyone to produce any such statement that I have rejected proposals for setting up committees. I notice there is a great silence from the Hon. Fred McKenzie.

I have said enough on that subject. I want to say now that to talk about country members not being able to serve on committees and to take the comments made by Mr Gayfer, who has indicated he is an opponent of committees anyway, is not a fair thing in relation to the motion.

Hon. D. K. Dans: He made comments as to why he was opposed.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: It is not a fair thing in relation to what is before the House. Mr Gayfer

has said publicly, and I give him full credit for his honesty, that he is an opponent of committees; he has never been in favour of them. To quote him in relation to what country members can and cannot do is not a fair comment on the time available to others members of this House.

I repeat what Mr Pratt has said: One of the reasons we did oppose the Leader of the House's proposals for extending the hours of the House was that we thought it would take away the time available to sit on committees. It was as simple as that. I said that in my comments. If I did not, I will stand corrected, but I guarantee if members look at *Hansard* they will find I said there was committee work to be done.

Hon. D. K. Dans: I did not say that, but Mr Gayfer said to me you would have only four members to do it.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: As far as the resources of this House, particularly the cost is concerned, I believe that is covered in the allocation for Parliament and this House. I daresay that could be rectified in one way or another. We have asked for the Government's co-operation—I made a plea for it. I appreciate it has to be an equal partnership between Government and Opposition. I have no illusions on that score. I have studied the methods used in other places, and it cannot be done without co-operation. The Senate found that out. It had co-operation and its committee system has worked well.

It astounds me that the Hon. Fred McKenzie can say he will oppose this motion; if a division is called he will have to cross the floor. That surprises me because I got the impression from Mr Dans' comments that there was general agreement with the proposition that we should have a committee system. That is particularly so as he quoted members of his party, including Mr Berinson, and also others, during the debate. Other supporters include Mr Tonkin whom Mr McKenzie must greatly admire, judging by his other comments tonight. He was in favour of the committee system and moved a motion in the other House in 1972 or 1973. That was quoted by Mr Oliver.

Many other people of all political persuasions have supported this proposal and it astounds me that Mr McKenzie will not do so. He and Mr Gayfer may vote against it and perhaps Mr Kelly might join them. I believe we will have the co-operation of the Government, judging by the comments made by the Leader of the House. I cannot believe the Government will not co-operate on this in spite of the comments of one or two of their

members and in spite of the suspicion quite unjustly disclosed by Mr McKenzie.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Time will tell; I hope I am proved wrong.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I can assure Mr McKenzie he is wrong. Time will prove him to be very wrong indeed.

Mr Deputy President (Hon. John Williams), I believe this is a forward move. I do not make any pretence on one point: It must be understood by both Mr McKenzie and Mr Gayfer that the committee system is dangerous to a Government. A committee system is something a Government instinctively shies away from because committees have the capacity to call departmental heads and other people before them. They can be asked to supply information and so on. Anyone who understands anything about the committee system knows that. It is laid out clearly in Odgers' *Australian Senate Practice*, and all the other textbooks that people have written about committees. It is clear Governments do not like committees because committees pry into their activities. However, is that not in the public interest? Can we not take a longer view?

Hon. D. K. Dans: Mr Neil McNeill was horrified by committees.

Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: If a committee system sheds more light I am sure members would agree that is a good thing. A Minister may not think it is a good thing to be questioned by a committee. However if we can institute a committee system more light will be shed on Government affairs and activities, and we will have done a service to the people of this State and to Parliament.

I thank members for their support and commend the motion to the House.

Question put and passed.

#### *Appointment of Select Committee*

HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.24 p.m.]: I move—

That notwithstanding Standing Order No. 338, the select committee to be appointed pursuant to the resolution passed by the House under Order of the Day No. 1, comprise the Honourables V. J. Ferry, I. G. Pratt, J. M. Brown and Mark Nevill; and that the quorum of the committee be any three of the members so named.

Question put and passed.

### TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF REMUNERATION (SENIOR PUBLIC OFFICERS) BILL

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 18 August.

HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [9.25 p.m.]: The Bill before the House has been scrutinised carefully by the Opposition. We regard it as one of the most unprincipled and disgraceful pieces of legislation that has come before the House in the time I have been in Parliament, and probably for all time.

Hon. Garry Kelly: What about your industrial legislation?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I will talk about that later; give me time.

It is significant that when one reads the Bill one finds it is difficult to understand. It will have to be looked at closely in the Committee stages. It is significant that it has been written in the main by Labor lawyers rather than Government officers; that probably explains the poor writing of the legislation.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Where did you get that from?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Never mind. That is the information I have.

The most important point to make is that absolutely no consultation has taken place with the Civil Service Association, which after all, is the representative body of the people who are affected. Yet this Bill has been introduced and the decision made with no warning whatever. Of course, it breaks a contract and agreement. A decision had been made by the Public Service Arbitrator. Whether it was right or wrong, it was an arbitrated decision and the Government therefore has broken a contract. It is unbelievable that no consultation took place, but after thinking about it and seeing the way the Bill was introduced, it is perhaps not surprising. No warning was given and the element of surprise was the key in its introduction. Surprise was absolutely essential.

It is a radical move—a sensational one. It did exactly what the Government wanted. It hid the true purpose of the legislation; Government charges were the real issue. The Press took the bait and the announcement of the legislation was made and monopolised the media. It hid the Government's charges, which were greatly increased.

I will quote from a letter dated 19 August 1983 which was given to me today. It is signed by Mr I. T. Fraser, General Secretary of the Western Australian Police Union of Workers. I would like to read a statement he makes on page 2 of the letter

because it puts in a nutshell what has been going on. He says—

We believe that the present legislative exercise is the aftermath of a frightening use of the media and this in itself must leave all thinking people in Western Australia with some apprehension.

That is exactly what has happened. It is a use of the media we have not seen before and it is designed to hide the increased Government charges, among other things. It is a simple, straightforward political trick. It is the most callous and cold-blooded piece of legislation I have ever seen. The manner in which it was introduced was quite disgraceful. The Bill was introduced by the Hon. J. M. Berinson and the first paragraph of his speech states—

This Bill is presented to give effect to one of the central elements of the Government's cost-cutting measures designed to strengthen the State's financial position.

As the debate goes on I am sure we will be able to dispute that argument and to prove quite clearly that it was introduced for other purposes. It was introduced for political gain. The Government and the Ministers responsible for this legislation have been prepared to sacrifice the loyalty and devotion to duty of a small group of people who for many years have studied and worked hard in the interests of the public, the Government, and Parliament.

Yet the Government has introduced this legislation regardless of the effect it will have on those people and on the lives of their families and children. It has done so without consultation and without considering what could happen to those people who have substantial commitments. Everyone who earns and receives a salary tends to spend to the maximum and commit himself to the maximum. I do not know what will happen to some of those people who will suffer. It is no good saying they can afford it; it is just not true.

The Government believes the move is popular, and it may be so as far as the public generally are concerned. The public may say that a group of people such as those affected can afford to have their pay cut when one considers the salaries they receive. The public may think it is a good idea. Any cuts in politicians' pay would receive the acclamation of the public. That sort of argument cannot be won.

We are talking about public servants whose salaries are to be cut and that without consultation. Sensational it was, but it was a cheap political trick. Surely there must be a time for any Government or any group of people to consider

this sort of move. There must be a time when integrity is more important than short-term political gain—and that is all this legislation represents. Even worse, I understand there could be a possible loss of staff as a result of this decision. There may be many people who are considering taking up posts with the Government of Western Australia—competent, well-qualified people, who will now change their minds. Other members of the Public Service will decide, as a result of the Government's move, that they will leave the Government service. We are talking about the general managers of departments—people with a great deal of responsibility and a great workload. People who have studied and worked hard and who have given a great loyalty to the service are to have their pay cut.

Indeed, the Attorney General is applying pressure to public servants. It has been reliably reported to the Opposition that some public servants are now being asked, upon resigning, to sign a document stating that they are not leaving the Public Service because of the salary cuts.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Are you accusing me of putting that sort of pressure on public servants?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am saying it has been reported to us that it has happened in some cases.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You mentioned me in particular—do you want to stand by that?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: There was some comment that maybe—

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Maybe?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Attorney General may deny that if he wishes to. I am saying that one senior public servant who has recently left the Government was asked to sign a document saying that he was not leaving for that reason. I refer to Mr Kidson, a very well-known and respected public servant. I ask the Attorney General: Has anyone been asked to sign a statement to the effect that he or she is not leaving the Public Service because of the pay cuts? Does the Attorney General know anything of that matter? If he can say that is not the case, that is fine; but I say to him that he must think carefully about his answer because he is aware that he cannot mislead the Parliament without getting into trouble.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: What sort of public servant, interested in leaving for that reason, would be prepared to sign such a statement?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am just asking the Attorney General to tell me whether he or any other Minister has asked any public servant to sign a document saying that he or she is not leav-

ing because of the cuts in Public Service salaries. If he says that that is not so, I will have to look at that situation.

I understand also that the judiciary gave an undertaking they would voluntarily take a 10 per cent cut in their salaries. I would like an assurance from the Minister handling the Bill that the proposal was generally supported and that members of the judiciary were not, for one reason or another, coerced into making that decision. In other words, did all the people in the judiciary, without any pressure at all, voluntarily decide to take that cut?

I believe all members will agree that the provisions of this Bill set a serious precedent—the most serious precedent since the industrial arbitration system first commenced at the beginning of the century. This is not the same as a salaries freeze such as the Opposition introduced in the latter part of last year. At that time, the salary and wages freeze legislation was introduced to hold wages at their present level—it did not change the arbitrated system or the levels of payment which had been decided by the umpire. Now, of course, the Government is prepared to suggest that this Bill is no worse than the wages freeze measure. I say to members of the Government that they should ask the people affected what they think about that, because certainly this move is far more serious than the salaries freeze legislation introduced by the previous Government.

The Opposition is not to be fobbed off with a lack of explanation, as happened in another place. We will not have our arguments ignored and our queries not answered. I give fair warning to the Government that we will require answers to all the questions and all the matters we are to raise.

I am not saying the arbitration system is perfect—indeed, I am one of those people who has criticised the system. It is fair to say it has been used and abused by some of the people on the other side of the House who have been in the position of being able to take on union positions. They know exactly how the system works.

I recognise and accept that over a period of time changes must be made to the arbitration system. We have to look at other ways, means, and methods; but that can be done in this House. If there are avenues, let us look at them here; but let us have regard for the whole principle and not just a one-off measure that is used as a smoke-screen for another purpose.

Hon. Fred MacKenzie: You did not make a very good job of that when you were Minister.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The legislation that the Opposition introduced in the latter part of last year was debated thoroughly in the House. We did not introduce a one-off situation. This is a one-off situation and if the Hon. Fred McKenzie were in a union it affected, he would go right off his face. I cannot understand how he can sit there and shake his head, indicating support of this legislation. It goes right against everything he and his members have ever said in this House.

I draw the attention of the House to comments made only a few days ago by the Hon. Des Dans. He gave me a warning and a little lecture. He said that anyone who mucks around with the arbitration system, or anyone who tries to change the industrial laws, is bound for a downfall. He mentioned Mr Bruce losing his seat and Government as an example of someone who abused the arbitration system. Anyone who abuses it in the way this Government is doing is bound to have a crash.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: You are referring to our last Government.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This is a much more radical change. What we have is an arrogant Government that has set a precedent for all time. That is what members must understand—the precedent is for all time. The Government has made a mockery of every argument its members have put forward in Parliament during the whole of my time here.

Hon. N. F. Moore: Quite right.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Government is simply overriding an accepted legal system. I say again that the freeze held wages, arbitrated decisions, and awards at a set level. It did not take anything away. This measure is taking something away, and it is doing it selectively.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Don't tell me that a freeze isn't a wage cut when prices continue to go up. Of course it is.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We have plenty of time to talk about a prices freeze if the honourable member wants to, but let me just talk about this one at the moment. If the honourable member takes the time to approach any member of the Public Service and ask what he thinks of the difference, she will soon be told. I suggest that the honourable member has not spoken to any public servants to determine their attitude. That is a terrible thing—a disgraceful thing.

I am saying again that it is selective and it offends every basis of the commitments the Labor Party has espoused over the time I have been here. It makes a mockery of the arbitration system and it makes a mockery of the Public Ser-

vice arbitration decisions. The Government is saying that Mr Malley and Mr Forrest are incompetent because they made decisions which this Government is now reversing. The Government is saying the arbitrators are not able to make a clear judgment; that is what it is saying. The Government is saying it wants more money and the Treasury wants more cash, and so the Government has overridden the umpire's decision. The Government is saying that it will make up its own mind what these people are worth. There is no point in arguing anything different. With the legislation we have before us tonight, we have a new Public Service arbitrator. He is nothing more than a cold-blooded, ruthless, shark to do these things to the people. He is playing with people's lives, and doing it without any care at all for the effects. With this legislation the Government is putting this man forward as the umpire, the treasurer, the arbitrator, the mediator, and the judge and jury.

Hon I. G. Pratt: And the executioner.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is fair comment, too.

Unfortunately Mr Dans is not here at the moment, but I hope he is listening. If he is listening, I would like him to note this comment: Over a long period of time Mr Dans has said that his Government and he personally would do all they could to keep politics out of the industrial relations scene. That is what he said, and every time I draw any industrial problem to his notice, like Lord Nelson, he puts his spyglass to his blind eye and says, "I cannot see anything". Mr Dans and the Government have not stopped meddling in industrial relations since they came to Government. Mr Dans is running around like a regular little fireman with his bucket and spade, except that his bucket contains petrol and he sets everything on fire!

