

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 8 April 1982

The **SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., and read prayers.

## BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Acts Amendment (Soil Conservation) Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture), and read a first time.
2. Acts Amendment (Country Water and Sewerage) Bill.  
Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Mensaros (Minister for Water Resources), and read a first time.

## STAMP AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### *Second Reading*

**MR RUSHTON** (Dale—Deputy Premier) [10.06 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before members proposes two further amendments to the legislation as follows—

One is to rectify a recent problem relating to the calculation of interest when the services of a finance broker are used to negotiate a loan.

The other is to ensure that all local government superannuation funds become liable for stamp duty.

The first matter relates to the credit and rental provisions of the Act, and in particular, to loans or transactions which are entered into at a rate of interest in excess of the declared rate, currently set at 17.75 per cent, and which arrangements consequently become liable for duty of 1.8 per cent.

For the purpose of the Act, interest is defined so as to include any amount paid in excess of the principal sum.

However, at the same time, specific provision is made to exclude from that amount any sums which may be payable for legal costs, valuation fees, or for any duties or fees lawfully agreed to be paid under any Act.

The net figure after deducting the costs specified is the amount of interest which determines the liability, if any, for the stamp duty of 1.8 per cent.

The Act is purposely framed in this manner to prevent any erosion whatsoever of the declared interest rate by preventing the deduction of any charges other than those specified.

Previously, the margin between the declared rate of interest for the purpose of the Stamp Act and the lending rate of interest on mortgage loans was such that even when the brokerage fees and guarantee insurance premiums were added to the normal interest charges, the total amount so charged would still not have exceeded the declared rate of interest above which the duty is payable.

However, the recent accelerated rise in interest rates has changed the position and has now highlighted the fact that sufficient margin no longer exists.

The result is that brokerage fees, paid to a mortgage broker or a premium paid for guarantee insurance in the normal course of arranging a mortgage, will, when added to the interest rate chargeable on the loan, exceed the declared rate of interest in the Act.

Consequently, many loans arranged by individual persons through brokers may become dutiable loans requiring the lenders of those funds to register and pay duty under the Act.

It was not intended that lenders in this area of finance would ever be caught by this provision.

Therefore, the Bill proposes to rectify the situation by excluding from the definition of "interest" any sums lawfully agreed to be paid by way of brokerage fees.

At the same time, the current "loan" definition, which prevents the splitting of the total interest payable, and so defeats the purpose of the Act, has been found to be too all-embracing in its present form.

**Mr Brian Burke:** This is a fairly minor amendment, isn't it?

**Mr RUSHTON:** This is to be modified so that in future, it will apply to the procurement or guarantee fees referred to in that definition when paid to a person or persons associated with the lender.

The second proposal to be covered by this Bill is to ensure that stamp duty will be payable by local government superannuation schemes on the purchase of property or other commercial dealings.

I hasten to add that the same provision will apply to the State Government Superannuation Fund but in that case, it is not necessary to amend the law but only to revoke the declaration previously made under section 119 of the Act,

which will be done as soon as this Bill becomes law.

It is proposed to make the existing State fund, as well as those operating for local government schemes, subject to the normal provisions of the Act.

This amendment to the law is necessary because of a successful appeal to the Supreme Court by the City of Perth acting as a trustee of the City of Perth Superannuation Fund.

The court ruled that the general exemption currently provided for local authorities in section 119 of the Act applied even when the local authority was acting in this other capacity.

The City of Perth Superannuation Fund is the only local authority fund established outside the Local Government Superannuation Act.

The board, established under that Act to control funds for all other local authorities, does not enjoy an exemption from stamp duty.

The amendment proposed by this Bill will ensure that all Government or private superannuation funds are treated in a like manner and will therefore, be liable for stamp duty on all of their transactions.

The two proposed amendments covered by this Bill are, of necessity, to operate from different dates. The first measure is to operate from 8 April 1982 which is the earliest possible date that could be adopted in order to minimise the period of time over which this problem has occurred. In regard to the second matter, the amendment is to operate from the date of assent.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Leader of the Opposition).

## **COMPANIES (ADMINISTRATION) BILL**

### *Second Reading*

**MR RUSHTON** (Dale—Deputy Premier) [10.14 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is one of two Bills forming the final part of the legislative package required to be enacted by this State in accordance with the agreement made on 22 December 1978, between the Commonwealth and the States for co-operative companies and securities regulation.

Members will recall that when introducing previous Acts which related to legislation forming part of the national companies and securities co-operative scheme, the obligations of this State under the agreement were described in detail. It was also explained that the ministerial council, an

executive body established under the agreement, is responsible for the formulation and operation of the uniform companies and securities laws provided for under the agreement and exercises general control over the implementation and operation of the scheme.

The substantive companies and securities laws have been introduced in two packages. The first package, comprising laws regulating the securities industry, company takeovers and matters relating to the general interpretation of the scheme legislation and other technical matters, came into operation in all States and the Australian Capital Territory on 1 July last year.

The second package comprises laws relating to the regulation of companies. The Companies (Administration) Bill which we now have before us forms part of this package and with the Companies (Consequential Amendments) Bill will complete the legislative package required to give full effect to the co-operative scheme.

Members are aware that the national companies and securities commission is responsible for the overall administration of the scheme legislation. However, it is required to have regard to the need to decentralise its administrative activities to the maximum extent practicable. Most of the powers and functions exercised by the national companies and securities commission under Western Australian companies and securities laws will, or have been, delegated to the Western Australian Commissioner for Corporate Affairs.

The Companies (Administration) Bill makes provision for the administration of the Corporate Affairs Office. It also provides for the continuation of the office of Commissioner for Corporate Affairs who is appointed and holds office in accordance with the Public Service Act 1981.

The Companies (Administration) Bill also establishes in this State a companies auditors' and liquidators' disciplinary board which will perform the disciplinary functions previously exercised by the companies auditors' board. The Act makes provision for the members of the previously constituted Companies Auditors Board to be the members of the companies auditors' and liquidators' board.

The national companies and securities commission will become the body responsible for the registration of auditors and liquidators upon the proclamation of the Companies (Application of Laws) Act.

This Bill also provides for the payment out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of such amounts

as are necessary to give effect to any agreement between the parties to the scheme and which relate to the apportionment of fees or payments with respect to refunds of fees specified therein.

All of the provisions to which I have referred are necessary as the relevant sections of the Companies Act 1961-1980 which currently provide for these matters will be repealed when the Companies (Application of Laws) Act 1981 comes into operation on 1 July this year.

The Bill now before the House has been approved by the ministerial council for companies and securities for introducing into the Western Australian Parliament. Similar legislation with appropriate adaptation has been approved for introduction in each of the other five State Parliaments.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

### **COMPANIES (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**MR RUSHTON** (Dale—Deputy Premier) [10.17 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Companies (Consequential Amendments) Bill is the last Bill forming the legislative package required to be enacted by this State to give effect to the formal agreement relating to co-operative companies and securities regulations.

Earlier, I dealt with the Companies (Administration) Bill and informed members as to the situation relating to other Acts which form part of the scheme legislation.

This Bill makes amendments of a technical and interpretative nature to the co-operative scheme Acts and of an interpretative nature to a large number of Acts of the State. Specific Amendments to Acts of the State other than those which directly relate to the co-operative scheme are set out in the schedule to the Bill.

The principal effect of the Bill is that reference to existing company legislation will be updated to refer to scheme legislation.

Amendments made do not make any change to approved Government policy.

This Bill has been approved by the ministerial council for introduction into the Western Australian Parliament. Consequential amendment Bills have been approved for introduction into each of the other five State Parliaments. Each State Bill has like effect in that jurisdiction.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram. Bertram.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**MRS CRAIG** (Wellington—Minister for Local Government) [10.20 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill proposes to include important provisions in the Local Government Act relating to street traders.

These provisions will confer clear powers on councils to make by-laws to regulate the activities of persons who wish to display and sell goods in the streets other than at a stall. The power to control stalls already is in the Act.

Councils also will be given power to impound the goods of those who unlawfully engage in street trading.

I want to emphasise that, in preparing this Bill, we have been mindful of the views not only of those who would advocate a total prohibition on the use of streets for commercial activities, but also of those who believe that street traders serve the public interest or add colour to our city streets.

As I have said, there is already power in the Act for a council to control the establishment of stalls in streets. I think there would be little argument that there should also be similar power for the control of other forms of street trading. There obviously has to be some limit on the extent to which people can set up their goods and wares on the streets.

Nor do I think that there would be any strong argument with the principle that the prime purpose of streets ought always to be to allow our citizens to move from place to place without obstruction. Whatever advocacy there may be for trading in streets, the line clearly has to be drawn somewhere.

The Perth City Council has been anxious to ensure that the street trading phenomenon that has come to the fore in recent years, particularly around the Christmas season, does not get completely out of hand.

Although there is already some power in the Local Government Act to control street trading, it has been found inadequate, particularly in relation to a council's ability to move quickly to clear any goods which were being displayed in the street without authority.

The Bill has been drafted quite purposely so that a council will not be able to completely

prohibit the activities of street traders. They may be required to obtain a licence and their activities may be regulated. Under the existing provisions of the Local Government Act, any person who is refused a licence would have the right of appeal to the court.

The inclusion of a power for council to seize unauthorised goods in a street also has been given careful attention. Although council officers will be able to impound these goods, they will have to be returned to the owner unless the court orders their confiscation. That confiscation can be ordered only if the person concerned is convicted of unlawful street trading.

The Government has tried to be as fair as possible to all interests.

The Bill also will confer power on a council to prescribe charges, in addition to licence fees, for the right to trade in a street.

Provision is made in the Bill for the repeal of the present provisions of the Local Government Act covering the calling of council tenders and the inclusion of a power to make regulations setting down procedures for the calling and consideration of these tenders. This will allow regulations to be made which will be in keeping with modern commercial practices and which will contain the sorts of controls that are appropriate to the expenditure of public funds.