The Government's industrial policy is one of meddling and interference and I will prove that as the debate goes on. The Government has got into the situation where it buys industrial peace. Anyone in this House could become a first-class solver of industrial problems by paying to solve them. However, when we pay to solve a problem, someone else must pay the price. That is what this Bill is all about. It means that the payments made by the Minister and the Government to buy industrial peace must be paid for somehow, and the chickens are now coming home to roost. The people who must pay for the Government's actions are the senior public servants—some 1 100 of them. They are the people having pay for all the giveaways made over the previous months.

When I asked Mr Dans a question about the Builders Labourers' Federation—an organisation of which he probably knows something—he replied as follows—

The Government has discarded the previous Government's practice of seeking industrial confrontation for political purposes and will not be interfering in the normal processes of industrial relations.

Mr Dans has not stopped meddling from the day he got the job. He was interviewed in the very early days of his ministry by a reporter from *The Western Mail*. The article written by this reporter is headed, "On a tightrope" and it reads as follows—

His job is to walk a tightrope between trade unions, industry and Labor policy, with the stated aim of removing politics from industrial relations.

I say again to this House that this is a political Bill. The Government introduced this Bill with a callous disregard for the people affected and it demonstrates the Government's failure to the people of this State. It is a political gimmick and a smokescreen.

I say again that the reason for the introduction of the Bill is to hide the massive increase in Government charges and fees. It is the first step in the statement of accord between the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions regarding economic policy. The real thrust of the statement of accord is the socialisation of Australia, and more particularly, the redistribution of wealth.

Hon. Garry Kelly: Does not some of the wealth need redistributing?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is not so. We have to be very careful. Is the member saying that the senior public servants should be the guinea pigs? Is the member saying that is what the Bill is all about? If so, I hope he will stand up and make a speech.

Hon. Garry Kelly: You made a statement about the redistribution of wealth.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This measure is a precedent—it legislates for a wage cut and not for a wage freeze. It faces public servants right now and in the future with an axe over their heads because they will wonder who is next. The Premier said that the Government considered a threshold of \$24 000. Next year, the Government will be in a far worse financial position than now. We left it in a pretty good position but the way the Government is spending money now it will not

have any left next year. What I am saying is this: Who will be next?

Several members interjected.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You left us a \$31 million deficit, that is what you left us.

Several members interjected.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: And that is not what I am saying—it is what Treasury says.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Rubbish!

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Your Treasury and our Treasury—the same Treasury and the same \$31 million.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. I. G. Pratt: Blatantly untrue.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If the honourable member who interjected was not smiling, I would take it very seriously.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: I am not smiling, and what I told you is absolutely correct and true.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Let me say again that we are now setting a precedent.

Already there has been talk of a \$24 000 threshold. That was the talk earlier, but Cabinet decided to lift the threshold, and wisely so; however, later the problems will be more serious and I would hazard a guess that the \$24 000 threshold will be considered next year. What will the reduction be—10, five, or two per cent?

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You are talking through your hat!

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Attorney has to say that, because he is trying to get his Bill through the House. The Labor Party and the Government in this State are prepared to sacrifice any principles to disguise their financial ineptitude. We all know about the broken election promises of this Government. It said it would create jobs, keep prices down, and not increase Government charges. However, the only promise the Labor Government has been able to keep is the one to reopen the Fremantle-Perth railway, and that will cost us money. The Hon. Fred McKenzie is smiling about that and I do not blame him but it is the only promise the Government has been able to keep. However, someone has to pay for that and the Government has selected those few people for the sacrificial con.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is wrong and you know it!

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: If the member says it is wrong, let me say this: Prior to the last election the Premier made public statements which I be-

lieve should be thrust in front of members opposite. Prior to the election the Premier said, "Labor will seek to freeze government taxes and charges during the period of the wages freeze"; "No increases in water rates"; and "No increases in electricity charges".

Hon. P. H. Wells: Where did you get those comments?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am quoting from an advertisement containing promises made by Mr Burke. We should frame this advertisement!

Several members interjected.

Hon. P. H. Wells: They have not changed their minds, have they?

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Let me return to the argument I was advancing. I said this was an unprincipled piece of legislation and the Government was prepared to sacrifice certain people to cover up the financial mess it had got itself into.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is not true.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr President, let me quote further. The Premier is quoted as saying, "A wage freeze without a price freeze won't work". I understand the Opposition is embarrassed. Another promise was "Labor will seek to freeze Government taxes and charges during the period of the wage freeze". Quite recently in an answer in this House, Mr Dans said the wages freeze was still with us, and yet we have had massive increases in taxes and charges. The Government said prior to the election that there would be—

No increases in water rates.

No increases in electricity charges.

No increases in third-party motor insurance.

No increases in land tax.

No increases in stamp duty.

No increases in bus and train fares.

No increases in rail freight charges.

No increases in irrigation charges.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Based on your assurance of no deficit.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I suppose that the best one to finish off with is, "No increases in State petrol tax".

If any of us were in private enterprise and we put that sort of advertisement in the paper then broke the promises made in it within the next two or three weeks, the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs would have us in court. He would say, "You have been misleading the public. That is false advertising". That was certainly the case.

Now we are saying to the person who authorised the advertisement and whose photograph appeared in it prior to the election that he is a person who has broken every single promise that is written publicly there.

Hon. P. G. Pental: The best new leader in the State!

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Premier has broken every one of these promises and yet the legislation before the House seeks to give this same man unfettered powers. He is a deceitful man; indeed, he must be, bearing in mind the way he has reneged on all the promises he made. Now the Premier wants this unfettered power over his own work force.

It is obvious the Government has a lack of financial management ability. That was perhaps highlighted when the Government announced increased taxes and charges and the Premier said the increases would give the State something like \$57 million. Since that time it has been proved the Premier was \$60 million out. It takes something of a genius to make that sort of mistake, and it is no wonder the Premier is bringing forward this type of legislation. It is no wonder the Premier has to cover his tracks in some way or other.

The Government's claim to fame in its industrial policy is to buy peace at any price and that is what this Bill is all about; it seeks to pay for the pay-offs which have been made over a period. It is robbing Peter to pay Paul. I would not have raised this matter had I been given a satisfactory answer by the Government. However, over a period I have been asking what sorts of increases the Government has given to Government workers; how many people are receiving these increases; and what departments are involved. The answer I received was, "The information will take some time to compile. It is not readily available".

The other night I made a speech on the adjournment which demonstrated clearly that information must be available for any Minister to make that sort of decision, so there is no question but that answer misled the House. However, in case the Government persists and says the information is not readily available, let me give members some examples which the Minister responsible should have given me in this House publicly, but which he did not want to do.

In *The West Australian* of 25 March, under the heading, "Government grants rise for bus drivers" the following comment appears—

His 20-line Press release—

That refers to Mr Grill. To continue—

—announcing the rise did not refer to Commissioner F. J. Neyland's January decision—which said that the WA drivers should not get the rise they were claiming as a flow-on from their Victorian counterparts.

Further down in the same Press statement it goes on—

Commissioner Neyland found that the drivers did not have a nexus with Victoria and that the increase they were seeking had been peculiar to Victoria.

The Government made that decision without reference to the arbitrator and without taking notice of the instructions of the commission. Obviously it was a buy-off and it will cost \$1.46 million a year. That statement is made here, so there is no mistake about it. The \$1.46 million is another bill which will have to be paid and it will be met as a result of the sorts of impositions on the public which we are discussing today.

Just to demonstrate how foolish the Government was and to illustrate the silly move it made—I am sure it regrets it now—let me quote from a statement which appeared in *The West Australian* of 27 July 1983 and which reads as follows—

Government was embarrassed

Minutes after Mr Gerry Overman launched the WA submission to the national wage case in Melbourne he was challenged by the commission president, Sir John Moore.

Sir John was referring to the Government decision in March to grant the MTT's 1500 drivers an extra \$14.30 a week in settlement of a claim rejected in January by the Arbitration Commission.

The Government says, "Take notice of the arbitrator; take notice of the umpire; that is all important". However, within weeks of gaining office, the Government made a fool of the arbitration system and it is continuing in that vein with this legislation.

The same situation applied in respect of energy workers. The Government sent along a couple of its paid union advisers to sort out the trouble; and what was the result? The union leaders said, "We will sort it out". Indeed they did; they bought industrial peace. The figures are there. I am sure the House does not want me to read them. Everyone knows what went on.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: What do you mean when you say, "They bought industrial peace"?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I quote—

About 300 members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union had threatened to hold a 24-hour strike last week to discuss progress on their claim for the increase.

There we see strike action again. The MTT drivers said they would go on strike and they received their rise straightaway.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Are you saying they didn't deserve it?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Is the member saying the MTT increase was justified?

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Yes.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I give up! Obviously the honourable member interjecting knows far better than the Industrial Commission and, I suppose, in view of his background, he is bound to be a little biased; but it is passing strange that the Government's advisers should go down there, make an offer, and the workers returned to work straightaway. Of course the Government can solve industrial disputes in that manner, but at what cost?

A headline appeared in *The West Australian* of Friday, 6 May 1983, which said, "Hospital workers jump pay freeze". The article reads, in part as follows—

The State Government has granted a 6.83 per cent wage rise to about 4500 public hospital orderlies and domestics under the exemption provisions of WA's wage-freeze legislation. The rise, back-dated to late March, is expected to cost the Government \$1.24 million.

The other day I made a statement in this House that the four increases I quoted which had been granted by the Government would cost in excess of \$7 million in a full year. Already I am half-way there with these examples. If ever we wanted to understand the incompetence of the Government in the industrial field and its lack of sensitivity and the bullying tactics which are implied by this legislation, we see it here.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Government simply ignored the arbitrator; that is what it did and it is continuing to do that.

Let us take another example—that farce, the Perth City Council workers' dispute. Let us get that straight. In *The West Australian* of 6 July under the heading, "Government moving to aid sacked Perth City Council workers" the following appeared—

Arbitration commissioner Jim Coleman criticised the behaviour of the MEU and the

weekend offer of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Dans, to act as a mediator in the dispute.

Mr Dans moved in again with his little fire bucket filled with petrol and tried to put out the fire. We all know what happened. To continue—

Mr Coleman said that Press reports on the offer by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Dans, to act as a mediator in the dispute disturbed him. This was the role of the commission but no approach had been made to it, he said. He questioned whether the Government understood the function of the commission.

I question whether the Government understands the function of the commission. I believe we have been fooled by Mr Dans and some of the members of the Government. They have only had experience in Opposition and when they are placed in a situation which has a mediator or an umpire, they ignore him if it suits their purpose.

The obvious reason for the Minister's refusal in this House to answer some of the questions I asked was simply that he was not prepared to release those figures before this debate was concluded, because they would be an embarrassment to him and the Government and would expose the whole farcical situation and the fact that the Government does not care a fig about the arbitration system; the Government just uses it when it suits it.

Let us look at what else has happened. I turn to the second part of the theory. On the one hand the Government seems to be able to afford these increases but, on the other hand, it says it has to take sensational and dramatic moves to save money. The Government is giving with one hand and taking with the other. I accept that it is a brilliant piece of deception and, to a certain extent, it has succeeded; but let us look at the real philosophy of this argument and the comments which were made by the Premier. Let us look at the deeper truth.

The Premier made the following statement—

...one of the greatest delinquencies of the labour movement has been the lack of attention that it has paid to the question of relativities and to the distortion of the distribution of wealth so that we have a situation...

Apart from being a smokescreen, this Bill is simply hiding the real truth of the matter; that is, the Premier and his Ministers have decided—not the arbitrator—that a distortion of relativities exists and they will sort it out. The arbitrator or



the umpire will not sort it out; the Government will.

The Premier went on to say—

It is time that we all started to realise that, in this society, things have got out of hand in respect of the distortion of relativities.

There is a clear statement by the Treasurer; that is his real objective in this legislation.

The distortion of relativities—if there is such a thing and that is what the Premier and the Government are saying—will be with us next year. If the legislation is passed, will the Government do a somersault next year and say, “We did not like it last year; we do not like it this year”? Of course it will. It is a first step in rectifying what the Government sees as a distortion of relativities. It is not being done through an arbitrator. The Government is saying, “We have to make certain in our own minds that this distortion of relativities will not continue”. This is the first step the Government will take and we in this House should not let it go any further.

The public servants have been made the bunnies by a ruthless political manoeuvre. This has been done by Burke's bodyguards who use computers instead of rifles; but, nevertheless, it has been done by his advisers. The Government believes it is sorting out a distortion of relativities, but it has made no reference whatsoever to an arbitrator.

The decision was announced in a reprehensible way. It was quite wrong for the Government to make the announcement on about the same day it announced the increase in Government charges, and that timing exposed the Government for what it is. I have here a journal of the Civil Service Association, which is worth quoting because it indicates that the penny has dropped for civil servants—they understand what is going on. The article states—

The Premier has moved to cover up massive increases in State charges and taxes by wheeling out the old public service *fat cat* bogey.

Before this year's State election, the Premier was a constant critic of the high cost of service charges in this State.

The smokescreen he chose was the cutting of public servants' salaries.

On the day the increased charges were announced, the Premier's intention to cut these salaries was leaked to the media.