The Bill seeks also to resolve a difficulty that came to light recently when the City of Perth found, on legal advice, that it was unable to approve certain building developments which, although they were capable of being approved under the council's zoning by-laws, did not conform entirely with the requirements of the Uniform Building By-laws.

These conflicting provisions related, in the main, to siting requirements which are strictly the province of zoning by-laws and town planning schemes, but which are also covered in the Uniform Building By-laws.

Finally, the Bill provides for an increase in the maximum permitted minimum rate which a council may impose on a ratable property.

At present a council may impose a minimum rate of not greater than \$40 on any property which otherwise, because of its very low valuation, would be assessed for some lesser amount.

The minimum rate was \$10 when the Act came into being in 1960. This was increased to \$20 in 1972 and to \$40 in 1978.

The present \$40 limit is no longer realistic in the light of present-day values and the Bill provides for a new limit of \$75.

There is, of course, currently a power in the Act for a council, when imposing a minimum rate, to differentiate between a ward of its district or a portion of a ward, by imposing a higher or lower minimum in respect of that ward or that portion and it is intended that this provision remain.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin.

## SEEDS AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [10.25 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides for minor amendment to the Seeds Act 1981 which now has been in operation for approximately three months. During this time departmental officers have been able to examine closely the operation of sections with major agricultural impact and have encountered a small, but significant anomaly.

One of the provisions of the Act is that a seed lot offered for sale must be labelled with the proportion of germinable seed that it contains. In addition, seed claimed to be of a high-quality, select category must have a prescribed minimum germination.

In its present form the Act requires that the proportion of germinable seeds in a seed lot be calculated on a mass—weight—basis.

While it is logical to determine germination by weight, it is much simpler for it to be determined on the basis of the germination of a specific number of seeds. In practice the number of seeds relates well to the weight of seed. The problem with determining the germination by weight is that the weight of the seed changes during the germination process. Traditionally germination tests always have been related on a count basis for the reasons set out above.

It is necessary to amend the Act to achieve this purpose. The amendment does not alter the thrust of the legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ARBITRATION AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

**MR YOUNG** (Scarborough—Minister for Health) [10.26 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill contains four major amendments to the Public Service Arbitration Act, plus some further amendments which are of a more minor nature.

The first major change will ensure that industrial agreements entered into pursuant to the Act remain in force until replaced by either a new agreement or an award of the Public Service Arbitrator. This will put agreements on a similar basis to that of awards.

Section 27(2) (d) of the Act provides that, notwithstanding the expiry date of an award, it continues in force until it is replaced. Although it had been believed that a similar situation applied in respect of agreements entered into, that is not the case.

This Bill will remedy the situation, whereby agreements covering Government officers cease to have effect once their term expires.

Secondly, the Bill will allow an expired award to be replaced by an agreement between the parties concerned.

While the Act provides for both awards and agreements, it allows an expired award only to be replaced by a new one.

Logically the Act should permit—

- (1) An expired agreement to be replaced by a new agreement;
- (2) an expired agreement to be replaced by an award;
- (3) an expired award to be replaced by a new award; and
- (4) an expired award to be replaced by an agreement.

The current wording of the Act allows only the first three actions, and it is proposed that the fourth option be possible in future.

The third major amendment provides for the appointment of a deputy Public Service Arbitrator.

Section 7 of the Act currently provides for an acting arbitrator "where the arbitrator is unable to attend to his duties... whether on account of illness or otherwise...".

The appointment of a deputy Public Service Arbitrator is preferred because it will be ongoing, rather than just catering for an emergency situation.

It is envisaged that this will provide for greater continuity within this industrial jurisdiction.

This approach already exists with the Government School Teachers' Tribunal and the Railways Classification Board.

The fourth amendment will enable Government employers to initiate a claim for a new award or agreement pursuant to the Act.

At present it is within the power only of the Civil Service Association to initiate a claim for a new award or agreement.

The Government believes that the union and the employers concerned should have equal rights in this area of operation of the Act.

This Bill will achieve that objective.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

## STAMP AMENDMENT BILL

### *Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

## BILLS (2): MESSAGES

### *Appropriations*

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Companies (Administration) Bill.
2. Public Service Arbitration Amendment Bill.

## GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [10.32 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill represents a further progressive step—

Mr Bryce: Retrograde step. It will take us back centuries.

MR RUSHTON: —in the Government's land freight transport policy, which has the aim of—

Mr Bryce: Paying off your friends.

MR RUSHTON: —developing an efficient transport industry in Western Australia—

Mr Davies: What is the pay-off?

MR RUSHTON: —and providing users with the benefits of competition and freedom of choice.

Mr Davies: Leave it till next year, and let's make it an election issue.

MR RUSHTON: I would not mind that at all.

Mr Davies: There is a challenge!

Mr Bryce: You would run a million miles.

Mr RUSHTON: The main objective of the legislation is to have a joint venture company commence functioning on or about 1 July 1982. The exact date will be dependent upon the time taken to finalise the legal and administrative details after Parliament has dealt with this legislation. To achieve this target it is essential the joint venture organisation be formed and functional by 1 July 1982. The move to a joint venture needs to be a smooth transition to ensure there is a continuing satisfactory transport service for the people of Western Australia.

The date of 1 July has been decided upon for implementation of the next stage of the deregulation process of the Government's freight transport policy. I also want to advise that the Government has decided to allow farmers to cart their own wool, mohair, and chaff in their own vehicles from that date.

Mr Davies: There would be a lot of mohair!

Mr RUSHTON: Essentially the Bill does three things. It makes provision for the Railways Commission to participate in a joint venture freight forwarding company; it allows Westrail to give credit to customers or suppliers in the course of the railway's normal business; and it authorises the commission to construct and maintain sidings both within and outside the limits of the railway.

The joint venture proposal is for a proprietary limited company, 50 per cent Westrail-owned and 50 per cent owned by Mayne Nickless. The joint venture option was decided upon after receiving the Commissioner of Railways' recommendation that it would be the best and most effective way to complete the deregulation of smalls freight in Western Australia. He considered it was in the best interests of Westrail to participate in the handling of smalls freight and keep down Westrail's deficit.

The joint venture operation is expected to remove from 1984-85 some \$7 million per annum—1981 dollars—from Westrail's annual deficit which will benefit users and taxpayers significantly. The joint venture company will handle smalls traffic—that is, parcels less than carload—and some wagon load—excluding private sidings traffic—in competition with any other transporters.

The smalls traffic involves approximately 325 000 tonnes per annum or about two per cent of Westrail's freight. It does not include the bulk hauls. Smalls consignments have been regulated to rail for many years. However, the current method of handling these traffics is not the most efficient.

Under conditions of free competition, rail cannot compete by the existing methods. This has been proved in other countries and by Westrail's own experiences.

Mr Davies: Who have you been talking to down there? Not the same people we have been talking to.

Mr RUSHTON: Deregulation of smalls has been decided upon, but this was inevitable because people will not accept regulation when there are better alternatives.

The joint venture company will work like any other freight forwarder, consolidating smalls, and forwarding it by rail or road—whichever is the most efficient. It will have country depots, operate comprehensive services, and use local carriers extensively.

The company will not have any unfair advantage over others. Deregulation of smalls traffics will be implemented without tonnage limitation on or about 1 July 1982 to open up marketplace competition between transport operators.

The joint venture proposes to offer smalls services to all possible destinations presently served by Westrail at similar frequencies. As the company will operate at a lesser cost using about half the staff required under the old method, and will be subject to competition, it follows that average prices and services will improve.

As part of the implementation of the Government's freight policy, the joint venture move will be closely monitored. The assurance is given that adequate transport services will be maintained to remote areas, if necessary under franchised arrangements.

Mr Davies: Those assurances are not worth a pinch.

Mr RUSHTON: The joint venture will result in Westrail having about 780 fewer employees; this is less than 10 per cent of the organisation's present work force. About 400 staff will be required for the joint venture and the company proposes to recruit 250 from Westrail and 150 from Mayne Nickless.

The assurance has been given that no Westrail people will be dismissed as a result of the change. The remaining Westrail positions which are affected—that is, those not transferring to the new company—will be absorbed by the usual reduction procedures through productivity improvements and a policy of non-replacement.

The Government's land freight transport policy is progressively enabling the transport requirements of the people of Western Australia

to be met in the most efficient and lowest cost way.

In regard to the final two aspects of the Bill, the intention is to confirm the power of the Railways Commission to advance credit to clients in the normal course of business. A consequential amendment adds the specific authorisation for the commission to construct sidings outside the railway property—for example, where a private landowner requires a siding into his property.

I appreciate the tremendous work done by the Commissioner for Railways and his staff, and by many other people—

Mr Davies: Under instructions.

Mr RUSHTON: —who have been involved in advancing this policy. It will bring great benefits, and it will be one of the historical transport decisions of this time.

Mr Davies: It will be the ruination of transport.

Mr RUSHTON: I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bateman.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: NINTH DAY

##### *Motion*

Debate resumed from 7 April.

MR GREWAR (Roe) [10.38 a.m.]: In common with other members on this side of the House, I express my appreciation to our former Premier (Sir Charles Court). His parliamentary career brought a new dimension to resource developments in this State. He raised Western Australia from an agriculturally-dependent State and a claimant State to one of extreme importance in the Australian economy. We were privileged to work beside Sir Charles Court, whom history will record as being of equal political stature, foresight, and vision to that of a former great Premier (Lord Forrest).

I congratulate the new Premier on his election to high office. I extend my loyalty and assistance to him in the affairs of this State. The job ahead is challenging, and it comes at an extremely difficult time for Western Australia, for Australia, and for the world. I believe that with his strong leadership, combined with his consideration for the people and the electorate, he will be ensured of electoral success and lead our coalition parties into Government in 1983.

I extend a welcome to the new members—the member for Nedlands and the member for Swan. I wish them happy associations with the Parliament during their terms.

It grieves me that Australian Labor Party members coming into this House have a great compulsion to denigrate the traditions of the House.

Mr Pearce: One of the traditions of this House is not to comment on members' maiden speeches.

Mr Bryce: Some of them are corrupt.

Mr GREWAR: The traditions of this House are not corrupt.

Mr Bryce: Come on! Read the editorial in this morning's *The West Australian*.

Opposition members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! First of all, there are far too many interjections at the one time. Secondly, I remind the member for Ascot that the intemperate language that he has just been using was ruled recently by the Speaker to be unacceptable to the House. I ask members of the Opposition, if they must interject, to desist from that type of language.

Mr GREWAR: It is fortunate the electorate dismisses the "trendies" and that is one of the reasons the ALP rarely gains Government. I offer a challenge to the new member for Swan and I am sorry he is not here—

Mr Pearce: Either you follow the traditions or you don't!

Mr GREWAR: I challenge the new member for Swan to come to my electorate and repeat the remarks he made in this place.

Mr Tonkin: He will do that at the drop of a hat.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! The member for Roe will be permitted to make his speech. He has chosen largely to ignore the interjections and, if he continues to do that, he will have the protection of the Chair. I ask members of the Opposition to give the member for Roe the opportunity to make his speech.

Mr GREWAR: I am not taking any notice of the interjections.

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr GREWAR: The member for Swan indicated we should have less representation in country areas. That comment showed a complete misunderstanding of the situation in country electorates.

Mr Bryce: Are you attacking the member's maiden speech? You have attacked him for flouting a tradition of this place!

Mr GREWAR: Being a member representing a metropolitan area, the member for Swan would not understand the vastness of the country. It seems to me it would be far easier to represent

20 000 people in a few square miles than half that number over 50 000 square miles. At least one would be home more than one or two days a fortnight.

The subject of decentralisation was raised in this debate and, in the eloquence of the speeches made, I believe most of the main issues relating to this question were not referred to and the guts of the subject were lost in a great deal of gobbledygook and so were never brought to light. Government policies, whether they be ALP or Liberal, support centralist not decentralist themes in their ideals. This has been the case for 50 years or longer and, bearing in mind the way we are going, it is my opinion we are becoming more centralist as time goes on.

One only has to examine population trends and figures to realise what I am saying is correct.

Mr Tonkin: It is your Government that is causing this.

Mr GREWAR: The heart of the problem is cost. It is simply cheaper to locate Government, industry, and business in the metropolitan area. No Government is really dinkum about coming to grips with these costs and containing them in country areas. Certainly Governments come up with palliative measures by way of incentives and subsidies to industry and I compliment this Government on what it has done in this area and also on the Bill introduced today which relates to the Westrail joint venture. All these matters help the position, but they are palliatives and they certainly do not provide a cure for the problem.

The country will remain the domain of people who must practice their vocations in these areas and also of those people who, by choice, decide to live in a rural environment. It is not my idea that a Government should set limits on metropolitan growth or establish any such physical barriers, but it should create some disincentives to living in the metropolitan region, because it is far cheaper and more comfortable to do so than it is to live in a country town.

Manufacturers of washing machines, television sets, or shoes would be quite out of their minds to develop or establish their industries in a country region for two main reasons based on cost. The first reason is the cost of freight, and the second is the cost of communications. Until Government comes to grips with these problems, there is no way decentralisation will occur except for industries which must locate in a country area.

Country businesses must pay freight two ways. The member for Geraldton mentioned this and I support his comments in that regard. Until these

costs are drastically reduced, decentralisation will not be possible.

Residents in Esperance pay 30 per cent extra on everything they buy, whether they are building a house or purchasing a part for a piece of machinery, and I do not trust any survey which might try to prove otherwise. When a resident of Esperance sends his product to the metropolitan market, there is still a requirement on him to pay freight on those goods.

Telephone costs to any point in Australia from the country areas must be reduced to at least local call rates. That suggestion is not as ridiculous as it may sound. Australia Post operates very profitably in this way. It is just as expensive to send a letter to one's next door neighbour as it is to send it to Cooktown in Queensland. Certainly it may mean that people who are on very cheap rates in the metropolitan region will have to pay an increased charge for their calls, but that would be in the interests of decentralisation.

It is hardly fair that a person in Esperance should pay \$1 a minute for his telephone calls. There is no way any small business can survive when it is up against this sort of cost barrier. Any small business in Esperance would be paying at least \$5 000 to \$10 000 in communication costs, and this kills any prospect of decentralisation.

The position is all the harder to bear when one considers that country people must pay sales tax on freight and also communications and other costs which may be added to the account.

Mr Rushton: We have tried to have that removed, but we have not succeeded at this time.

Mr GREWAR: I may be old-fashioned, but it worries me to see the escalation of social problems as cities expand. I do not believe people were meant to live in confined spaces and crowded conditions in big cities. Such conditions breed social deviance, negative attitudes, and self-centred people with little or no vision. A great number of these poor people in the cities would be much happier living in a rural environment. They would be more self-sufficient and their inputs would contribute civically and socially to the community.

Mr Bryce: Are there any social deviants outside the city?

Mr GREWAR: Yes, there are. Has not the Deputy Leader of the Opposition been outside the city and travelled into country areas? I believe any surveys would prove these problems—

Mr Pearce: Pick a survey!

Mr GREWAR: —are much greater in a confined city environment.



Australia is one of the most, if not the most urbanised country in the world and Governments are responsible for that, although modern technology and motorcars have contributed to this situation also and must share some of the blame for it.

While Governments have given incentives to industry to establish in country areas, they have a long way to go to alleviate the problems of country living and, in many cases, Governments have provided disincentives to this. I refer, in particular, to the establishment of sewerage systems in country areas and towns which frequently do not require them. Indeed, if a sewerage system is required, on many occasions it is needed in only a portion of the town.

I cite Esperance again as a town where probably 60 per cent of the area need not be sewered due to deep, permeable soil and a saline water table. The population in many country towns is rather scattered and not densely packed together. However, a new developer must find \$2 000 to comply with the sewerage provisions. Unfortunately this money cannot be added onto the cost of building on that block, as is the case with the septic tank system which is included in the cost of home building and hence is subject to a home loan. We are told a great deal of rubbish about the contamination of water supplies by septic sewerage systems. However, in our town, the sewerage is dumped right on top of the fresh water aquifer from which the water supplies are drawn; but levels of nitrate taken in this vicinity indicate it is a serious contaminate.

If the Government is honest about decentralisation it will find ways to reduce transport and communication costs—the rest really does not matter—and only then will decentralisation become a reality.

My next topic is the Pilbara rail link, a subject which has been debated in the Press recently. I ask: Are we so centralist now in believing that everything must have its origin in Perth? Apart from the 350-mile link which is uncompleted, we almost have a Pilbara rail link through the eastern goldfields now. The uncompleted section is between Leonora and Newman, an area of flat country where rail construction would be extremely simple. I do not understand why we should establish a completely new link from Perth to Newman which would have to traverse much more rugged country in parts and be a length of, probably, 900 miles. I do not see any reason that everything should begin from Kewdale.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Why do we not put in a sealed gravel road through Perth?

Mr O'Connor: Sealed gravel road?

Mr GREWAR: I urge the Government to construct a road between Leinster and Newman so that goods coming from the Eastern States can be railed to Leonora and trans-shipped by road transport to Newman. There is no reason for the great amount of goods coming from the Eastern States to go first to Perth, occasioning higher freight charges. Such a road link, and ultimately a rail link, would do a lot for Kalgoorlie and the eastern goldfields area generally. I do not know whether our planners have blinkers on or whether it is the people of the eastern goldfields who have tunnelled vision; but our bureaucrats are certainly showing no horizon with the decisions they are making in this respect.

While I am criticising the bureaucrats, I would like to mention the problem of water supplies in country areas. I instance Salmon Gums, a small town of 39 services which have a most inadequate water supply. For eight years now I have raised this matter in the Parliament in an attempt to have an increased water supply for this town, but I have been thwarted.

The town water supply has a large catchment area, and a very small puddle at the end of it to catch the water. After rains the puddle fills, the water overflows and soaks away in the kopi soils because it can hold only a small amount of water. It holds only enough water for a few months after which restrictions are again imposed. This often occurs in summer in dry years. The residents want a bigger excavated dam. They do not want any more catchment area. They want a dam that would provide them with a water supply lasting over the normal summer period.

The experts come to the town in their chartered aircrafts and black motorcars and mull over the situation and suggest it is nothing that \$300 000 or \$350 000 would not correct. However, they say this amount is too much for the Treasury to provide. After all, they say, it costs \$10 000 a service, and the provision of this money would not be possible. The residents know this. They try to convince the experts that all they want is an excavation, which would cost about \$30 000. They even have offered to excavate the dam themselves, to be recouped later. Such a suggestion is too much for the Treasury, and the idea is shelved.

Mr I. F. Taylor: Not the Treasury—your Government. It makes the decision.

Mr GREWAR: I am sure that if this scheme were approved, and if they were allowed to do some of the work themselves, they would not claim on the Government for that work if it were not well engineered and successful.

Despite the fact that the experts may not consider that the local people know something about dam construction, I believe they do. Farmers in this State have built hundreds of thousands of dams compared with the several hundred that would have been built by the PWD. After all, the farmers have to cater not only for their own needs, but also for the needs of their stock.

A dam-sinking technique has been developed locally which has revolutionised water collection throughout my electorate. The technique was developed by a local man, Mr Ken Shepherdson, a contractor in the area. The excavated material is spread over the land and becomes a very effective catchment. These dams were shown to the bureaucrats who, unfortunately, had not seen them before, and because of that they dismissed the idea out of hand. However, the technique works very effectively as was shown at Grasspatch. The dam there holds about 20 000 yards of water and it cost about \$25 000. This is the sort of thing that Salmon Gums wants. I urge the Minister to take the matter up with his department so that a water supply for Salmon Gums can be installed before next summer.