That explains exactly what happened and why. The penny has dropped, and the Government has underestimated the Public Service. The rank and

file now know the threat posed to them as a result of the Government's action.

I have been a Minister, as have other members on this side of the House, and one Minister is sitting opposite me now. We all know that if a budgetary problem exists a Minister simply says to his staff—to the directors and senior officers who will have their pays cut as a result of this measure—“This is not good enough. You cannot have a 10, 15 or 17 per cent increase; in the department's budget you have to make do with an 8 per cent increase. Go back to your budgets and adjust them”. During every year I was Minister that situation occurred; we had to make the public servants do their work properly. It is the nature of people to try out others. This Government did not bother to do that, it just said, “This is a good move. We will save \$11 million”. It is prepared to sacrifice people it employs.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: You always cut at the bottom level, and never at the top.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The arbitration system is the legal system for setting wage levels. For as long as I can remember when in Opposition members opposite have extolled the virtues of that system, but now they have reverted to type. They introduced when in Opposition a green paper, a discussion paper, which no doubt has formed the Government's policy on these matters. In many ways it was released as a trial to determine public reaction, and one of the matters referred to was an increase in the powers of the Industrial Commission. If the Government introduces legislation to effect that increase—I understand that there would be only one arbitrator—I will ask why the Public Service Arbitrator will be dispensed with, and whether it is a fact that the Public Service will have to go to the arbitration commission to have matters resolved. Is the Government embarking on a campaign against the CSA? Is it embarking on a vindictive move?

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Is there anything wrong with that?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Has the Government consulted the CSA?

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Tell me whether there is anything wrong with the CSA going to the commission?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not know why the Government would bother changing the system, because already it has only two commissioners, Mr Dans and Mr Burke. I do not know why the Government would need more; it ignores whatever anybody else says.

It is strange that the TLC has not sought to support the CSA in its fight against the Govern-

ment's intentions. I thought the TLC was opposed to pay cuts, especially those made by an arbitrary decision. The TLC made the comment about the Perth City Council dispute that if it proceeded to the point that the council were allowed to succeed a precedent would be created for other groups. This move by this Government could well be emulated by private enterprise across the board on the basis of economic considerations.

This Government has torn up the Act and thrown away decency and fairness. We have come to understand that this Government does not support harmony and good will, or consensus and good government, which it said before and after the election it would support. It said it would be the be-all and end-all to solve all problems, but all we have had is yet another broken promise, as has occurred in many other areas.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: Where do you get that from?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have figures available to me which I will produce in due course, but now the Opposition is happy to ask questions in this House so that we can compare the answers with the figures we have. But there has been a lack of proper answers, and that is good, because we will make fools of the Government. In fact, that is what we have been able to do.

This Government has always talked about the virtues of the arbitration system and the necessity to abide by the umpire's decision. To dispel any doubt about the Government's position, I will quote comments reported in *Hansard* which indicate the Labor Party's turnabout and the insincerity of the Government in bringing forward this measure. On Thursday, 13 May 1982, at page 1873 of *Hansard*, the Hon. D. K. Dans was reported as stating—

We will agree to this Bill provided the same assurances given in the other place are given here; that is, that a full review of the Act will be undertaken between now and the next session of Parliament and public servants will have their conditions of employment considered by people skilled in the art of conciliation and arbitration in the wage-fixing system.

I wonder whether the Labor Party has continued that review, because we had made preparations for it. To continue—

It seems to me there is a feeling not only in this country but also in countries overseas that civil servants are different from anyone else; that they do not need to have their salaries keep pace with inflation; that they do

not have to pay for the necessities of life or for petrol to run their cars; that they do not have to meet every other charge that other people in the community must meet. There is a belief that they are simply loyal servants of the Government and long may they suffer and bleed for it.

I suggest they are bleeding now. To continue—

That idea must soon run out of puff. It may have been relevant when a pound was a pound one year and still a pound 30 years later. It does not apply now.

In 1982 Mr Dans talked about public servants. I will quote another comment of his reported in *Hansard* at page 3867 of Tuesday, 19 October 1982, and the comment is—

The very basis of our economic well-being revolves around three simple points: (a) We need unions to operate, we will not operate without unions; (b) we need employers' and (c) more importantly, we need an umpire. The umpire must lay down the ground rules for minimum rates and say to both employers and unions, "If you cannot measure up to the minimum conditions, you should not be here."

I agree with him—this Government should not be here. I refer again to *Hansard* of Tuesday, 12 October 1982, at page 3509, at which the Hon. D. K. Dans states—

... Mr Masters—after all he is the Minister handling the Bill—shows he has no appreciation of the Australian tradition with regard to the arbitration system in this country and the manner in which it grew up.

He said that the other night, yet all the evidence I produce now indicates that he cares nothing for the arbitration system and even less for the Industrial Commission—the mediator, the umpire. To continue—

I have often said in this Chamber that "industrial relations" is another phrase for "human relations in the work place".

The honourable member has indeed soon forgotten the statements he made. Statements made by other honourable members are worth quoting also; in particular, one by the Hon. Peter Dowding, whom I am glad to see here now, is worth quoting. In *Hansard* of Wednesday, 22 December 1982, at page 5913, the Hon. Peter Dowding said—

It is interesting to note that this legislation is directed at sabotaging the long-standing principal that wage fixation is not an executive Government decision—

Hon. P. G. Pendal: Who said this?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr Dowding.

Hon. Tom Knight: That is unbelievable.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: To continue—

—but is determined by a series of commissions and tribunals which collect evidence and make determinations.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Surely he will vote for us.

Hon. Neil Oliver: That is one thing we can count on.

Hon. P. G. Pendal: He will have a short ministerial career.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: To continue—

It has been prepared to avoid the matter entirely and override all the wage fixing processes. What a vote of confidence that is in the independent tribunals mentioned in the Bill.

Further on he continues—

The reality is that it is a vote of no confidence in the Industrial Commission, the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, the Public Service Arbitrator, the WA School Teachers' Tribunal and others because the Government has not been prepared to seek to justify the rubbishy economic stance that it took in this House in the Minister's second reading speech or to allow the tribunals to decide issues on the evidence presented.

Hon. Peter Dowding: When will you get to the point?

Hon. P. G. Pendal: The point!

Hon. Neil Oliver: Weren't you listening before?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: To continue—

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, when the chips are down, the Government is not prepared to accept the decisions taken; it hides them under the hat of executive power.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is quite right, but it is not what we are debating tonight.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We are debating the industrial arbitration system.

Hon. Peter Dowding: No we are not.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We are debating the Government's riding roughshod over people for political expediency, and we are debating statements made by members who will have to eat their words or vote against this Bill.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: You know who we learnt from, and that's you.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: On Wednesday, 22 December, at page 5911 of *Hansard*, the Hon. Peter Dowding is reported as saying—

When we see the trauma the honourable member's party is causing this State we think we could do the job a lot better. We would not resort to cheap political stunts at the expense of the community.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Hear, hear! That has been shown by our practice over the last six months.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: We have had rises in electricity costs.

Hon. Peter Dowding: They have been less than every electricity cost increase your Government brought in after every election.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: No!

Hon. Peter Dowding: You ought to look at the record some more.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. Peter Dowding: You left us with a deficit for the first time in the history of the SEC, so don't talk rubbish to me, because that's where you are wrong.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. P. G. Pendal: Chuck him out.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask honourable members to take note that when I call for order that is what I mean, and if members ignore that call I will, unfortunately, have to take some action. I suggest you cease your interjections and that the member on his feet quickly relate his comments to the legislation before us and cease to be provocative.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Mr President, with due respect to you, I thought I was talking to this legislation. It deals with the industrial arbitration system and the overriding of the umpire's decision. I am drawing to the attention of the House the statements made by two Government Ministers. If I am being provocative by quoting from *Hansard* I would like you to tell me.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Are you disagreeing with the Chair?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Am I allowed to read from *Hansard*?

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member is permitted to discuss anything he can relate to this legislation.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: At page 1760 of *Hansard* of Tuesday, 12 May 1981, this statement was made by the Hon. D. K. Dans—

What is the good of unions going to the commission and obtaining a decision if the Government comes back to Parliament almost immediately and destroys any decision the commission has made or is likely to make?

The Hon. Peter Dowding came in to say—

This Government does it all the time. It is disgraceful.

Hon. Peter Dowding: That is right.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: To continue—

The purpose of the commission involves one desire, and one desire only; that is, the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes. The Government's intention is to implement Government policy by coercion of manoeuvre, simply to prevent any settlement of industrial disputes. However, when the commission reaches a decision, whichever way it goes, the Government should not interfere, by way of legislation, to nullify that decision . . .

That is what we have before us today.

Hon. Peter Dowding: It is not.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: To continue—

. . . that policy should apply, no matter what the decision. The Hon. Peter Dowding believes that is not what we are talking about today. The arbitration commission made a decision and now we are talking about this Government overriding that decision.

Those comments are relevant and if Mr Dowding does not think they are, I am sorry for him.

I think the Government should quite seriously consider that instead of putting the matter before the Treasurer for his decision it be put back to the Public Service Arbitration for his consideration.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Public Service what?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Public Service Arbitrator is competent in making decisions and, indeed, making all the decisions that the Government is making. If the Government has any doubt about that position, it should look again because obviously the Government is able, as umpire, to put before the Public Service Arbitrator the economic arguments and say to the arbitrator, "Here is a serious economic argument and we have serious problems". The arbitrator, under section 21 of the Public Service Arbitration Act is able to

consider the economic facts of the argument. Section 25 of the Public Service Arbitration Act says—

25. Subject to the provisions of sections twenty-one and twenty-six of this Act, no award, order or decision of the Arbitrator made under this Act shall be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed or called in question, or be subject to any prohibition or mandamus, in any Court on any account whatever.

Those public servants working under this Act and who have been before the Industrial Commission, the court, or the Public Service Arbitrator have a right to accept, once a decision is made, that it stands and they should be able to appeal or work on that premise.

It is wrong that the Government is not prepared to put forward an economic argument and to stand by the umpire's decision.

I condemn the title of the Bill and certain statements made about certain employees. It is discriminatory that the Government has selected public servants—although not all public servants, and made them a sacrificial cow. It is interesting when we refer to the selective few, that in opposing the Confederation of Western Australian Industry's proposition that the 17½ per cent holiday loading should be deleted, on 20 July 1983 the Government advocate said the following—

. . . in a period of wage restraint, the Commission "should not agree to moving wages in terms of dollars and cents in a downward direction". We were urged that at a time when persons were being required to exercise restraint no entitlement should be withdrawn for that would jeopardise the wage pause and particularly should not be withdrawn from a "small body of employees" within the State . . .

The Public Service Board representing the Government of WA said—

. . . it would be inequitable, said the Board, particularly in a period of wage restraint, for a group of employees "to be singled out and penalised".

Hon. P. G. Pendal: Across the board?

Hon. Peter Dowding: Even those people cannot afford it.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The comment continues—

It was said that to grant the application would be for the Commission to abandon its

oft-stated principle of comparative wage conditions justice.

A statement was made on behalf of the Government that it was wrong to be selective, to pick on a few people and take their pay away from them. At the same time—not a few days later—the Government is proposing to do just that. While on the subject of selective cuts let me again quote an article from *The West Australian* of 6 July 1983 headed "Firm's conduct disgraceful, says judge" which reads as follows—

The conduct of the big engineering company Comeng (NSW) towards its employees and the law was "disgraceful and utterly unworthy of a corporation of its size and significance." Mr Justice Macken said yesterday in the NSW Industrial Commission.

In a 15-page judgment he upheld an application by the Vehicle Builders' Union to block, for a three-month cooling-off period, 10 per cent wage cuts imposed on its members at the company's Granville plant.

[Comeng (Commonwealth Engineering) is a subsidiary of Australian National Industries.]

In handing down his decision, Mr Justice Macken described the pay cuts as illegal and said: "It may be one thing to treat employees like feudal villains. It is another to throw down the gauntlet in challenge to the rule of the law itself."

It is a fair indication that there should not be selective pay cuts and it should be up to an umpire to make a decision and not a Government totally biased by this time.

What would happen if a company were to go to the Government and say it had economic difficulties and could not afford to pay wages and so it wanted to reduce certain wages by 10 per cent, some by five per cent and others by two per cent? What would the Government say to this? Many companies would argue that they—

Hon. Peter Dowding: Or a company that retrenched its workers. What did you say when you were Minister?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: What Mr Dowding is saying is that if a company wanted to cut wages he would act as he does now and blow a fuse. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

If the Government is prepared to take action those companies and groups in private enterprise will have to take the same action. I wonder what sort of statement Mr Dans would make if some

shipping companies came to him and said, "We are in financial difficulties and our employees who are earning \$30 000 per annum should have their salaries cut by 10 per cent". What would the Hon. Peter Dowding, the Hon. Joe Berinson, the Hon. Des Dans, and the Government say? They would all run for cover. This Bill is an Act of sheer hypocrisy. The Government may claim it is a money Bill and is in the public interest. We believe it is a selected income tax. This is a money Bill of a serious nature and we want the Government to convince this House of the reasons for the Bill, which we have a right to know. It affects public servants who have been working for the Government for many years.

Hon. Tom Stephens: Just like you produced the facts about the deficit before you went to the polls.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: What about the money that has been invested?

Hon. Tom Stephens: If you had been a private company you would be in gaol by now.