There are very many country towns in this part of the State which have no water supply at all, and if the PWD has its way they never will have a water supply. Many of these towns have only two or three residents and, at PWD costs, a water supply could be as high as \$20 000 a service. Therefore, there is no way that these people could ever get such a service. They will be denied water for their gardens and for their septic systems. They can do nothing themselves. They have only quarter acre blocks and there is no way to build a dam on that area.

However, there is a way these people can have water supplies if the PWD will forget about providing hygienically pure drinking water. That is not the sort of water these people want anyway, as they collect this water from their roofs. They want water for their septic systems and their gardens, and this could come from a dam built on the edge of a town, connected to their residences by cheap polythene pipe. I believe the Government should consider this idea. These people live under difficult conditions and they need some sort of water supply. I reiterate that it is not domestic water they are after.

I make a plea now for the farm water supply loan scheme to be extended to cover the purchase of desalination equipment. This scheme has been rather marvellous in providing water to most farmers in this State in sufficient quantity to overcome most of the drought conditions we have

experienced. On some farm properties the collection of water in dams is extremely difficult because of leaking subsoils, saline soils, and other problems. These are the people who are in real trouble.

But there is an answer. The answer is the desalination of underground water. Most properties, if not all of them, would have saline underground water supplies. If the loan scheme were extended to farmers to purchase desalination equipment a water deficiency problem would not occur again in this State.

The cost of running the desalinators appears to be about \$2 for 1 000 gallons of water, which is far cheaper than the cost of cartage, even from a local source. It also would obviate an extreme cost to the Government for the line haulage of water, which amounts to many millions of dollars in times of drought.

The Department of Agriculture is engaged in testing desalination equipment and is very happy with the efficiency of the units. My plea is that, if trials continue to show that desalinators are practical, the farm water supply loan scheme should be extended this year, before next summer, to cover this cost.

Now I come to my hardy perennial, one about which there is a great deal of debate. It concerns the matter of land release. Farmers and practical people who know something about agriculture have been urging that land be released in our south-eastern areas. The conservationists have given a positive "No" to this suggestion and have indicated that the reasons include the possibility of increased salinity, wind erosion, and many other negative points. A great number of these people know nothing about agriculture. The voices of farmers who practise their agriculture on this sort of land should be heard above the voices of conservationists. I must add that I do not decry listening to the other side of the story.

The practice of agriculture in Western Australia always has been hazardous with our Mediterranean-type climate. Problems were experienced in the Avon Valley, and if one travels through that area today one will see an enormous amount of water erosion and salinity. Even our most prized areas such as those in the deep south-west have had problems with poor soil, the need for high cost fertilisers, and salinity.

Evidence exists to support the development of our south-east agricultural areas. Farmers to the north, south-east, and west have practised agriculture for the last 60 or 70 years with success. Admittedly they have experienced drought, but viable systems have been developed.

Comment has been made that little is known of the area inside this vast stretch of virgin country in the south-east. The trial plots established by the Department of Agriculture at Forrestania and in the 90-mile tank area tie up with the accepted practice of agriculture in eastern and western areas. My criticism of these plots is that they have not been operated for long enough. I suggest that a full-scale research station be established in the area to investigate more deeply and on a complete farm basis the potential of the area. The Salmon Gums Research Station covers the area east of the mallee land release area, and the results obtained by that station tie in very well with the proposed land release area.

To dispel any doubts, an outstation should be established approximately 40 kilometres east of Salmon Gums to examine any specific problems that may exist. It is very important that research stations be established in this area before settlement takes place. It could be 10 years before full-scale settlement occurs, and in that period a research station could gain experience of any problems that might be suffered later by settlers. Any problems that develop surely would have been experienced by such a research station, and reasonable solutions found.

Criticism has been made of the rainfall in the area despite the fact that 16 storage gauges have been established, some for 20 years. As well, dozens of farmers have rain gauges and pass on information to the Bureau of Meteorology so that the bureau is aware of the rainfall to the east, west, and north of the area. The bureau is experienced in these matters and its view should be accepted over the view of other people who have no knowledge at all of the area. Criticism has been made of the likely increase in salinity, and critics have said that the rivers draining to the South-West Land Division will cause problems downstream. Such criticism shows a great misunderstanding of the situation. The rivers drain to the south and to the east; they go nowhere near the South-West Land Division. The rivers were saline long before any settlement occurred, and any increase in salt level will not have an effect on them.

The techniques of handling salinity are many. For 40 to 50 years, the Salmon Gums Research Station has investigated the problem as it pertains to the area in question, and has found solutions. It is not considered that salinity will be of drastic consequence provided appropriate techniques are used—techniques laid down by the Department of Agriculture.

More recent research at the Esperance Research Station and elsewhere shows how

salinity control is possible on the wetter sand-plain soils. The department has established drains and, I believe, has found a cheap solution to the problem.

With any land release it is important that land which may suffer from salinity problems is not released and always remains in reserve areas. There is no good in compounding the problem, but I believe appropriate solutions to the problem have been found for the south-east agricultural areas.

In any land release in this area I suggest buffers of natural vegetation be left between each farm instead of the farms abutting one another. A strip of 10 to 20 chains of virgin bushland should be maintained between each property as a buffer against wind erosion as well as for the control of salinity and the conservation of wildlife.

Mr MacKinnon: There would be the additional cost of fences.

Mr GREWAR: That is true, but that additional cost would be small in comparison with the benefits to be received. Although it is not always possible to release perfect land, land with no apparent problems, we should do our best. Limits should be imposed on the amount of land cleared by farmers and restrictions should be placed on land which is left vegetated. Likely problems in development should be detailed to the farmers and the clearing of certain land should be prevented.

Trees are very important to our landscape. One only has to see the wind erosion created after development in certain areas of the south-east during the past few years to realise the many problems we have with sandy soils. The strong west and north-west winds have brought about massive destruction of the landscape.

An area of 44 000 hectares between Jerramungup and Esperance was blown out by strong winds. Vegetation strips left along roadsides protected 10 to 20-chain wide strips of crop in the lee of the wind. Such vegetation strips assist to maintain light soils in a stable condition, and should be an essential part of our agricultural system. It is fortunate that most of the new land release area has a mallee-type vegetation. Such species resist grazing and are an excellent and effective windbreak. Strips left in the Esperance area 50 to 70 years ago prove my point. Problems and solutions in relation to farming in the south-east agricultural areas were put strongly at a recent Primary Industry Association seminar at Esperance.

It would appear that we have available today the technology which will ensure the development

of this south-east area into a stable agricultural system. I do not believe we will face insurmountable problems with our development.

I would now like to make some further comments in relation to new research centres I proposed earlier. It would be my suggestion that the prime research area should be into techniques of land development and management—that is, into the basic areas of farming as practised in adjoining areas. However, we should consider also a whole range of plants which could be of benefit in the utilisation of land in these areas. I refer to species producing hydrocarbons—Jojoba, Guayule, and euphorbias. I do not believe the Middle East will be able to produce oil for an indefinite period. Fossil fuels are not an infinite resource and we must consider other hydrocarbon sources. We must examine whether certain areas are suitable for growing species of plants which produce hydrocarbons. Some of the land held by research stations also should be set aside for the study of native plants. We have been negligent up till now by not considering to a sufficient degree the use of native species for fodder. Such species are adapted to our climate. No-one has done anything about investigating this subject in depth. We should now start to do some domestication and plant breeding to improve the species so it is adapted to the dry areas of this State.

I mention the injustice of the rating system as outlined by the member for Vasse which is based on valuations. It is archaic and I ask: Why should those with the largest area of land or living at the most prestigious addresses have to pay more than anyone else when they receive the same service? It is not logical. It boils down to a policy of making those pay who can pay.

Mr Pearce: The whole tax system is based on that.

Mr I. F. Taylor: That is the basis of it.

Mr GREWAR: Some residents are paying two or three times as much for sewage disposal as that paid by people living a couple of streets away. A person living at a prestigious address perhaps with two people using a pan service is paying more than a person a few streets back but who has 12 people utilising the service. I cannot understand why Governments are hesitant to introduce a service charge, a cost per pan or a cost per person using that service. To base the cost on land valuation is unreal.

Shire councils in the past collected their rates to spend on roads. That is where the main part of the expenditure went; however, it is very different today. The amount of money shire councils spend on roads is very small. This money comes to

Governments from Federal and State grants and most shire funds are spent in other service areas such as recreation and cultural pursuits.

We have the ridiculous situation today where farmers, big property owners or people living in better locations of the city, pay up to \$5 000 in rates, whereas a person utilising most of the shire services and living in a back street may be paying only \$100. Often the person paying the most is furthest removed from the services and does not enjoy the benefits that flow from the shire expenditure.

With the present rating system the disproportion will become greater. A tremendous amount of amalgamation is occurring in farming properties, as you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane) will know, and fewer and fewer people will pay more and more for services.

In the United Kingdom and Europe this problem was corrected and the agricultural businesses have become viable again. The Government has corrected it. There is an urgent need in this State for shire councils to have a dual rating system, a charge on land value for road works and a poll tax on every citizen for every service the shire supplies or a tax on the user-pays system such as is used in rubbish collection service, etc. The burden of rates is enormous and unfair and it is time that something was done about this problem.

Mr Pearce: The rich pay more and the poor pay less as with every other tax.

Mr GREWAR: That is exactly right. The rich pay more and the poor pay less.

Mr Pearce: Are you opposed to that?

Mr GREWAR: I do not mean people who are necessarily rich. Just because a person has a large area of land, it does not mean he is rich.

Mr Pearce: The people who have the most difficulty paying rates are those who are poor. In my electorate they pay \$250 a pop.

Mr GREWAR: It means a lot to many people. The problem is serious.

Although it may seem inconsequential to this Assembly, one matter which concerns my constituents greatly is grasshoppers. For two years we have had this serious problem of Australian plague locusts and the wingless grasshopper. Both species have been invading our pastures and crops as well as home gardens and farm tree plantings for the last two years and have been responsible also for mechanical troubles in motorcars due to the blocking of radiators. This summer has been particularly bad and the summer rain has enabled

these species to continue breeding. We have a plague situation again.

Farmers in the area are very worried about the build-up that is occurring before cropping actually starts and they believe there should be some form of control now. The Government provides free chemicals for the control of Australian plague locusts when the crop is sown. However nothing is supplied during other times. Farmers also want the Government to assist them in relation to the control of wingless grasshoppers.

The Government's argument is that wingless grasshoppers do not travel very far, but I dispute that. The winds in the southern areas certainly spread these pests about significantly. The Government believes that because it is a localised problem the farmers should control it themselves. Most times wingless grasshoppers are associated with Australian plague locusts, anyway. My constituents are concerned that the Government should step in with a control programme before the season actually starts and I hope the Minister will comment in this regard.

I urge the setting up of some form of biological control in the hope that a pest or disease can be found to control these serious pests. A solution to the problem has been very elusive. I am sure in time it could be sorted out.

I support the motion.

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [11.16 a.m.]: I will answer some of the points the member for Roe has raised, particularly in regard to the plague locusts and grasshoppers. I share the member's concern in this regard. It is quite unseasonal to have locusts in the proportions they are in at present. As the honourable member knows, it was partly at his request that Mr Jim Stephens, the Regional Agriculture Protection Board officer from Lake Grace, was sent over to New South Wales in March of this year to study that State's methods of control for this problem. Mr Stephens has now returned and is studying the current situation here. It is quite unusual and probably resulted from the heavy rains we had in late January in the southern part of the State. Mr Stephens suggests that possibly the plague locusts here now are as bad as, if not worse than, they have been in New South Wales this year. He has returned with some suggestions.

The honourable member mentioned the matter of free chemicals being supplied by the Agriculture Protection Board and the fact that they were not available outside the cropping season. There is a very good reason for this. The amount of chemicals which we gave to farmers

last year or during the last cropping season cost approximately \$150 000; a not inconsiderable part of the APB's budget. It has been and is now a general rule that free chemicals will be supplied to farmers during times of plague locust problems for the protection of crops. To date, we have not been able to extend that distribution, but because we have had plague locusts and wingless grasshoppers at this time of year, it really is not of great consequence except for the fact that this year there have been some summer pastures as a result of the unseasonal rains we experienced.

The wingless grasshopper is no friend of the Acting Speaker's (Mr Crane) because it is one which he first brought to my notice some years ago and we did start a biological control programme then. Although there has not been a resounding success to date, there has been some improvement and I believe that with further research into biological control, we may have the answer to the wingless grasshopper problem. I understand it is not applicable to the plague locusts. I can assure members that the biological control programme is continuing. In the last few weeks I have spoken about it to Mr Dean Rimes, the Chief Entomologist.

Another problem which has become apparent is that of the \$150 000 worth of products which were supplied to farmers this year. There is a possibility that some of it has not been used and has been left in sheds on farms.

This is not very good from a co-operative point of view, because if producers do not use that chemical they should make a point of returning it immediately to the nearest Agriculture Protection Board office so it may be reissued to someone in need.

Recently implied criticism was made about the supply of free chemicals to the southern areas for the protection of vines. This was seen as a departure from the normal practice, but chemicals of the order of 40 litres only were supplied to the vineyards. The plague locusts were in flight at that time and did not appear to settle in any numbers; they did not appear to do any great amount of damage to the vineyards or pasture areas there.

Mr Stephens has given me a preliminary report on his trip to New South Wales and he will have some suggestions which I am sure will increase the efficiency of the methods we are using at present. It well may be that in the light of what I have said about some chemicals not being used, we will have to look at the feasibility of issuing free chemicals to aerial operators only.

I say "aerial operators" because of the observance of Mr Stephens in New South Wales. He is convinced that with the utilisation of different nozzles on the spraying aircraft we could save up to 20 per cent in expenditure on chemicals.

This, of course, would have one of two effects: Either it would save the APB the expenditure of hard-earned funds, or it would, with the same outlay, provide more chemicals which could give more relief to farmers.

Originally it was thought that with the current movement of locusts there would be no egg-laying as it was hoped that by this time the temperature would have dropped enough to discourage laying. However, an inspection this week in the Kent and part of the Gnowangerup Shires has shown evidence of egg beds, mostly in creeks. It would be advantageous at this stage if I appealed to farmers to co-operate with the APB and to keep their eyes on the creek beds and report immediately on any hatching they see so that the board can take some remedial action.

It may be that remedial action on the egg beds is not as important as spraying, but this is something which will have to be assessed after we read the report of Mr Stephens' trip to New South Wales.

I should like to comment on some of the remarks made by the member for Roe about research stations and the desirability for a broader research thrust. I realise the area which the member mentioned in his reference to new land released is not as well served as some other parts of the State. However, as an extension from the Esperance Downs Research Station, we did take on a small amount of country in the Circle Valley sands area which is one area which our advisory committee has acknowledged has not had the benefit of research to the extent other parts have.

We have since been able to swap 100 hectares of our land at Esperance for a further 100 hectares of Circle Valley sands. I assure the member for Roe that we will be undertaking some fairly extensive research in this area. Apart from that, we have made application to and received approval from the Department of Lands and Surveys for the allocation of two virgin blocks west and north of the Esperance Downs Research Station, with no particular projects in mind at this stage, but as an insurance that we will have land available in this area when research is needed.

I reassure the member for Roe that it is not forgotten country and we are making provision for further research.

As is known to the House, I have said that the matter of research stations is something which, of necessity, is under constant review, because as new land releases are undertaken it will become necessary to direct research into those areas, as well as from the older settled parts of the State. It well may be that there is a need for some shift in emphasis.

Recently we were able to open what is now known as the Dry Land Farming Institute at Merredin. I believe this will be of benefit to the cereal growing parts of Western Australia.

I should like to make a comment on a suggestion made by the member for Roe which was that the farm water supply loans areas should be enlarged to embrace parts of the State where the desalination of underground water well may be a practical answer to water shortage.

This is a worthwhile subject and one on which I will be making some inquiries. If desalination can be undertaken at a reasonable rate and if the equipment can be installed at a capital cost which would be reasonable to the farmer—especially if it is subsidised by the amount we are making available for on farm water and the equipping of bores, etc.—it could have a beneficial effect on the southern part of the State, in particular the area to which the member referred.

There are vast areas of country in Western Australia and some to the east of my own electorate where there is an abundance of underground salt water of varying degrees of salinity. If this could be harnessed and utilised for stock water it would be of great advantage to the rural industry.

I thank the member for his comments and hope that my replies have been of some assistance to him.

**MR COWAN** (Merredin) [11.27 a.m.]: Members may recall that I was rather critical of the Governor's Address last year and said that it seemed to be more of an economic review of the State's financial affairs than a policy background that the Government had given to the Governor to read to Parliament.

This year, I am rather pleased to say that the Governor's Address contained a little more policy and a little less financial rhetoric.

Mr Bertram interjected.

**Mr COWAN:** The member for Mt. Hawthorn may not agree with the policies contained in the speech, but I think he would have to accept that there were far more stated policy objectives in the Governor's Speech than there have been in past Speeches. I think he would take exception to some

of it, but would have to accept that policy objectives are handed down in the Governor's Speech.

Mr Bertram: He was talking about how many strikes had been achieved.

Mr COWAN: I would not think that would be a policy objective, although it well may be. We have not yet seen some band-aid type of cosmetic legislation introduced into this House which is supposed to cure some of the problems of industrial relations. In fact, all it does is bring to the notice of the public the rather poor industrial record we have in Western Australia. Of course, everyone will accept that industrial relations will never be cured by politicians legislating for or against it.

It is appropriate at this time to welcome the new members to this Parliament—the member for Nedlands and the member for Swan. A great deal has been said to them, but the only comment I would like to make, other than to welcome them, is to say that the only thing they can be guaranteed is that politics will not be what they expected. It certainly was the case for me.

I would like to comment about the people who were replaced by those members, particularly the former Premier, (Sir Charles Court). In some respects, we may have been political adversaries, but despite that I maintain respect for what he has achieved. I will not say anymore on that subject because history will record whether his achievements were successful or not as great as everyone in this place claims. I refer to the previous member for Swan who came into this place at the same time as I did; no-one could doubt his ideals—

Mr Bryce: I am not too sure about that.

Mr COWAN: —or question his capacity for work.

Mr Tonkin: That is not correct.

Mr COWAN: The member for Morley might question the dedication of the former member for Swan to the Labor Party over the last six months or so—

Mr Tonkin: And his capacity for work.

Mr COWAN: I have been associated with the member for Swan on various committees and I found his work capacity to be excellent.

Mr Bryce: He is an old phoney.

Mr COWAN: The member for Roe and the Minister for Agriculture, who have taken part in the debate this morning, and myself, all represent rural constituencies and many people would perhaps think that this Parliament is trying to compete with the Australian Broadcasting

Commission programme, "Country Hour" by producing a parliamentary country hour and a half. However, the two previous speakers raised some points which I would also like to raise. I refer to matters contained in the Government's policy document, which one assumes is a working paper for this particular session; I refer, of course, to the Governor's address to the Parliament on 18 March. As a representative of a rural community it concerns me to find that the Government intends to amend the Soil Conservation Act. I have no criticism with the object to make amendments to this Act. However, I would have liked there to be a greater participation of farmers in the formulation of the Act.

There is no question but that under the circumstances that exist in Western Australia at the moment the Bills that are brought into this place are drafted at the request of the bureaucracy. It is disappointing to discover that people involved in the industry of agriculture, towards whom I believe the Soil Conservation Act amendments will be largely directed, have had a minimal input into, or participation in, the drafting of the amendments that have come before the House. I say this with a great deal of confidence because I know two members of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee who represent the dry land farming regions, and two weeks ago, when I last contacted them, no information had been offered to that committee in relation to what the Government proposed to do in its amendments to the Act. It is very important that people in the industry are given the opportunity to provide input for an amendment to an Act as important as this. I do not mean they should just put forward a submission; I mean that a forum should be made available where there is some opportunity for discussion.