Hon. I. G. Pratt: It is no wonder that you were not successful in accounting.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: This is a serious Bill and I regret that the Opposition is getting upset.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You mean you wonder why the Government is getting upset.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Let me make my own speech.

The Opposition wants the financial facts and details as to why the Government has selectively picked on a small group of public servants. We believe that the Government will agree to the national wage case which will result in a four per cent increase for public servants. It will cost the Government, I would imagine, in the region of \$55 million. On the one hand the Government says it must take \$11 million from public servants and on the other hand it says they can have a wage increase of four per cent which will cost in the vicinity of \$55 million.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Do you believe the freeze should continue indefinitely?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I do not believe that at all. Perhaps this legislation should be deferred until the Budget papers are brought forward to enable us to determine whether it is justified. I have serious doubts. There is conflict when the Government says it needs \$11 million and then agrees to a national wage increase which could incur expenditure in the region of \$55 million. I think the Government members would understand that \$11 million from \$55 million leaves \$44 million.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Under which section are you referring? It should not be section 21.

Several members interjected.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I wonder whether this policy will be used again as a future source of savings for the Treasury. I am asking whether, in fact, the Government will project this Bill into the future and use it for the same purpose.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: The answer is, "No".

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I want an absolute assurance.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Absolutely no.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I accept that if the Hon. Joe Berinson says "No" the matter will be decided by a court or the Industrial Commission and that the Government will not refer to the distortion of relativities. That is of help if Mr Berinson says that the Government will not make judgment in relation to distortion of relativities—

Hon. J. M. Berinson: The legislation has a life of 12 months and no longer.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: —I am pleased about that. The interpretation of distortion of relativities mentioned by the Premier and other members of the Government in this House is an issue and we have reason to believe that in 12 months' time it will be something that the Government will act on. I am pleased that the Government is giving us that sort of assurance.

A letter dated 15 August 1983 was sent to every member of the Public Service. It is significant that I asked a question in this House today of the Leader of the House as to whether in fact a letter had been sent to all public servants. I also asked what was the cost. He said he would defer that answer. Perhaps the Leader of the House did not know what the cost of the postage would be, and that is understandable. However, I have a copy of the letter with me. It is signed by Brian Burke, Premier, and reads as follows—

In fact, I have informed the CSA that the Government is prepared to permit an application for a wage rise to proceed this year provided that any increase awarded operates after the expiry of the Salaries and Wages Freeze Act.

I raise the point that, in fact, the Government is taking money away on the one hand and giving it on the other hand. I believe we should raise the question again and should ask why there has been no consultation with the CSA. After all that is the representative body and it is able to contact its members quickly.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Would you read the introductory section of the letter?

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: It reads as follows—

Despite public claims to the contrary the Government has no vested interest in undermining the employment or income security of the Public Service on which it depends so heavily.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: The letter does not refer to the meeting.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I am asking why the Government did not consult with the CSA. I make the point that the Minister's second reading speech made reference to the wages freeze and said that if the Government did not introduce this Bill the wages freeze would have to continue for another 12 months. That, of course, is quite misleading. We all know that much more than \$11 million would be raised if that were the case. It would be something in the vicinity of \$115 million. There is no question that the wages freeze could have been continued for more than six weeks, give or take a week. It could have been continued and would have solved the problem that the Government is trying to resolve—if it is a money matter, and I do not believe it is.

I wonder whether the Government has considered that the people affected in the main are single income earners. A survey carried out by the Civil Service Association indicated that 71 per cent of the people who will lose 10 per cent of their wages are single income earners. Did the Government look, and will it be prepared to look, at the double income earners? After all, many double income families could be earning between \$50 000 and \$55 000, but they will not be affected. Why did not the Government give consideration to that matter? The Minister should not say that it could not be resolved. That is a silly statement to make. The Government knows, and we know, that the situation could be resolved in that way. It is absolutely unfair that 71 per cent of the people to be affected by these cuts are single income earners when people with much greater incomes, because of dual earnings, will not be affected at all.

I would have thought the Government would have paid attention to this aspect. It should not have tried to rush its legislation through without proper consideration.

Has the Minister considered the overtime factor? It is clear from statements made that the public servants who will be affected will not work more than the required number of hours, and that any hours over the time that they do work will be overtime hours, and they will claim overtime payments. We all know that the senior public ser-

vants work days, nights, and weekends whenever a Minister, or the Government, asks them to do so.

Hon. Peter Dowding: And they continue to do so.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The amount of work that they do is remarkable.

Hon. Peter Dowding: And their loyalty continues.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Their loyalty is being dented by people like the Minister for Mines who has no regard for them. Not many people would take their private secretaries into their offices and get rid of the public servants.

Hon. Peter Dowding: We have a great deal of confidence in them.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: The Minister has not demonstrated that. He has put his private secretary into his office. He has demonstrated that he has no confidence in the Public Service.

Hon. Peter Dowding: I have a number of public servants in my office. It would be very hard to fault their loyalty, so do not talk rubbish.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: That is a typical example of this fellow and what he will do. He says all sorts of things in this House, and goes outside and does something else.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He had to send a senior public servant to Bunbury to settle the strike.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I ask the Minister handling this Bill if the Government has considered the overtime factor. Many public servants work long hours. I know that the Hon. Peter Dowding says that they still do, and no doubt they will continue to do so. They are absolutely loyal and devoted to their jobs. A number of public servants in certain areas have suggested that they will claim overtime payments. If a large number of them do that, surely the savings that the Government is trying to make will be decimated, and it will receive no value from this at all. It is quite possible that many of the public servants will say, "We want overtime or we won't work". The Minister handling the Bill should direct his mind to that question.

Why is the Bill selective? Is the distortion of relativities the prime consideration; is it the redistribution of wealth; or is this really a finance Bill? In his second reading reply, I ask the Minister to tell us why the Government has not been prepared to take the economic arguments to the umpire. Why has the Government not been prepared to take this matter to arbitration and say, "The distortion of relativities is too great. We want to argue that it is unfair, and therefore we

want to argue that it is not fair to continue paying them"? That is the question we should be asking. The Government should be putting that to the umpire and allowing him to make a decision. We should not be put off by the smokescreen from pursuing the intent of this legislation.

By interjection, the Attorney General said that the legislation will definitely not continue beyond 12 months. It is true that the legislation contains a sunset clause; but I have a few doubts about that. It is exactly the same as the clause in the wages freeze legislation; but I ask the Minister to give us an assurance that the sunset clause will apply to the whole Bill and not just to clause 6 to which it relates. We want an absolute guarantee that, after 12 months, the legislation will not continue.

We are entitled to a full explanation of the guidelines relating to the decision made to exempt certain people, and not to exempt certain people. Some odd things must be going on there. By looking at the Bill, I cannot determine how the Government arrived at its decision. I cannot understand, for example, why the Chief Industrial Commissioner has not been included in the exemptions. I cannot understand why the members of the Workers' Compensation Board and the supplementary board have not been included. After all, their salaries are not funded by the Government, and would not be a saving to the Government. Maybe the Government has a reason for this; if so I would like to hear it. We know that the Government is after the tall poppies but, after all, it must have some reason for taking these people into account.

Perhaps we should ask why the Public Service Arbitrator has not been included in the exemptions. I ask the Minister handling this legislation if he will give us reasons for those decisions. Obviously we will raise them at the Committee stage.

The Commonwealth funds a number of people and part-funds other people. The Government has included academics in the exemptions, and perhaps it has good reason for that because of Commonwealth funding. A large number of people in the Department of Agriculture, for example, and many people in the Public Health Department, are funded completely or partly by the Commonwealth. Why are some included, and not others?

I now deal with clause 4. Mr President, I am running through the Bill so that we can receive answers from the Minister and I will raise these matters further in Committee. We are cautious and doubtful about the powers that the Treasurer is to be given. In many cases, he will have absolutely unlimited power; and, quite frankly, we do

not trust the man any more. He has broken so many promises that we cannot believe things will be as they should be. Can we rely on the Treasurer to follow the intent of this legislation? We certainly will not give him any loopholes to use, because he will use them if he has the opportunity.

The Treasurer will have the option of interpreting the Act in whatever way he likes. He will have the ability to make an interpretation, and to make a judgment on a person's financial hardship. Who will really decide financial hardship? I know that in another place the Treasurer said that he will receive the information from people applying for an exemption on the ground of financial hardship. He gave an assurance that he would deal with those matters himself; but that is ridiculous. It is really silly for the Treasurer to say that, and it is silly for the Minister handling the Bill to repeat it.

If 100 or 200 applications are received, no one person—not least the Premier—would be able to take the time to look at all of the information that will be put forward. People will have to bare their souls and give full details of their financial position. Information on hire-purchase and commitments relating to mortgages and bank loans will have to be given to the Treasurer so that he can study and evaluate the claims. It is not possible for the Treasurer to do that. I wonder who will do it. Will it be his advisers? In fact, the Government might have to appoint one or two special advisers to do so!

Hon. V. J. Ferry: I think they probably would.

Hon. G. E. MASTERS: We want an explanation on this matter. We do not want the Treasurer to be judge, jury, and everything. We are anxious about this proposal in the Bill.

A precedent has been set in the workers' compensation area. In fact, the Government is now proposing in this Bill to consider weekly payments. Weekly earnings are quite different from award figures. Under the Workers' Compensation and Assistance Act, workers' compensation earnings are calculated on award wages. All of us know that many people believe weekly earnings should be considered, although they may be quite high—perhaps 40 per cent or 50 per cent higher than award rates. I know that in this case it may be necessary for weekly earnings to be considered; but the Minister should tell me why. The Bill sets a dangerous precedent.

Certain union leaders have brought pressure to bear, saying that the award rate should not be paid for workers' compensation, but payment should be based on weekly earnings. Is this the

breakthrough? Is this the wedge in the door? Is this the opportunity for other applications and other requests for weekly earnings to be considered? We want an assurance that that will not be the case. At the most, the award rate should be considered.

I will raise with the Government one other matter. The Opposition believes it is unfair that a person who works part time should be subject to a 10 per cent cut. A part-time worker could be working part time for a number of reasons. It may be the only job he has; it may be that the job offers part-time work only. Perhaps there is simply not enough work for a person to be employed full time. A person whose part-time rate matches that of a person working full time for \$30 000 a year will lose 10 per cent of his pay. A person working part time earning \$15 000 may be liable to a 10 per cent reduction. That is unfair, and I cannot follow the basis of that argument. The people affected by this may work part time for various reasons, and it may be the only job that they have anyway.

In the Minister's second reading speech, he said that he accepted the voluntary offer of the judiciary. We would like to know whether that is really the case. We want an assurance that all of the members of the judiciary actually volunteered. Did all of them volunteer, or did two or three of them have to be coerced? We want to know whether that is a true statement.

We want to know when the wages freeze is likely to end, because it has an effect on this legislation. We want to know whether superannuation entitlements for Public Service officers will be affected. Will they suffer a loss as a result of this legislation? We want to know why the Minister said, in his second reading speech, that the wages freeze would need to be continued for 12 months if the legislation were not brought forward. I do not believe that. I made the point earlier that that is a ridiculous statement to raise. We want to know exactly what the Minister meant by that statement.

We consider this legislation to be ill-considered and bad. All of us have looked at the Bill, and we have had a degree of difficulty with some of the drafting. I do not know what genius put it all together; but he must have had a tin of worms in his head. Some of the clauses do not seem to make sense; I am sure that the Hon. Joe Berinson will have difficulty in explaining to the House exactly what they mean.

The procedures indicate that the Government will have a dictatorship over its employees, with the precedent set in this legislation. It makes a



farce of the arbitration system. The legislation makes ridiculous the Government's statement about consensus and conciliation being the order of the day and that harmony and goodwill would influence the work force.

We have seen consensus in the comments made tonight by the Government about distortion of relativities and redistribution of wealth. In fact, the Hon. Mr Kelly asked what was wrong with that; of course, he supports those concepts.

The 12 months will not be the end of this. The precedent has been established, and the trend is just beginning. This is a preview of what the Government intends to do in the coming months and years, if it is in power.

The Opposition will demand, and has the right to demand, proper answers and explanations before giving its support to the second reading of this Bill.

**HON. G. C. MacKINNON** (South-West) [10.45 p.m.]: I listened with great interest to Mr Masters, who gave one of the most thorough summations of a piece of legislation that I have heard for a number of years. He framed his words very carefully. To say that I was worried enough before about this legislation is to say very little about how I feel having now heard Mr Masters' comments; he managed to double and redouble my worries.

I can take my mind back to the Depression of the 1930s. I lived in the country in those days and I know that it was not all that uncommon that at the end of the Offertory in country churches the clergymen would find themselves with insufficient money to cover their own stipend, and they would then without reluctance and chest-beating once again send around the plate. Were I a caricaturist I might draw our present Premier with his collar back to front sending the plate around again, because that really is what he is doing.

This is not an unpopular piece of legislation; the great mass of people believe it is fairly popular, because the tall poppies are a pretty easy group of people to shoot at. Indeed, we have actually seen some of these tall poppies voluntarily lying down and playing dead; in other words, being prepared to throw their money into the kitty. I greatly admire them for that.

This is a clever political gimmick if ever I have seen one. I do not want to go over all the promises made by the Government about not increasing charges. However, I point out that I was on the receiving end of a great deal of vituperative comment when I was Minister for Water Supplies. I well remember the present Premier waving a bottle of dirty water. I know where it came from;

it came from Mr Piantadosi, who has now been rewarded.