I remind the Government that it is not a matter of how much research or inquiry is made on any subject. Unless there is some opportunity for industry participation the Government is likely to find a great deal of resistance to what it is attempting to do. I hope the proposed amendment to the Soil Conservation Act meets with the approval of primary producers.

I give members of Parliament an example of what could happen if there is no industry participation. Members will realise that the 1978 amendment to the Mining Act was one of the most controversial pieces of legislation ever to come before this place. The concept of the new Act commenced in the early 1970s when the Government of the day established a committee of inquiry which travelled throughout the goldfields area. It conducted several hearings and made

some recommendations, and from those recommendations the bureaucrats in the Mines Department drafted the new Mining Act.

The new Mining Bill was first presented to the House in 1972 and was thrown out; two or three years later it was presented again and was thrown out again. After some 10 years the Act still does not do what the people in the mining industry want it to do. During this session we are likely to see further amendments to the 1978 Act. Members can be quite certain that the 1978 Act in itself is in jeopardy, despite the time it has taken for this Act to evolve, because consultation did not take place with the mining industry itself. After a period of 10 years we still have an Act which the industry rejects. I hope this is not the case with the Soil Conservation Act and the amendments which will be brought before the House later on in the session.

One of the principal reasons for seeking stronger and better control of soil conservation is the growing change in soil use in dry land farming areas. Cereal production used to represent about one-third of the primary producers' income. This figure has escalated to as high as 85 or 90 per cent and that has been brought about by the process of continuous cropping. No-one has had any great experience in this particular field, and no-one from the Department of Agriculture can tell us what are the likely effects of continuous cropping on soil structure in the eastern wheat belt. It is very important that we have the necessary laws on our Statute books to ensure that if problems do arise with this new farming concept, action can be taken to ensure we do not destroy what most people regard as our heritage.

While I am on this subject, I would like to comment on the dry land farming research unit at Merredin. This had been sought for a long time by the people in the region. I commend the Government for having established this particular institute. It was long overdue and with the enormous changes in the agricultural industry in the eastern areas, it will be a necessary Government aid to agriculture.

Other areas of policy also concern me. One in particular which we have been advised will be implemented this session relates to the changes in the Western Australian freight transport system. At the moment a great number of commodities are regulated to our rail system. I do not think anyone would disagree with the concept of our being able to offer greater deregulation to give greater opportunity to people in rural areas to use that transport mode which is most economic for them. However, this Westrail joint venture poses as many questions as it answers. It is certainly a

first step towards deregulation, but it does not go the whole way. We have been advised there will still be a 9-tonne limit on articles.

Mr Rushton: That is not so. I introduced the legislation this morning and in my second reading speech I mentioned the legal limit, and it is not 9 tonnes.

Mr COWAN: What will be the legal limit?

Mr Rushton: Whatever a vehicle can carry now—it is 38 tonnes.

Mr COWAN: Is the Minister saying that any transport operator can carry the legal limit which his vehicle is allowed to carry?

Mr Rushton: Yes.

Mr COWAN: That is a very reassuring statement.

Mr Rushton: That is in my second reading speech.

Mr COWAN: I am very pleased to hear that. That frees me of one particular concern I had and I will now deal with the others. The objective of this proposed joint venture is, one would think, to reduce freight rates. People tend to be sceptical about whether the Government can achieve that stated aim, and the reason for their scepticism is based on past experience.

Mr Rushton: It is transport which can achieve it, not just government. These various freedoms will allow people to get the minimum freight rate.

Mr COWAN: I accept what the Minister says—it is what transport can achieve. But let us examine what happened in the past when responsibility for carrying freight was transferred from Westrail to another transport mode—chilled goods.

Mr Rushton: Which was a franchise.

Mr COWAN: It was on a franchise basis but it was still a transfer from one mode to another. There was a large increase in the cost of freighting chilled goods.

Mr Rushton: I do not want to interrupt you—

Mr COWAN: The Minister certainly can. I am very pleased to have the Minister interject on this issue because, believe it or not, he will find this will become an election issue if the Westrail joint venture backfires.

Mr Rushton: It will not backfire.

Mr COWAN: I hope the Minister is right.

Mr Rushton: The franchise was introduced for a number of reasons, health being one. At the time, I am given to understand Westrail was carrying goods at 25 per cent of the cost, so the taxpayer was paying three-quarters of the cost of



carrying the goods. Since that time it has been monitored. Now it has been opened up to competition. When the transfer was made it was not on competition, but it is now on the main line hauls and there is already some benefit.

Mr COWAN: I would dispute that. The cost of transporting chilled goods to country areas has not diminished. It has increased and the quality of services has diminished. Many stores which were able to have milk delivered two or three times a week have had deliveries reduced to once a week. People have experienced that and they are worried that this transfer from one transport mode to another, instigated by the Government, will add to costs.

Let us now look at the present parcel courier service. The charges imposed by the companies operating this service are astronomical but people are prepared to pay them because usually it is for a one-off item.

Mr Rushton: Can I give you an explanation?

Mr COWAN: I would certainly like to hear it.

Mr Rushton: These freight rates are imposed on the couriers so there is no competition with the railways. With the coming of this change, they will be able to operate on a normal competition basis. You will find there will be a considerable fall in freight rates in those areas because the transport commissioners have been putting those limitations on them. They could not charge less than those rates because they were protecting the railways. You will see quite a dramatic change in this courier service.

Mr COWAN: I would hope so, when it costs \$16 to \$18 to transport an item that has a net worth of \$2.

Mr Rushton: That is imposed on them.

Mr COWAN: Very heavy protection must have been offered to Westrail passenger parcel service, because if one could put a parcel on the Westrail passenger bus, it cost no more than about \$2. Yet the Minister is telling me that these courier people were advised or instructed to charge \$14 or \$16 for the same article. I find that rather hard to believe.

Mr Rushton: Get in touch with the Commissioner of Transport. It was done to protect the railways so the courier services could not take above a certain weight and they could not go below a certain freight rate. In that way they did not intrude into Westrail freights which we have been protecting for a long time. The objective was to provide a service if someone wanted a special part.

Mr COWAN: I think the Minister will accept the point that in two cases costs have increased and in some instances the quality of service has diminished, and that that has occurred because of a change in the mode of transport. The Government is now changing the mode of transport, and country people are worried that this will lead to yet another increase in freight costs and yet another diminution in the standard of service provided. If I am wrong, I will be pleased to stand here and admit it, but that is the fear of the people I represent.

In regard to employment opportunities, it is even more debatable whether the Government's policy will be effective. At the moment the Government has decided that only 11 country depots will feed services to other towns. All the stationmasters in the small one and two-man stations will be withdrawn.

Mr Rushton: Not all.

Mr COWAN: I am glad to hear the Minister say that because my information—which fell off the back of a truck—is that all the one and two-man stations in country areas will be withdrawn. There will be no operators there, and all we will have is an agent transporting from the depot to one of the 11 major depots in those particular towns, or an agent transporting direct from Perth to that particular depot.

If the Government is to reduce employment opportunities in country areas, a balance of extra employment opportunities must be offered to the carriers, who have a great fear that they will find it impossible to compete with the joint venture or with a large transport company in Perth. That fear is held by the carriers who operate in small country towns and, in fact, in regional country towns. The fear is that the Government's transport policy is centralising the whole of Western Australia's transport system. If that happens, the old adage that to this Government decentralisation is a myth will be borne out.

Mr Rushton interjected.

Mr Brian Burke: We want to hear you, too.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's comments are not audible to the *Hansard* reporter.

Mr Davies: Or for us!

Mr Rushton: Just to give you some feeling of optimism, I indicate that local carriers throughout the countryside are organising to be able to be competitive with all the other transporters in the field.

Mr COWAN: That means an interview with the joint venturers. I do not know that that is

organising to be competitive. I have heard that the joint venturers are going from one town to another to find out which carrier will satisfy them in relation to their contracts.

Mr Rushton: Carriers that are nothing to do with the joint venture are, in fact, organising into their own transport system.

Mr COWAN: I do not share the Minister's optimism.

Mr Brian Burke: I do not understand the Minister's optimism, let alone share it. What was that to do with one and two-man stations? Did we get an assurance on that?

Mr COWAN: No, we did not.

Mr Brian Burke: Can you give us an assurance on one and two-man stations?

Mr MacKinnon: Would you keep them going without any traffic?

Mr Brian Burke: We did not get an assurance on that.

Mr COWAN: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition will receive that assurance.

Before I leave the Westrail joint venture, I wish to raise other matters that concern me a great deal. One example is the leasing of the Kewdale freight terminal which handles something like one million tonnes of freight annually.

The Government has claimed that the joint venture will take 320 000 tonnes of Westrail's "smalls" traffic, as it is called. That leaves under 700 000 tonnes of freight to be transported by someone else. I have not seen any assurance by the Minister that that will be picked up on a door-to-door basis. I have not seen an assurance that the freight that constitutes that 700 000 tonnes can be handled by Westrail's gantry and road service operating from the Kewdale freight terminal. If that is not the case, the stated figure of 320 000 tonnes is wrong.

All these questions are being asked about the joint venture. It would be fair to say that there is very little confidence in the policy.

Mr Brian Burke: Let the Minister answer about the 700 000 tonnes, and its suitability to be handled by the facilities that Westrail proposes to use.

Mr Rushton: I have every confidence that Westrail and other agencies will be able to handle the freight in a very satisfactory way for the public.

Mr Brian Burke: We have full confidence in Westrail; but, with the use of the facilities, will they be suitable?

Mr Rushton: The facilities and the service will be very adequate, for the people in the country particularly.