Mr Burke at that time used to make the most outlandish statements about genuine workers in the Metropolitan Water Authority whose job it was to see that dirty water did not get past the inspection points. He maligned those workers viciously, so viciously indeed that a number of them rang the then president of the union and complained bitterly.

This legislation is a clever piece of work because it is a smokescreen to cover all the increased charges the Government has introduced. Tonight we have seen Mr Dowding virtually apoplectic and trying to shriek across the Chamber, apparently trying to help Mr Berinson, Mr Berinson being one member who needs help the least in this place. When someone says something about charges which gets up the nose of Mr Dowding, he nearly has apoplexy and gets up and expects us to take all that he goes on about. He has set so many shocking precedents that this Chamber has unfortunately seen fit to put up with, that perhaps the rumour is correct that he is getting ready to move to another place. Everyone who hears the rumour practically rushes off to church and offers up prayers that it is true. He is obviously keeping in practice.

Hon. D. K. Dans: He may be the next Governor.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The Government would not inflict that upon us. We previously had the Dunstan experience in South Australia. I do not believe the Government would do that. Mr Dans has really shocked me; I am practically speechless.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You would have to curtsy to me then.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I will comment on a few matters that Mr Masters did not touch.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Wearing drag, too.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I do not regard this as a taxing measure, and so therefore I do not think it can pass legally as a Budget Bill. This is another part of the camouflage. It is a popular measure to a lot of people.

My recollection goes back to the days when people used to say of one Benito Mussolini, "He is doing a lot of good in the south of Italy; he has drained the swamps".

Hon. Robert Hetherington: He drained the Pontine marshes.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Hetherington would probably be the only man old enough to remember.

This is a very dictatorial action by the Government; there is not the slightest shadow of doubt about that.

Hon. Peter Dowding: Is that why it is before Parliament?

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: This is why I say that everything Mr Masters said is true. The Bill negates all those things that the Australian Labor Party used to stand for. Members opposite are now social democrats and they do not stand for the same things any more; they are a different kettle of fish. This really is an example of their hallmark and their keystone.

It is easy to pick the members opposite who really dislike this measure intensely. So that they will not be maligned in Caucus, I will not name them, but they are easy to pick up by their interjections. We all know who they are.

There is no way that this measure would not have been screamed at with genuine anguish by members of the Australian Labor Party had it been introduced by the coalition Government. They know what I say is the absolute God's gospel truth. They would have talked about it in this Chamber the whole night; they would have called it arrogant and dictatorial. Were Ron Thompson still here, he would accuse us straight out of being Fascists and Nazis. Members opposite know that to be the truth as surely as I am standing here speaking.

I was absolutely horrified to find that the Government had chosen Mr Berinson to handle the Bill in this Chamber, because he would know that minorities, particularly successful minorities, can be attacked with virtual immunity. Again, this Bill would not have been introduced by the Australian Labor Party of old and it shows that members opposite are social democrats. Members opposite have often said that they are the only political party in Australia to have lasted for as long as they have, but that is rubbish because members opposite no longer represent the Australian Labor Party; rather, they represent the social democrats. The Australian Labor Party would never have introduced this legislation in days gone by. Of that there is not the slightest shadow of doubt.

It is my intention to vote against the Bill because I do not believe it is a taxing measure. Of course, I will be accused of all sorts of things, and it is easy to accuse someone with a name like Graham Charles MacKinnon. People will say I am just hungry for the money. I am not, but be that as it may I wonder just what the next step will be. If a political party can salve its conscience to the point that it can be persuaded to take a step

like this, how will it salve its conscience next week or next month?

We must bear in mind that we have some people advising this Government who have less political knowledge and experience than do some of our very newest members. These advisers have not been long in the business, and one must be in the business for a while to understand the political ramifications of such a measure. One must have read some political history. I regret that too few people read the political history of this and other countries. I am shocked at some of the reputable people I know who have taken up good positions as advisers to the Labor Party and who would lend themselves to this sort of measure.

I hope, trust, and believe that some of them advised against it, because it will have some shocking ramifications. I repeat: I do not know of any totalitarian form of Government that did not start off with the full acceptance of the people. There is no way that this Government will have that. Let us face it, we are making prize asses of ourselves in the international view, anyway. We have a population of 1.4 million and we must have more politicians and advisers to run what is a reasonable sized city than any other State in the world, let alone a city State, which we are. However, the salaries of all the top brass have suddenly been cut.

It is all very well to redistribute wealth, but members who have done a study of the history of taxation know that the whole system is designed to redistribute wealth; that is what the taxation system is about. Suddenly we have a totally new way to redistribute wealth.

Hon. Peter Dowding: You are a real conservative. You just don't like change.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have seen more change in my life than Mr Dowding is ever likely to see in his. At least I have wide vision; anyone who can accept this sort of stuff must have tunnel vision.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth): I ask the member to direct his comments to the Bill.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I would like to do so, and, indeed, I am talking about the attitude of mind which goes to formulating this sort of legislation. I am not talking about the individual clauses of the Bill, because the second reading debate is supposed to give members the opportunity to deal with the philosophy of the legislation.

I heard Mr Dowding's speech. He did not realise that the actions he took when he was in Opposition would reflect on him when he was a Minister. When the chickens come home to roost on

his head and do the sorts of things that chickens normally do, the Minister screams and rants and raves and turns everything into turmoil. The Minister did not even have enough vision to see what he was setting himself up for, but in making these moves, he may be training to leave here and perform in another place perhaps.

I wonder if any thought has been given in the compilation of the Bill to the creation of wealth. Certainly all the members here will lose \$3 500. I was absolutely fascinated when the newspapers referred to Mr Burke's magnanimity in accepting a 15 per cent pay cut. Had I had the same sort of experience Mr Burke has had, I would have been pretty happy with that situation.

We get \$34 000, give or take a little and, of course, we do not get any expenses. In today's money—not when he was a back-bench member—Mr Burke was earning \$34 000 prior to his elevation to Leader of the Opposition on a salary of \$54 500. As Premier his salary increased to \$71 000. He will then lose 15 per cent, that is, \$10 789, which leaves him with approximately \$61 000. That is not bad. I think I might have said I would be prepared to accept another five per cent reduction in salary and really get front page coverage in the newspapers. Mr Burke probably did, but perhaps he could have got full front page coverage.

The people towards whom I thought the newspapers might have shown a little sympathy were the fellows who were earning \$55 000 plus allowances for a motorcar, telephone, and a few other expenses like that, who suddenly dropped to \$34 000; and then, by an arbitrary stroke of the pen, lost another \$3 500, and yet do not grizzle.

Most members have just accepted the position. They might have raised a few arguments in principle about it, but it has been rather well accepted.

Hon. Tom Stephens: What, the change of Government?

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: No, this arbitrary, arrogant, and dictatorial reduction in pay which the Government seeks to make without reference to any tribunal.

It is no good saying the people concerned have enough money. Nobody has enough money. For one reason or another everybody's expenditure rises to meet their incomes to some extent and a number of people in the Civil Service have young children and families to support with all the expenses that that entails.

I thought it quite incredible that the Press should have given any sort of coverage to the reduction proposed to the Premier's salary bear-

ing in mind that he had just had such a massive pay increase. I have not been in quite as exalted a position as that, but I have been close to it. I know a Minister is too busy to spend what he earns and he is lucky if he can just keep up with his normal expense allowances. Therefore, a reduction of this nature would really be no terribly great hardship.

A particular attitude exists in regard to this legislation which I feel I must mention; that is, its effect on the Civil Service as a whole. To some extent, particularly when times are difficult as they are at the moment, it is quite realistic to compare our operation to that of a military exercise. Brian Burke is the commander of the troops and it behoves a commander to keep his troops in good heart. So far as the general public are concerned, I have already said that I think this is a very skilful exercise and I congratulate those responsible for its instrumentation and organisation. However, for those who are part of the deal—those who are to have their heads chopped off—it is an abysmal exercise.

The body of the Government—the working troops of the Government—is the CSA. The members of that association traditionally back up a system which helps the Ministers and we have seen them estranged in a way I have never seen anywhere previously. I was very sorry—I think most people must have been—to see the civil servants marching on Parliament House. I have been the recipient of that sort of treatment twice: it occurred once on the part of the pure water people when I took steps to fluoridate the water supply and it occurred also in relation to scientologists when I was instrumental in banning their organisation. They marched up to Parliament carrying placards and screaming for my body and everything else. It is terrible for people who have a regard for Government to see the Civil Service turning on it.

I think it is a terrible thing, because I have been part of a Government. I will not ever be part of a Government again, but any young man who saw that, regardless of his political affiliations, must have felt very sad indeed, because these were the people on whom the Government relies at all levels. They are the people who meet the customers at the front desk; they are the people who advise Ministers and talk to members of Parliament. They comprise the body, heart, and soul of a Government and by this inept, dictatorial action they have been estranged. I do not know how much they have been estranged. I have not found any wheel-barrow loads of secret documents that have fallen off the back of a truck coming through my door yet.

We have seen enough problems in recent years in relation to leaks of confidential documents from the Civil Service. It is of no use saying we should not have secrecy. That is what one says when one is in Opposition and one does not have any consideration for the future. Of course there must be confidentiality in 101 things.

That is why so many members when they become Ministers must swallow their words about secrecy in Government. They have confidential information that must remain confidential. Surely some sort of *esprit de corps* and some sort of morale of the people upon whom we rely must be maintained. A Minister sends questions to be answered by these people and expects to receive intelligent replies.

Despite what might have been said about civil servants in this country, I know they are good and will not do what they want to do which is to muck up the answers in order to spoil the system—they have more concern for the country than that. Nevertheless, their attitude is a side issue to this legislation, which the social democrats will live to regret.

Having started on this track there will be something else, and then something else. I have seen it happen before and I am sure it will happen again; we will see the plate sent around again to get a bit more money to fill the Government coffers.

This measure is quite wrong in principle. Other ways are available to the Government to obtain revenue, but to obtain it in the way it intends is wrong. Most, if not all of the technical answers have been provided by Mr Masters, but this is not a small piece of legislation.

Whipping the heads off tall poppies is literally a national pastime in Australia and we have despaired about the speed with which it is done. No doubt exists in my mind that the social democrats have shown themselves as adept at the redistribution of wealth, and I look forward with despair at the absolute certainty that they will show no proclivity whatsoever for the creation of wealth. Without the people who work to get themselves into the \$30 000-plus bracket the rest of the community would have a pretty poor look-out; and in particular my sons and the sons of other members who have not got that far yet, would have a pretty poor look-out.

It is my intention to vote against this legislation because I have seen similar legislation before. I have seen this sort of action start off to do good for the people, but I never believed in it. I saw it as a kid, and from my experience in war and out of war, I did not believe in it. I have no respect for this sort of attempt at this stage of our lives.

**HON. ROBERT HETHERINGTON** (South-East Metropolitan) [11.08 p.m.]: As a member of the Labor Party I support the Bill. It is the kind of Bill a Labor Party would bring in, and since this is still a Labor Party, of which I am a member, it has been brought in by a Labor Party. I was sorry to be out of the Chamber during part of the speech of the Hon. Gordon Masters.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was a good speech.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I will read it with great interest, but I am sure that his concluding remarks were not good whatever his opening remarks were. Towards the end he started to talk about so-called dictatorships and he threatened the House with what would happen in the future.

Hon. Fred McKenzie: It was the same all the way through.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: This is a one-off piece of legislation to solve a specific problem. It is not legislation that I support with joy. I wish it were not necessary, but I believe it is at this time. When it was put before me I considered it cautiously, because I too remember the Depression with its Premier's plan and the 10 per cent cut across the board, but now is not then, and this legislation is designed specifically to reduce the salaries of a select group, a group the Government can control.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Yes, the Government can control them.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The Government cannot produce legislation to reduce the salaries of other members of the community. One of the important points of this legislation is that the Government upon coming into power found that its Budget had been committed to other areas by the previous Government.

Hon. G. E. Masters: It has been spent by the Government in areas about which the Hon. D. K. Dans will not give us details.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I believe the honest people on this side of the House, who give me the information they do.

Hon. G. E. Masters: We haven't been told anything.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I happen to believe these honest people, the people who run this Government and who try to do their best for this State in this time of grave economic difficulty. If members opposite do not believe the Government and want to argue by casting personal insults, let it be. Certainly the Hon. Gordon Masters was good at that in the past; some of his actions as a Minister were not worthy of consider-

ation. I will not go into those matters; I will explain why I support the legislation.

The important point is that we have this one-off piece of legislation because we find ourselves faced with a deficit as a result of Government funds already committed by the policies of the previous Government. We have had to find extra money or let Government services go down the drain. It is a pity we did not bring in the cuts a little further down the wage levels. Although that would have hurt more people, we would have been able to save more jobs in the Public Service, a saving which would have been highly desirable. If we are faced with the choice of either bringing about pay cuts or sacrificing necessary services, I know what is the best decision to make, and we have made that unpalatable decision.

I was a little amazed by the odd letter or two I received from public servants who told me that they were belittled by the Government's decision. They said the Government did not appreciate them, otherwise it would not have adopted this course. Needless to say, such a thought is nonsense. As members in this House know, I have always been one to defend in this House our Public Service, and I will continue to do so. My salary will be reduced by 10 per cent, to which I do not look forward for myself, but my self-esteem and self love have not been damaged by this Bill. I do not think the Premier thinks less of me or less of his team; I do not think he thinks we are not worthy.