Mr COWAN: Now that the Leader of the Opposition has had question time, I wish to examine the part of the Governor's Speech where it deals with the policies that the Government will introduce. One particular issue interests me, and it comes under the heading of *Conservation and Environment* on page 3 of *Hansard*. The last paragraph of that reads as follows—

The present area of National Parks is almost 4.5 million hectares with additional areas under investigation. Up to June last year 26 new wildlife reserves were created, lifting the total area to almost 10 million hectares.

That sounds fine; but if we consider the specific instances that occurred last year, we find it takes quite a lot away from the Government's handling of conservation and environmental matters. I refer particularly to Wooroloo Brook and the Red Hill area in the Shire of Toodyay. It can be demonstrated easily that the area of land sold by Agnew Clough Ltd. in both instances never should have been sold; and, somehow or other, the Government should have acquired that land and set it aside for reserves for the protection of flora and fauna, or for conservation. That did not happen, so this policy set out in the Governor's Speech does not reflect the true position of the practices of the Government.

It is important that the Government takes action on issues like these, when people are concerned that they are losing some of the few areas that are still available for the protection of the environment and flora and fauna.

I would now like to deal with some of the issues which are not even contained in the Governor's Speech, and which, quite clearly, the Government is prepared to ignore. Again I will deal with those particular issues which affect country people, the first being that of petrol pricing.

Everyone in Western Australia knows that, because of vertical integration and because of the wholesale price for petroleum products established by the petroleum products pricing authority, an oil company can sell fuel to an independent retailer, and then take another truckload 10 yards down the road to its own retail outlet, and sell that fuel for 1c or 2c less than the price at which it is supplied to the independent retailer. That is purely and simply because the wholesale price determined by the petroleum products pricing authority contains some costs which can be attributed only to retailing. Until

the Government does something about that, country people, who do not have access to discount petrol, will be subsidising metropolitan people.

Mr Parker: Actually, we are all subsidising the people in the Eastern States who have it a lot cheaper than we do.

Mr Tonkin: And the Government won't act.

Mr COWAN: The member for Fremantle is quite correct. We Western Australians are all subsidising the Eastern States, or those Eastern States which have Statutes providing for a reduction in the wholesale price determined by the PPPA.

I am concerned about the country people who are subsidising cheap petrol at the metropolitan outlets. Very few people who live outside the metropolitan area can gain access to the cheap petrol outlets.

Mr Parker: You are quite right about that.

Mr COWAN: I am surprised that a Government which has a majority of representation from country electorates has not addressed itself to this issue.

Mr P. V. Jones: There is a lot of truth in what you say, but there is one point that is worth noting. There are anomalies in the transport within the State, which have been taken up; and the petroleum products pricing authority in Victoria has now undertaken to conduct an inquiry, which it is conducting at the moment, into the transport anomalies which were in the schedule of transport pricing published on 18 December last year. In other words, first of all, we have got them to admit that there are anomalies. I know it is not meeting all the conditions; but you are perfectly correct. There are anomalies; and at the instigation of the Government here, that authority has now agreed to examine the disproportionate problems that exist in the freight differentials.

Mr COWAN: I accept what the Minister says, but the fact still remains, as he says, that we are paying more than we should for petrol in Western Australia. As far as I am concerned, and from what I have studied by way of legislation in other States, a very simple Bill would be required to change the situation as it exists in Western Australia. Two steps would need to be taken. One would be to determine that the price would be so many cents below the wholesale price established by the authority and the other would be to ensure that the independent retailers are able to purchase no less than 50 per cent of their product on a tender system. That would give some competition in the wholesale arena, because there is absolutely

none at the moment. There is all the competition in the world at the retail level, but there is absolutely no competition in the wholesale section of our petroleum industry. If the Government wants to avoid an election issue, it had better do something about that matter this session.

I should like to turn now to the APB and deal with two issues which are rather important to me. One is the skeleton weed fund levy in which some interest has been expressed.

Mr O'Connor: Has skeleton weed been found up in your electorate?

Mr COWAN: Yes, regrettably it was the first area in which skeleton weed was found in any quantity, so I have a very active interest in the matter and I would be quite happy to declare my interest to the House.

The problem is that a submission has been given to the APB that the funds be administered through the various regional or zoned areas and, by doing that, we would avoid large amounts of pay-roll tax. Of course, I do not think that would be very palatable to the Government, but, as it is a farmers' fund provided by the farmers to eradicate weed on their properties, I do not see there should be any great resistance to the proposal we have put forward that we do, in fact, administer the skeleton weed levy on a regional basis, so that we gain a greater exemption from pay-roll tax.

The other issue, and I am pleased to say it has been corrected, relates to the fact that the unused portion of these funds was not invested and, therefore, did not attract interest. For the first two or three years of the fund's life, the money collected remained in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. I presume the funds were invested, but the interest gained was returned to the CRF, rather than to the skeleton weed levy fund.

Mr O'Connor: It is becoming a more difficult problem. The skeleton weed issue is more difficult than it was six or seven years ago.

Mr COWAN: The problem is far more widespread and I am pleased to say Naremben is no longer the prime target area. There are now three main areas—one is the metropolitan area, one is at Eradu and places just outside Geraldton, and the third is on the coastal plains of Esperance. It seems all the major areas in Naremben have been found and we are now in a phase of containment and control.

Mr O'Connor: It is essential it is carried out and I agree with you on that point.

Mr COWAN: No-one argues about that. All we ask is that the Government ensure we can

minimise pay-roll tax and that the interest on the skeleton weed funds, which are not being used for the eradication of weed, is in fact returned to the fund rather than to consolidated revenue.

The other issue I should like to take up in regard to the APB is the matter of the emu barrier fences. A great argument has occurred about this matter and I am sure the member for Greenough will be listening intently to what I have to say, because the matter involves his area. He would be aware some contention exists about the realignment of the emu barrier fence in a particular area and it now raises an interesting point. The APB made the decision to realign the fence at Two Wells in direct contradiction to the recommendations of an advisory committee and local authorities.

I would be very interested to see what would happen if the predictions of these local people proved to be correct. It would be interesting to see who would be responsible for the consequences.

The local authorities in the area believe that, because of the realignment of the fence, it is highly likely there will be a massive build-up of emus against it and possibly some penetration of the fence will occur.

Mr Tubby: There is no doubt the local opinion will be correct.

Mr COWAN: The question then arises: As the APB was responsible for the decision, will it accept responsibility for any damage caused to neighbouring farms if the fence fails?

Mr O'Connor: The matter would have to be reviewed at the time in accordance with the problem that occurred.

Mr COWAN: If the fence does fail, would the Government be prepared to realign it again along the route recommended by the local committee and local authorities?

Mr O'Connor: I could not give a firm undertaking on that, because, as you will realise, the fence has been erected in an effort to overcome a problem. I sincerely hope it will, but these matters can be reviewed by the Minister in due course if the problem exists.

Mr COWAN: There is one more matter I should like to raise—

Mr O'Connor: Just before you move from that matter, I should like to ask whether there have been any real difficulties there at this stage.

Mr COWAN: No, we have not yet had a large emu migration. As the Premier would know, emus migrate only once every four or five years when water becomes scarce in the Murchison. That has not occurred since the realignment of the fence,

because the Murchison has had some of the best rains in years. However, I can assure the Premier that it will happen one day and, if the fence fails, there will be many red faces in the APB. Perhaps people who were responsible for the decision may have retired, have been pensioned off, or have been promoted—I do not know. However, many farmers up there will, quite correctly, lay the blame for the failure of the fence on the APB and they will be expecting some redress for that particular inefficiency.

I should like to raise another issue which occurred years ago and which successive Governments have had an opportunity to rectify, but have not done so. I refer to the Royal Commission of inquiry into Wool Exporters which occurred some years ago. I do not know whether members are aware that in the course of that inquiry into a failed wool-buying company, the commissioner handling the matter was forced to adjourn the inquiry *sine die*, because he was unable to subpoena witnesses from the Eastern States to give evidence before him.

That particular issue was referred to the Attorneys General several times and, on each occasion, no decision was made and no agreement was reached whereby a commission of inquiry could subpoena witnesses from another State to appear before it. Nothing has happened about that particular situation.

Consequently we have a Royal Commission of inquiry into Wool Exporters which, in fact, has never been concluded and which has never brought down its final written report. I certainly hope the Premier makes a note of that and sees to it that the Attorney General places it high on the agenda of the next meeting of all State and Federal Attorneys General, because it is a serious situation which has never been resolved.

In the last five minutes left to me I should like to refer to the editorial which appears in this morning's *The West Australian* and refers to electoral reform.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr Tonkin: Use the word "corrupt"!

Mr COWAN: I have no intention to use the word "corrupt" other than this once.

Mr Bertram: The member for Swan used it the other night.

Mr COWAN: The member for Swan is entitled to use whatever language he chooses. If he is sat down for using unparliamentary language, that is his problem.

Mr Bertram interjected.

Mr COWAN: The need for electoral reform is starting to gather momentum in Western Australia. I do not think we will ever see a repetition of what occurred in this place last year. Such a blatantly gerrymandered line will never be drawn by a future Government, even if the Opposition should ever gain power. Never again will we be presented with such ludicrous legislation.

Mr Tonkin: Are you saying that because you are an optimist?

Mr COWAN: The public will demand we have some semblance of electoral reform.

I do not agree with the Opposition's call for one-vote-one-value. Our party policy clearly states that we should have a weighted vote, but we certainly believe all those very anomalous situations that do arise because of the legislation introduced and passed last year should be removed.

The time is right for the public to begin demanding that we have electoral reform.

Mr Tonkin: Hear, hear!

Mr COWAN: There is no question but that we will eventually reach the situation where the weighted vote can be protected only by a removal of the present anomalies. No one can doubt that the electoral commissioners are placed in a critical position by the Government's telling them where the metropolitan boundary is to be drawn. To my way of thinking the metropolitan boundary should be drawn by the commissioners. I am quite certain they would be able to define the metropolitan area in a far more acceptable manner to the public.

Mr Tonkin: Without saving four Liberal seats.