The Premier has had to adopt this one-off course but has found no great joy or pleasure in it. Having decided it is necessary, he has followed it.

Some of the arguments I heard as I came into the Chamber tonight I had heard *ad nauseam* in another place; the arguments seemed to circle round and round. Although there will be a one per cent to 10 per cent cut in the salaries of some people, the CSA will be able to go to the Industrial Commission once the wages freeze legislation lapses, and in the meantime any pay increase as a result of the national wage case decision will be passed on. That wages freeze legislation was brought in by the previous Government, and it will lapse at the set time, unless we repeal it, which I do not think we will do. We certainly expect that a national wage increase and other arbitration increases will be allowed; the CSA like everybody else will be able to go to arbitration to have the wage levels restored.

I know it will hit some people hard; there is no doubt about that. Nobody is predicting that it will do anything else, but it will not hit the people who will have their salaries reduced as hard as it has

hit some other people in our economy who have been sacked, or whose firms have just folded up. Other people in the community are suffering more. When I hear about what we are doing to the civil servants, I am also aware of the fact that in my electorate we have to get food parcels for people who have not enough to eat. That is the stage our economy has reached and that is what the Government is trying to do something about. We are in a parlous and perilous situation where we have to try to do something about it. Just imagine that in Western Australia today it is necessary to get food parcels for people who have not enough to eat. That is a shocking state of affairs. When I hear how badly we are treating one section of the population, I am aware of what the downturn of the economy is doing to other sections of the population.

I am very sympathetic to some of the people who have been affected, particularly members of the Police Force who have spent many many years to get where they are. If this proposed Act was intended to last more than 12 months I would probably oppose it. I looked at the Bill very carefully and very cautiously.

Hon. Neil Oliver: Can you repeat that?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I said I looked at the Bill very carefully and very cautiously, and finally I was persuaded that we should pass it.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Re-endorsement had nothing to do with it?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: No, re-endorsement had nothing to do with it. That is a contemptible, contemptuous statement, but it is the kind I have grown to expect from the honourable member on my right since I have been in this House.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Why pick on Mr Stretch!

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: We need not bandy that sort of insult around the House. I am talking about a serious subject.

Hon. Neil Oliver: How about talking seriously, then?

Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are caucused and you know it!

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: It may interest the honourable gentleman to know that I accepted the Bill before we went into Caucus, so whether I am caucused or not, I take full responsibility for the views I am uttering right now. I always have done so and I will continue to do so, because, after all, I am in a principled party and I act usually from principle.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Good.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: People may disagree with what I am doing but I am certainly not a person who would lend himself to a kind of first step into taking away people's rights as suggested by the Hon. Gordon Masters or the Hon. Graham MacKinnon and as will, no doubt, be suggested by the Hon. Sandy Lewis when he gets to his feet. He will huff and puff, no doubt.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Will you let me make my speech?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I would be only too happy to let the honourable gentleman make his own speech but I have a rough idea of what he will be talking about.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Get your speech over with.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I hope the honourable gentleman is nearly finished with his asinine remarks because I can do without them.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is your view.

Hon. Neil Oliver: Dispense with the platitudes.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Listen to who is talking.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth): Would the member please direct his remarks to the Chair?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Certainly, Mr Deputy President. It is a pleasure to speak to you.

Hon. Neil Oliver: Watch it!

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: I noticed in the Hon. Graham MacKinnon's speech when he was going all over the place that he brought forward good and bad points. The honourable gentleman always makes a pretty good speech from one point of view, but he makes a lot of emotional gestures such as that the top brass will be cut in two—well, really! I would have thought that with some of the top brass on \$57 000 a year it would hardly be called being cut in two.

Hon. Neil Oliver: Tell the Premier that, will you?

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: Why should I tell the Premier that?

Hon. Neil Oliver: Just do it.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: He is quite intelligent. He can work it out for himself.

Hon. Garry Kelly: He knows it is not being cut in two.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: He knows it is not being cut in two. He knows we are not being vindictive towards the civil servants. He and the Hon. Graham MacKinnon know that,

even though some of them are annoyed or cross with us, the civil servants—

Hon. P. G. Pental: Annoyed? That is an understatement.

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: It may or may not be an understatement. I have spoken to some public servants who do not feel quite the same way. Their views vary from place to place. The House should support this Bill. Despite what the Hon. Graham MacKinnon says, I know this is not technically a money Bill, but it is part of the Government's budgetary proposals. It is part of a total proposal where we are trying to balance the deficit and keep services going. We are trying to do the best for the State.

We are trying desperately to employ temporary measures because of the deficit and the policies we inherited, before we can get our own priorities into place. For this reason we have had to put this temporary Bill forward. It is not a Bill that takes away, as I have already pointed out, the right to arbitration. It is not the beginning of something worse. It is a one-off temporary measure.

Hon. V. J. Ferry: It is that all right—10 per cent!

Hon. ROBERT HETHERINGTON: The Bill will allow the normal arbitration process to take place. It will restore the full power of the salaries reduced at the end of the 12 months which the Bill covers. It is none of the things I have heard said about it. It is a measure which has been carefully and sensibly considered. It is a temporary measure which is in the best interests of the State and I therefore support it.

HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [11.23 p.m.]: We have at various times in this House heard a lot about mandates. We have heard why the Labor Party was elected to Government. Before commencing with the body of my speech, may I congratulate the Hon. Gordon Masters and the Hon. Graham MacKinnon on two gems of small speeches. My speech may not be as short, but I do not think anyone will be in any doubt about my feelings on the Bill when I have finished. I quote from the ALP policy document as follows—

Simply, the next ALP Government in W.A. will do a better job than the current government, without the confrontation.

The ALP's concern, and initiatives, in the industrial relations field have received saturation coverage from publication of the Green Paper to seminars, conferences and media scrutiny. Support has come from all areas with the consensus viewpoint that the ALP proposals will remove the confrontation,

aim at full employment and maintain community standards.

Later, the document reads as follows—

The next ALP Government will adhere to this consultative process and seek consensus—employers and unions will be expected to do the same.

When an agreement is reached immediate steps will be taken to implement it if, despite exhaustive effort, there is disagreement in whole or in part and resort to independent inquiry is not appropriate, a report of each organisation's position and views shall be made to Parliament.

On *Industrial Arbitration* the next ALP Government will amend the Arbitration Act to promote consultation as the prime method of dispute settlement and wage and employment conditions determination. In so doing the ALP recognises that the existence of an arbitration system is essential to good industrial relations as long as it reflects the principle of justice and equity and that one side, employer or union, is not weaker than the other.

That is a marvellous mandate—a Parliament with justice and equity. The policy goes on to say that there will be no discrimination in the work force and that democracy is permitted in the workplace. Like everything else this Government has done it has broken all the creeds of this book—the mandate for it to govern and the mandate of industrial relations. This Government has, in every area, continued to break its promises to the people in its manifesto, if nothing else.

I refer to the question I asked of the Leader of the House on 27 July which reads as follows—

Does he believe that if both parties accept the decision of any wages or salary tribunal, this decision should be adhered to until one or other of the parties approaches the tribunal for some change?

The Hon. D. K. Dans replied, "Yes".

The Leader of the House is obviously in conflict with the Minister handling the Bill because nobody, to the best of my knowledge, has approached the Civil Service Association or members of Parliament in their haste to bring this legislation forward. It would seem to me that this House is here to review legislation. Unlike members of the Labor Party I have always attempted to do that. I have never been caucused on any matter or told how to vote. I have had good arguments put to me, but I have never been caucused or placed in a situation similar to that in which

the Minister handling this Bill has been placed. He has gone against the Labor Party policy which was promised to the people about equity, justice, and arbitration. The Government continues to make light of the promises that the public accepted in good faith.

I refer now to a letter written to a public servant by a Minister and I quote—

The Government is unlikely to face a tougher decision than its recent move to reduce the salaries of senior public servants.

That is an interesting statement. It was not a deferred decision. The letter continues—

The reductions have been forced on us by the extremely difficult financial position facing the State in the next year.

That does not say very much about the things to which the Hon. Robert Hetherington referred; the so-called deficit which has been proved wrong. It is like the tobacco tax; the Government claims that a certain amount will be raised as a result of legislation but it backed off when it was given the right figures. The letter continues—

It was a decision of sheer economic necessity.

What rot! Here is a paragraph that could have been written by some facetious twerp, certainly not a Minister of the Crown. It reads as follows—

I realise that it may be bitter medicine for you and your colleagues in your Department to swallow. Having taken a 12% cut myself I know the feeling and I can hardly come forward like the doctor who says "This won't hurt a bit."

Really, is that an answer to give a senior public servant? The ALP members sitting in their seats are shocked that one of their Ministers should write to a senior public servant in this vein. It is not a funny matter and there need be no smiles about it. He continues—

All I can ask of you is to please bear with us through these difficult times—

One would think he was in childbirth, the way he goes on! It continues—

—and so help the State to be in a strong position to benefit from an expected upturn in world trade.

The Minister has become an economic expert. The letter continues—

This won't be an easy year for any of us—

No-one knows that better than public servants and members of Parliament after this effort. It continues—

—but there are encouraging signs in the world's economy.

He goes back to being an economic expert. It continues—

In the meantime, there may be some financial relief in the September National Wage decision.

We still have not heard whether the wage freeze is on or off. If we left it for another six weeks none of this nonsense would have occurred. The letter continues—

I know you are being asked to shoulder a heavy burden but many others in the community also have to tighten their belts.

They are top public servants. It continues—

Please be patient and in any case of extreme hardship you are free to apply for special exemption.

Well, that is lovely, is it not? One would not have thought that a Minister of the Crown could write a letter like that to a senior public servant in his department who would know more about what is going on in the department than this Minister will ever know. The public servant has spent a lifetime in the Civil Service and he has been written to by an obnoxious young Minister in those terms. It is degrading, to say the least. However, it is typical of the ALP's attitude towards public servants and people in the community. It likes to degrade. We on this side of the House do not want to lower ourselves to the standard of the ALP—the broken promises and the knocking of first-class public servants.

I refer to the comments made by the Hon. Robert Hetherington—not in any great detail, but he referred to the grave deficit that has become a myth of the ALP. He has not been able to substantiate the fact that the figures are wrong and that there is no deficit. The ALP did not take any of the figures into consideration and it shouted and screamed before it did its homework.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: You are simply wrong.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am simply wrong! The Hon. Joe Berinson cannot read figures. He should stay with his legal work and not add up figures. The Government bungled the tobacco tax as it has everything else it has touched and it is now bungling this Bill.

Mr Hetherington made great play of the fact that he has always defended public servants until now. He told us he was convinced before he went into Caucus that this was the best way of handling matters. To return to the Hon. Graham MacKinnon's comments on the social democrats and the fact that they are now accepting those

sorts of things because they are not truly an Australian Labor Party—

Hon. N. F. Moore: Are they not democratic socialists?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I do not think there is anything democratic about them.

Hon. N. F. Moore: You are calling them social democrats.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Hetherington said it hit some people hard but not as hard as those who have had the sack or whose firms have folded. I have had three approaches from people who are likely to lose their houses. They had been promoted and could see further promotion, and because of their borrowings it was possible they would lose their houses unless they tightened their belts hard. I know they can apply for an exemption, but nobody in this community who has risen to the level of being a civil servant on a rate of \$29 500 and above wants to say, "I have borrowed and made plans for the future, and please Sir, would you exempt me?" as though he was asking the headmaster whether he could go to the toilet.

That is the sort of position in which this Government is placing civil servants, and members of Parliament for that matter. I am not sure whether I will be queueing up to ask for an exemption. It seems to me the Government has not thought this through. As Mr Masters said, the Bill is very shoddily drafted. I wonder what the Hon. Peter Dowding would have made of it if we had brought in a Bill like this. I will not rant and rave as he does, but I am sure that if he were in Opposition and we had brought in this Bill we would have had a tirade for ages.

I asked a question about job opportunities and the effort made by the job creation unit, and I was told it had created some 140 jobs. Where did those jobs come from?

Hon. P. G. Pandal: The Government's advisers?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No, we are going to pay for the advisers after the event.

The only jobs created by the job creation unit came from the wages pause. This Government's job creation unit has not created a single job, if I am to believe the answer I received—and sometimes I tend to be a little disbelieving.

Hon. P. H. Wells: Not one job in five months?

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Yes, 140 jobs, all from the wages pause. And this Government is so keen on getting jobs for people.

We heard about the party of principle from Mr Hetherington. Can we talk about the ALP and principles? It has broken promises on just about



everything in its manifesto; "Bunbury 2000", industrial relations policy, price increases, and every section of the manifesto. The Government is tearing it into little bits; it will be confetti before long. The Government is tearing up its manifesto as it is tearing the State.

Hon. Lyla Elliott: Like Sir Charles Court promised to solve unemployment in six months.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Does the Hon. Lyla Elliott think two wrongs make a right?

Hon. Lyla Elliott: I do not remember you complaining about that.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Would Miss Elliott like me to refer to *Hansard* and show her where I did complain about it? I am not like the Labor Party; I do not sit speechless and obey without question my leader's command. As she knows, I happen to have a reputation of getting up in this place and arguing with the Government, whether it is of my colour or another colour. The ALP cannot throw such comments at me—they can but they will not stick—about following the party line.

Mr Hetherington said it was a temporary patch-up measure. That sounds right when one considers all the ALP's broken promises and the terrific waste of granting rises in other areas and of trying to support some of the matters it promised in its manifesto. It is interesting that the ALP puts a line between workers. I notice the Hon. Peter Dowding nods his head. He believes there should be a line between workers. He wants to separate workers and one class from another. It is typical of the man; he would not go and face the people of Bunbury. He sent his chief public servant to do all his dirty work for him. That public servant should receive a pay rise instead of a pay cut for putting up with the Minister and for doing his dirty work. Most Ministers do their own dirty work. They do not crawl out sideways and try to get out of their nasty responsibilities.

Let us look at some of the answers given to questions by another Minister. I refer to the schoolteachers. I have heard Mr Hetherington say a number of times we have high class schoolteachers and I have agreed with him. He is prepared however to cut their salaries. Let us look at the answers Mr Pearce gave to the *WA Education News*. Following are the questions and replies—

*1. Will teachers whose salaries are cut be eligible for pay increases through the re-established nexus with NSW teachers?*

ANSWER: Yes. The increase in salaries in relation to re-establishing a salaries nexus with NSW will apply in full to all eligible Western Australian teachers notwithstanding

the provisions of the temporary salary reduction legislation.

Already we see a wedge between one group and other public servants. The article continues—

*2. If so, will the base figures for percentage increases be taken as salaries before the cuts or after them? Will the same apply to increases through the national wage case?*

ANSWER: The present proposals to be embodied in the legislation make provision for movements in wages and salaries awarded by industrial tribunals to be based on the salary that would have been paid if there had been no salary reduction.

This means that where an increase is awarded by an industrial tribunal, for example, in re-establishing nexus with NSW teachers or in relation to a national wage case decision, the money amount by which salaries are increased will be equivalent to the increase that would have applied in the absence of any salary reduction.

We are talking about getting one section of the community to pay the piper and yet a breakthrough already has been made, as I read that answer. Schoolteachers will be able to take the total of their increase above the salary cut. I wonder how the Minister looks at the salaries of members of Parliament. I hope he knows how our salaries are based and what our tribunal recommended. I hope he knows on what basis our tribunal made its judgment, and I hope he will explain to us how we will catch up in following through 90 per cent of the Federal Government's tribunal award.

"Catch up" is the Labor Party phrase. Is that not what Mr Dowding and Mr Dans have done with people over the last few months? Was that not a catch up?

Are members of Parliament not to be granted any raise in salary for 18 months? I am sure the Minister knows the answers to my questions and I would like an answer from him, either when he replies to the second reading debate, or during the Committee stage. We have a right to know the answers.

I am not one of those who is bitterly opposed to the community as a whole taking a reduction in salary to benefit the community as a whole. However, I do not believe any section of the community should be singled out for a vicious attack such as this. It is very interesting that nobody from the Trades and Labor Council has realised its members could possibly be the next to suffer a Government attack. This Government has not stuck to its word since it has been in power. Who

is the next person on the Government's list? What tradesman will receive a cut in his salary? Perhaps it will be the principal of a school, who does not live up to the beliefs of the ALP. Are the two-income families, with a combined income of more than \$29 500, the next on the list? Why is a single-income earner any different from a family with two incomes? The same amount of money, or more, may be coming into the house of a two-income family, yet they are unaffected by this legislation.

I thought the Labor Party believed in the family unit. We have heard many lectures from Mr Hetherington on this subject. Obviously, at this stage, the single-income earner is the one who will be crucified.

Members have received many letters from constituents in the weeks leading up to the introduction of this legislation, and I am sure these letters have been quoted in many places. It was interesting to read a comment from the National Economic Summit. John Leard, Managing Director of Australian National Industries Ltd. made the following comment—

We are not going to get out of our problems without some sacrifice and some restraint on the part of all Australians—and I would emphasise "all"—because at the present time that sacrifice is being borne mainly by the unemployed, the low-income earners, and by those businesses which are going into bankruptcy.

To that group we can now add the public servants.

All Governments, of whatever political colour try to do something about the unemployed, and try to establish an income base which is satisfactory to even the low-income earners. Of course, not much can be done about bankruptcies. This Government, by its policies and its continual attacks on businesses, will create more bankruptcies, day by day. Between Hawke and Burke, we have the business bashers. We have a "bash business" Government in power today. I find myself wondering whether the Government has not said, "We have been bashing business. We had better get on to the public servants as well".

One continually hears about this Bill being a Budget Bill. In this context, it is interesting to read the following quote from a letter I received protesting about the Government's legislation—

To attempt to save \$11 million, or less than ½ per cent of a total Budget of \$2 400 million hardly qualifies it as a Budget Bill.

That gentleman is quite right when he goes on to say the Bill is an attack on our democratic system, by trying to limit savings to one particular area.

I am glad that Mr Dowding finds this amusing. I wish to question further the Government's attitude on the matter of salary cuts. Why, when some of us took a voluntary pay cut, did Mr Burke, Mr Dans, and Mr Dowding not also take a cut?

Hon. V. J. Ferry: That question is a bit embarrassing for them.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is extremely embarrassing. Why did not Mr McKenzie, Miss Elliott, or Mr Brown take a pay cut? Will that voluntary pay cut be taken into account on this occasion? Will those of us who took a voluntary pay cut for nine months be compensated on this occasion by having a pay cut inflicted on us for only three months? Or, having made our sacrifice once—which members of the Labor Party were not prepared to do—are we to make another sacrifice? No answer is the stern reply!

Hon. V. J. Ferry: You had better explain it again.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No, I know the Attorney General knows some members took a voluntary pay cut, but that there was no wage restraint on the part of members of the then Opposition. Members of the Labor Party were asked to join in voluntary wage restraint but no, the matter was not considered important enough in those days. Now, apparently, it has become extremely important. It is very interesting that there is complete quiet from members of the Government.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: Interjections are out of order.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Especially when interjections are irrelevant. Mr President, the Government is not giving us any answers about what is going to happen to these people.

Many people are curious as to this change of attitude on the part of the Labor Party. Why would ALP members not accept wage restraint on the last occasion it was put forward whereas they appear keen to accept it now? Why should we believe members of the Government, any more than they believed Sir Charles Court, when he suggested we impose voluntary wage restraint upon ourselves?

Hon. V. J. Ferry: At least he did not inflict it upon public servants.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I hope the Minister intends to answer my query.

Hon. Tom Knight: It happened twice did it not?

Hon A. A. LEWIS: In the case of some people, it happened three times.

It is very interesting that the Government never discussed this proposal. Strangely enough, when the Premier was conning his friends in the media, in the process of raising Government charges, he did not mention this legislation.

The Premier did not say, "Some people have taken cuts before. We as a Labor Party never have, but we now believe we should legislate, not only for the members of Parliament, but also for the whole ambit of civil servants earning above \$29 500". Of course, that was leaked the night before the charges were increased; so that announcement topped the headlines. That was a good piece of PR; but I would not regard it as honest. In fact, it was dishonest.

In the same way, the Government squirms about its manifesto and its broken promises. It seems that there is no reason for the Government's attitude. I am sure the Minister would like me to read the letter from the Civil Service Association to me, and outline the areas in which the dispute falls. The letter reads as follows—

the abolition of jobs in the government sector of employment and its effect upon the provision of services expected by government and the public;

the denial of the right to have our salary claim proceed to arbitration;

The Government has told us it will allow that to happen. Will the Attorney give us an assurance that that will be allowed to proceed to arbitration, or is this another promise that the Australian Labor Party will break?

In the letter, reference is made to the use of legislation to interfere with industrial awards and agreements. Is this the first time that has happened? Will Mr Dans step in the next time that an agreement is made and say "No, we won't allow it"—the same Mr Dans who believes that the umpire should always be right?

The Civil Service Association has been extremely patient. Mr MacKinnon spoke about its members marching on Parliament House. I suppose members of Parliament should have joined them and marched, but perhaps they did not ask us because we looked a little too portly to make it up St. George's Terrace. However, I assure them that we support them.

It is interesting that the Government will not answer. It would not answer in the lower House, and in this place it will attempt not to give any answers to the questions it has been asked. Mr

Berinson is shaking his head; I am glad that he will give all the answers.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: I will do my best.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Mr Berinson will do better than his best, because this is an extremely important Bill. He knows how important it is, and I know how worried he is, in his own heart, to have to bring this horrific legislation into the House. I know he is ashamed of having to do that, and ashamed of the Government to which he belongs. He could not be the man I think he is and not be ashamed of bringing this sort of legislation into the House. He should have left it to the junior on his right. We accept that he does not honour what he says he will do.

This is draconian legislation. We are here to defeat bad legislation, and I could not support this legislation in any way. The Government can say it is a budgetary, or money Bill or anything else it likes, but I would not support it in any way. If the Government keeps bringing up this hogwash, there is no way I could vote for it. Very little legislation brought by the Government to this place is not a budgetary measure!

I understand a budgetary measure to be one that deals with expenditure by the Government, and not the cutting of expenditure. This measure is cutting the Government purse, and I would like the Attorney to give me an "illegal" opinion on it. I know he is not allowed to give me opinions, but perhaps he will give a political-legal opinion on it and tell me how he could claim that this is a budgetary measure.

I could not support the Bill in any way. Nobody in his right mind could support it, and I urge all members of the House—members of the ALP included—to oppose the Bill completely.

#### *Point of Order*

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: A document has been quoted from, and the document has been clearly identified under standing Order No. 151 (a). I request that the member immediately, at the conclusion of his speech, table the document. The document was referred to, and the Hon. A. A. Lewis identified the letter as one from a Minister to a public servant.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Sure.

Hon. V. J. Ferry: You can have my copy, if you like.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: How many copies would you like?

The PRESIDENT: I will make sure that I understand the point raised by the member. The Standing Order requires the honourable member

speaking to identify the document at the time it is quoted from.

Hon. TOM STEPHENS: The document was clearly identified in the course of the speech, so I did not think it was necessary to ask him to identify it any further. I thought that Standing Order No. 151 (a) (i) had been complied with. The member identified it as a letter from Minister to a public servant.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I understand the Standing Order, and I will table it.

The PRESIDENT: I agree with the honourable member, and I rule that the document ought to be tabled. The honourable member has agreed to table it.

*The document was tabled for the information of members.*

*Debate Resumed*

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Fred McKenzie.

*House adjourned at 12.03 a.m. (Wednesday).*

# QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## AGRICULTURE: PROTECTION BOARD

### *Staff: Replacement Policy*

198. Hon. H. W. GAYFER, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Because of Government policy that for every two staff positions vacant in Government departments only one position will be filled, what effect will this have on the coverage of the State by Agriculture Protection Board District Officers?
- (2) (a) Which districts will be affected by the deletion of staff; and  
(b) in what manner?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) Some districts will not have a resident Agriculture Protection Board District Officer but will be serviced from adjoining districts.
- (2) (a) and (b) One vacancy at Merredin and another in the lower south-west area will not be filled.  
Other districts affected will depend on vacancies and future policy.

## GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE

### *Esperance Meat Exporters Ltd.*

200. Hon. TOM KNIGHT, to the Minister for Mines representing the Minister for Economic Development and Technology:

- (1) Did Esperance Meat Exporters Ltd. have a Government guarantee of \$2.5 million?
- (2) If so, did the company ask for an increase to \$3.2 million to cater for inflation rises since the guarantee was first approved?
- (3) On what basis was the company's request rejected?
- (4) Did an accounting firm do a feasibility study or critique on the company?
- (5) If a critique, is this a fair basis for rejection?
- (6) Did the Government extend the investment to a period of five years or more from commencement?
- (7) If not, why not?

- (8) Does the Government's refusal to underwrite the company now mean the original \$2.5 million granted several years ago has also been cancelled?
- (9) Is the Government aware that because of the original guarantee the company outlayed many hundreds of thousands of dollars for obsolete Midland abattoir equipment on the basis of the guarantee?
- (10) Due to the rejection of the guarantee would the Government now accept return of this equipment plus any costs the company may have borne together with the equipment the company has purchased for the project?
- (11) How can the Government justify a \$3.1 million loss for Robb Jetty which has a limited export licence, and not be prepared to back Esperance Meat Exporters Ltd.?
- (12) How radically would the company have to alter its operations before the Government would consider granting the guarantee requested?
- (13) Does the Government consider it has any obligation to the company because of its \$400 000 expenditure made on the basis of the original guarantee?
- (14) What basis is there for saying that only 50 per cent of saleable sheep from the district would pass through the Esperance Meat Exporters?
- (15) Is it correct that the Esperance office of the Agricultural Department says the figure should be 57 per cent?
- (16) Why has the Government not considered it reasonable that Esperance Meat Exporters buy from other areas of the State?
- (17) Is the Government aware of the freight cartage advantages of the backloading of sheep to Esperance because of live sheep trade to the metropolitan area?
- (18) Did the independent study look at turn-off figures from the eastern goldfields districts where surplus sheep could be available from the 360 000 sheep in these areas?
- (19) Was reference made in the report to power and water at normal prices being a subsidy for Esperance Meat Exporters?
- (20) Has the "independent study group" been involved in a paid consulting capacity?

with another WA abattoir which could be disadvantaged with the works at Esperance?

- (21) If "Yes" to (20), could the company carrying out the study still be classified as an impartial group?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) to (21) The question asked by the member is very detailed. The Minister for Economic Development and Technology will provide the answers in writing.

209. *This question was further postponed.*

#### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

##### *Telephone Book: Entries*

214. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Leader of the House, representing the Premier:

With reference to the new issue of the Perth White Pages Telephone Directory, page 39—

- (1) Did the State Government Information Centre authorise the change in the manner in which the Ministry and members of Parliament telephone numbers are inserted?
- (2) Why do the Speaker, former Speaker, Ministers and previous Ministers of the Assembly, still retain the designation "honourable" whilst no similar recognition is granted to their counterparts in the Legislative Council?
- (3) Why were those members of the Legislative Council whose entries were changed from the previous book not consulted before such change was implemented?
- (4) What action will the Government take to ensure where errors have occurred, constituents can expeditiously contact their elected representatives?
- (5) Was the protocol officer in the Premier's Department consulted?
- (6) What additional cost, if any, was involved in the new format?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) to (6) Wide consultation occurred on the production of the new format which was designed to provide easier access to Government Departments, the Ministry and members of Parliament. Due to an oversight, the designation "honourable"

was omitted from the Legislative Council list. This was not a matter of policy and no slight was intended. Constituents of Legislative Council members should not be disadvantaged and the matter will be rectified in the next issue. There was no additional cost caused by the new format.

215. *This question was postponed.*

#### MINERAL SANDS: INDUSTRY

##### *Inquiry: Membership*

216. Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Health:

With reference to question No. 28 of 27 July 1983—

- (1) Have all the members of the inquiry committee been appointed?
- (2) If so, what are the names and qualifications of the members?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Professor Murray Winn, B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D.—Chairman.

Dr John Matthews, Research Officer of the ACTU—Victorian Trades Hall Council, Occupational Health and Safety Unit.

Mr Alan Tough, Managing Director, Allied Encabba Limited.

#### STATE FORESTS: PINE

##### *Boyup Brook and Cranbrook*

217. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Forests:

Is it the Government's intention to plant pines on private land in the Shires of Boyup Brook or Cranbrook?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

The planting of pines on private land is currently being investigated by the Manea committee and the Centre for Applied Business Research of the University of Western Australia.

The Shires of Boyup Brook and Cranbrook are close to the climatic limits of the preferred species, *pinus radiata*, and would have lower priority when selecting land for planting.

# INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

## *Perth Meat Export (WA)*

218. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) Has the Minister for Industrial Relations or the Government received a request from the TLC to support a move to quash charges brought by the Perth Meat Export (WA) against trespassing pickets at Osborne Park some 18 months ago?
- (2) Was the request verbal or written?
- (3) Have any discussions whatsoever been held by the Minister or Government with the Perth Meat Export (WA) or a representative of Perth Meat Export (WA), referring to charges laid?
- (4) Has there been any correspondence involving the Government or Government departments dealing with the charges laid?
- (5) If so, will the Minister table the correspondence?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) I am advised approaches have been made to the Government by the Trades and Labor Council in relation to section 82B of the Police Act.
- (2) The approaches have been both written and verbal.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Yes, as in (1) and (2).
- (5) No.

# FISHERIES

## *Hopetoun: Facilities*

219. Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Works:

- (1) What proposals were projected by the previous Government for the development of the facilities for the unloading of fish and for the launching of boats used in the fishing industry at Hopetoun?
- (2) At what stage are the projects today?
- (3) Is the present Government changing the budgeting policy of these works?
- (4) If a reduction in funding is being made at Hopetoun, are increased funds proposed for facilities to be constructed in the "Bunbury 2000" region?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) The construction of a breakwater, provision of a service jetty for the professional fishermen and a launching ramp for joint use by the professional fishermen and boating public.
- (2) Construction of the breakwater is 90 per cent complete.  
Construction of the launching ramp has commenced.  
Construction of the service jetty is scheduled to commence in November 1983.
- (3) No.
- (4) Answered by (3).

# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

## *Glossary*

220. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

In view of the bewildering profusion of departments and agencies, and the preference for understandable English language in the Parliament—

- (1) Will the Premier have his Government prepare and publish a dictionary/glossary of all such organisations that operate under some form of initials (e.g. SILDAC, SILDAC "C", CAWS)?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), can a copy be sent to each member, electorate office, and other concerned people?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) and (2) It is acknowledged that such a reference would be helpful, but as the member would no doubt appreciate there would be a tremendous amount of research and compilation time involved in the preparation and maintenance of such detail, which, with existing financial constraints is not possible to undertake as additional staff would be required.  
No such dictionary/glossary was produced by the previous Government during its nine years in office.

## PUBLIC WORKS: DEPARTMENT

*Country Areas Water Supplies: Act*

221. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources:

Is it the intention of the Government to amend or alter in any way the Country Areas Water Supply Act?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Yes.

## SUGAR INDUSTRY: ORD RIVER

*Federal Attitude*

222. Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the sentiments expressed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Mr Bowen, at the NSW Labor Party Conference held on 13 June this year where he stated that farmers' stand on free trade "was laughable"?
- (2) Has the Minister found that these sentiments are reflected in the Federal Government's attitude to a sugar industry on the Ord River?
- (3) What is the current attitude of the Federal Government to the production of sugar at Kununurra?
- (4) Can wheat be imported into Australia cheaper than it is currently marketed locally?
- (5) Is the New Zealand meat industry subsidised?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) The Minister is aware that the Federal Government has expressed opposition to the growing of sugar at Kununurra, but this does not reflect the attitude of the State Government.
- (4) No.
- (5) Yes.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: PETROL

*Price: Country Towns*

223. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

What was the price of super grade petrol in the following towns—

- (a) Manjimup;

(b) Donnybrook;

(c) Boyup Brook;

(d) Darkan;

(e) Wagin;

(f) Narrogin;

(g) Dumbleyung;

(h) Esperance;

(i) Geraldton;

(j) Mt. Tom Price; and

(k) Wiluna;

on 18 February 1983 and 18 July 1983?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

It is not possible to provide the details as at the exact dates specified. The previous Government requested the Department of Consumer Affairs to survey petrol prices in certain nominated country town just prior to the State election. The nominated towns included only Esperance and Geraldton of the towns for which the member has now requested information. I can only assume that the previous Government was not concerned about the price of petrol in the other towns. It should also be remembered that the Shell Company of Australia took action immediately after the State election but before the present Government took office resulting in the retail price increasing by at least two cents per litre. The Government then took action under the Prevention of Excessive Prices Act to redress that situation.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has information on petrol prices during the month of February 1983 and also has information on recent petrol prices. This information is provided below.

TOWNS	FEBRUARY	RECENT
(a) Manjimup	44.9-49.6	45.8-47.8
(b) Donnybrook	44.9	45.2
(c) Boyup Brook	48.9-49.9	48.0-49.0
(d) Darkan	47.5	46.5-46.9
(e) Wagin	49.2	47.9-48.0
(f) Narrogin	46.9	46.9-47.9
(g) Dumbleyung	—	47.9
(h) Esperance	47.9-48.5	46.1
(i) Geraldton	47.5-49.9	46.1
(j) Mt. Tom Price	48.9	48.3
(k) Wiluna	—	56.5



## DECENTRALISATION

### *Country Businesses*

224. Hon. MARGARET McALEER, to the Leader of the House representing the Deputy Premier:

- (1) Does the Government have a policy of decentralisation which includes support for small country businesses?
- (2) If so, would the Minister consider the advisability of allowing country hospitals and other State instrumentalities situated in country areas to purchase their requirements locally?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) The Government has a policy of support for country businesses. The policy is put to effect through its programme of assistance to industry and its Government purchasing policies and in fact, the SBAS Ltd. currently—
  - (a) has business counsellors regularly visiting country areas;
  - (b) provide the BIZPHONE telephone counselling and information service to country inquirers, from anywhere in WA, at the cost to them of a local call;
  - (c) conducts seminars for small business owners, at the request of and in association with local organisations.
- (2) The question of Government purchasing procedures is presently subject of a comprehensive review. Selected, appropriate tenders are constructed in such a way as to enable regional tenderers to participate in contracts of supply. It is the Government's intention to further address the matter raised by the member in the course of the review.

## MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR FUEL AND ENERGY

### *Interstate and Overseas Trips*

225. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Since becoming a Minister—

- (a) how many overseas trips has he made, for what reasons and to what countries; and
- (b) how many interstate trips has he made, for what reasons and to what States?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (a) and (b) Government Ministers must travel frequently on the business of the State. This practice was adopted by the previous Government and will be continued.

I refer the member to the answer given by the former Premier to question 1043 of Thursday, 12 August 1982. His comments remain valid and apply equally to Ministers' staff as to Ministers.

All travel by Ministers and staff is closely checked to ensure that travel is kept to a minimum.

As considerable research will be required to extract and collate the information, I am not prepared to place any further demands on staff who are otherwise fully committed.

However, should the member have any reason to believe that travel of an unauthorised and unnecessary nature has been undertaken, then he should let the Premier know. The Premier will have the claims investigated.

## TOURISM

### *Spencers Brook-Wundowie Railway Line*

226. Hon. W. G. ATKINSON, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Tourism:

Further to question No. 172 of Wednesday, 17 August 1983—

- (1) Had contracts been let for removal of the Spencers Brook-Wundowie railway line?
- (2) If so, had work commenced to remove the railway?
- (3) If work had commenced, has work ceased?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) Recovery of assets from the railway was to be undertaken by Westrail staff.
- (2) Lifting of the railway had not commenced, although some preliminary work was done.
- (3) All work has been stopped, pending consideration of a submission to the Government to retain the railway line for tourist excursion trips using steam-hauled trains.

## TRAFFIC: COUNTS

*Collie-Roelands Road*

227. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Mines representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Main Roads Department conducted traffic counts on the Roelands end of the Roelands-Collie Road?
- (2) If "Yes", what has been the traffic load in each of the last three years?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The only traffic count taken on this road in the last three years was in February 1981. At the junction with South West Highway the traffic was 2 040 vehicles per day.

## JETTY

*Walpole*

228. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Works:

Is the Government going to build a new jetty at Walpole?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

The Government has no current plans to construct a jetty at Walpole.

Notwithstanding this, I can add that several recent requests for such a facility have been received and are being considered in liaison with the other bodies who will be concerned with its funding and management.

## "BUNBURY 2000"

*Executive Officer*

229. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Mines representing the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

- (1) Has anyone been employed as executive officer for the "Bunbury 2000" programme?
- (2) If "Yes", who?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Mr P. Beeson—Executive Officer Regional Development, South West Development Authority.  
Mr K. G. Fisher—Executive Officer "Bunbury 2000", South West Development Authority.

Both are on loan from other areas of the Public Service and are occupying the positions in an acting capacity.

## LAND: NATIONAL PARK

*Shannon River: Timber and Wood Chipping Industries*

230. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Forests:

Further to question No. 129 of 4 August 1983, will cutting of the remainder of the hardwood area include road and stream reserves?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Subject to careful landscaping it may be necessary to extend cutting to within 200 metres on either side of roads of lesser tourist importance. This was the width originally proposed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Wood Chip Project. Extension of cutting near streams will be considered only if trials indicate that it can be accomplished without detriment to water and fauna values.

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS: ACT

*Farm Purchases*

231. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

Further to question No. 126 of 4 August 1983, what consultations has the Minister had with the—

- (a) Tractor Machinery Association; and
- (b) Farm Machinery Dealers Association?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (a) and (b) In keeping with this Government's policy of broad consultation I convened a meeting which included not only representatives of the Tractor Machinery Association and the Farm Machinery Dealers Association, but also representatives of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Primary Industry Association and the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture.

# CONSUMER AFFAIRS: DEPARTMENT

## Staff: Increase

232. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

What extra staff is it estimated the Department of Consumer Affairs will need when farm products are brought within its ambit?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

It is impossible to make any valid estimate until the amended Act is in force and complaints are being received from farmers.

# QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

### Perth Meat Export (WA)

71. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

I refer to the Minister's answer to question 218: The Minister did confirm to the House that the Trades and Labor Council had made a request to the Government to quash charges of trespassing against pickets 18 months ago.

I ask the Minister what action has been taken by the Government as a result of this request?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

No requests have been received by me personally. It is a question better addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. If the Minister places the question on notice, I shall provide the answer.

# AGRICULTURE: MACHINERY

## Height: Letter to "Sunday Independent"

72. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Will the Minister ask the State Energy Commission to recheck the Minister's statements in a letter to the *Sunday Independent* of 20 August in regard to the height of agricultural machinery?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

This is a bit of an old chestnut that Mr Lewis has raised.

Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are misleading the public.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: It is easy to sit there and cat-call but—

Several members interjected.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: Unaccustomed as I am to this sort of behaviour in this place—

Several members interjected.

Hon. PETER DOWDING: I have already made it clear to the honourable member that if he either supplies me with information or draws my attention to statements which are inaccurate, I will certainly consider them. As I said last time he raised this chestnut, he can come to my office to discuss any matter with me; however, he has not.

If the member thinks anything which has been said is inaccurate, he should supply me with the necessary information. I do not intend to have SEC officers wasting their time on what could be a red herring.

# AGRICULTURE: MACHINERY

## Height: Letter to "Sunday Independent"

73. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Will the Minister for Fuel and Energy answer my question?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

I have, and if the honourable member wishes to supply me with material which suggests any statement made to me or by me is inaccurate, I will have the matter checked; but I will not waste public servants' or SEC officers' time until I have something to go on.

# MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR FUEL AND ENERGY

## Overseas Trips

74. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

How many overseas and interstate trips has the Minister made since he has been Minister?

The PRESIDENT: Order! That question is out of order. The honourable member knows he cannot ask the same question that has already been asked.