Mr COWAN: It is no coincidence that the four peripheral seats deemed to be rural are, in fact, metropolitan. There is no coincidence that the only one which was lobbed into the metropolitan area was that held by the member for Rockingham, and we all know on which side of the House he sits.

Mr Bertram: It would be a great thing if the Chief Justice provided some leadership.

Mr COWAN: At no time will I vote in favour of legislation which blatantly draws lines such as those drawn in last year's legislation and which maintains the very disproportionate balance in the Legislative Council Provinces.

I believe I have brought to the notice of the Government those issues I consider to be important. Despite my criticisms of the Government, in some instances I have

commended it for its work. I support the Address-in-Reply.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Premier) [12.13 p.m.]: I take pleasure in rising to comment on the Address-in-Reply debate and to pay tribute to the wonderful contribution made to Western Australia over a long period of time by my predecessor, Charles Court. Charles Court made a contribution to Western Australia not only as a Premier, not only as a Minister of Government, not only as a member of Parliament, but also as a citizen in very many ways. To many people he was a tough character. I know him to be a man with a hard crust and a soft interior, and I saw this on many occasions.

Charles Court was first heard of to any great extent in Western Australia when at 16 years of age he represented the State in a cornet competition held in Sydney and won the Australian open. From that time on he was always to the fore in many aspects of life in this State.

Mr Parker: I thought he was always blowing his own trumpet.

MR O'CONNOR: It is better at least to have one to blow than not to have one at all.

He is a man who genuinely represented this State and this Parliament in a way he believed was right. He did this work in the interests of the people. He made his mark in the business field at an early age.

I first met Charles Court before his son who is now the member for Nedlands arrived on the scene. I met him in Bougainville in 1944.

Mr Tonkin: Did you meet Colonel Bogey?

MR O'CONNOR: I was in close contact with him from that time on. He played a major part in industrial development in this State, not only because he knew that the large industries had to be assisted to start operations in this State and would make a contribution to the coffers of the Government, but also because he realised the great amount of work that would be provided for the people of the State.

In many ways he is a loss to the Parliament and to the State at the moment, but I know of no man who has made a greater contribution to this State than he has. He was so very dedicated and put in so many hours for the State.

I welcome the two new members to the House. The member for Nedlands succeeds his father (Sir Charles Court) and I wish him well. He and the member for Swan, whom I also welcome, are young members and both should have a long time here considering the electorates they represent. I

wish them well. If they work as hard, as arduously, and as sincerely as Sir Charles Court they will bring a great deal of credit to themselves, to the Parliament, and to Western Australia.

One point on which I would like to comment briefly is the Treasury letter referred to yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition, and his comments reported in this morning's Press. I make it very clear that those letters went out with a number of documents, and a little later I will seek permission to table those documents to show conclusively that we are not a secretive Government and that we do not wish to hide things from people. We are prepared to reveal all the documents involved with this issue.

Mr Pearce: It was hidden from you. You said no such letter had been sent out.

Mr O'CONNOR: I said nothing of the kind, and the member well knows it. He knows that is untrue.

Mr Barnett: Do not get touchy.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am just correcting an untruth made in this House. The Leader of the Opposition never made that sort of statement. He asked if I had seen the letter and I replied that I had not.

Mr Brian Burke: Just to put the record straight, you said you had no knowledge of it.

Mr Pearce: That is what I said.

Mr O'CONNOR: No, it is not. One of the things in this House that worries me is the number of things members opposite twist around to mean something different from what was said.

Mr Tonkin: What about Ministers who tell lies; will you deal with those?

Mr O'CONNOR: In doing this members opposite are misleading not only the House, but also the people of this State. I hope members will tell the truth or rectify errors, which I did.

Mr Brian Burke: Be fair. I appreciate your clearing it up, but you said that no mention was made of Australian savings bonds. I checked *Hansard* and it is in the question.

Mr O'CONNOR: There are two questions, but only one was sent to my office. When I read through it I understood immediately that an error had been made. I replied to that question. The copy of the other question was not forwarded to me from *Hansard*. I was replying to that one question. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will accept that.

Mr Pearce: I see we will have to televise Parliament and have action replays to check on these things.

Mr Young: You specifically said the Premier denied the existence of the letter, then you tried to crawl out of it.

Mr Pearce: We will have some readings from *Hansard* when we come back and see what was said.

Mr Young: You said two things. You changed your mind the second time.

Mr Pearce: I did not.

Mr O'CONNOR: I want to comment on the document sent out by the Treasury, a copy of which the Leader of the Opposition tabled. It is a very sensible document on the financial management of this State.

Quite frankly, the Treasury would be irresponsible if it did not send out a letter of this nature to the various departments so that those departments could prepare for the Budget. If Opposition members feel this letter should not have been sent, obviously they have no idea of financial management.

Mr I. F. Taylor: They were sent out without your knowing about them.

Mr O'CONNOR: Hundreds of letters go out from the Treasury each year, and thousands from Government departments.

Mr Pearce: The point is that we know about it and hundreds of others do, but you don't.

Mr O'CONNOR: No reason exists for the Treasury to refer to me every letter it sends out if it is doing the job required of it—what I want done. Certainly, I wanted such a job done. The letter represents sound financial management, which no-one can deny.

The newspaper article quoted the Leader of the Opposition as saying that the instructions suggested a new round of increases. That is one of the issues to which I refer when I say that such things can be misinterpreted, misconstrued, or placed in a way that gives the wrong impression to the public. Nowhere in that letter is it said that an instruction was being issued. If we compare the article in this morning's newspaper with the letter it can be seen that the letter is not as suggested. The letter reads—

In preparing the revenue estimates it is essential that all Departments review their fees and charges where this has not already been done.

Further on the letter states—

The review should extend to all those areas in which services are being provided—

Mr Pearce: That's an instruction.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is not an instruction.

Mr Pearce: You read that sentence again. A review is to be conducted, and that's an instruction.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Speaker—

Mr Pearce: A review is to be conducted.

Mr O'CONNOR: I will read again this paragraph.

Mr Old: Make it slow.

Mr Barnett: Normally it is when he reads something.

Mr O'CONNOR: The letter states—

In preparing the revenue estimates it is essential that all Departments review their fees and charges— . . .

Mr Pearce: What about the next sentence?

Mr O'CONNOR: To continue—

—where this has not already been done.

The review should extend to those areas in which services are being provided for which no charge is currently being made but where one may be warranted.

As I have indicated previously, sensible financial management requires regular reviews to be conducted to ensure all charges reflect the cost of the provision of services. If that is an instruction I do not know what else would be.

Mr Pearce: It is an instruction.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is quite different from any instruction I have ever seen.

Mr Pearce: If any departmental officer didn't take that as an instruction he would lose his job.

The SPEAKER: I call upon the member for Gosnells to desist from interjecting. He has been interjecting continually while the Premier has been making his speech. I suggest more progress will be made if the Premier is able to make his speech without interjection.

Mr Watt: The bionic mouth!

Mr O'CONNOR: The letter continues—

It should be noted that the approval of your Minister for your estimates is required before they are submitted to Treasury.

Before any charges can be altered, ministerial approval is required as well as the approval of Cabinet and Parliament. To indicate that this letter is an instruction to impose a round of increases is not at all accurate. What the letter states is that charges ought to be reviewed, and

that could mean that charges could go up or down depending on the circumstances. We know that around June of each year the Treasury works to assess what is happening in the various departments in an attempt to ensure that a sensible Budget is drawn and that it is in the best interests of the public. For the Treasury not to have issued a letter similar to this would have been irresponsible of it. I make it clear that I support the issuing of the letter. It has been an essential part of the arrangement of the first steps in the drawing up of the Budget for this State.

Mr Brian Burke: Are you able to see that we at any time said the letter should not have gone out?

Mr O'CONNOR: No, but the inference is that it should not have because the Opposition has suggested it is an instruction for an increase in charges and, therefore, irresponsible.

Mr Brian Burke: Let me say that if the inference taken by you is not the one meant, the point we are trying to make is that there should have been something passed on to the Treasury about the proposition.

Mr O'CONNOR: Such things could be said about every letter that the Treasury or any Government department puts out. Any of those letters could be said to be an instruction from a Minister, but frankly, they are letters of a nature sent out every day of the week. I make it quite clear to the people of this State that we are responsible in arranging our Budget. We will be not only responsible, but also taking into account human factors. The public can be assured this will be the case. As well I assure them that no minutes are before the Cabinet to suggest that there should be an increase in taxes and charges in this State.

Mr Parker: There are precious few minutes before Cabinet at the moment.

Mr Brian Burke: You already have the Minister for Water Resources announcing publicly that there will be water rate increases.

Mr Mensaros: That's absolutely untrue.

Mr O'CONNOR: This is an instance of something being misconstrued.

Mr Pearce: You said there would be increases.

Mr Mensaros: I said there will be recommendations one way or the other. I said nothing else, and if you read something into that that is your business.

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Speaker, I can hardly hear myself with the interjecting from the member for Gosnells.

The SPEAKER: I have asked the member for Gosnells to desist from interjecting and I again ask him to desist. But I point out to the Premier that he is obtaining a little assistance from his side which is provoking some reaction from the Opposition benches. I call on the House to desist from interjecting.

Mr O'CONNOR: We will responsibly take into account all issues including the human factors involved when we draw our Budget. This State Government has not been nor will it be as irresponsible as, let me say, the New South Wales Government. That State has tremendous problems in regard to financing and management.

Mr Bertram: It was by the Liberal Government.

Mr O'CONNOR: It was not as a result of the Federal Government.

Mr Bertram: I am talking about the Liberal Government under Askin. The present Labor Government had to suffer the Askin Government's bad management.

Mr Wilson: What about the Victorian Government?

Mr O'CONNOR: The Victorian Government is Labor, as the member well knows.

Mr Wilson: It has been in for half an hour.

Mr O'CONNOR: I was informing the member of the type of Government Victoria now has.

Mr Tonkin: It was Liberal for 26 years.

Mr O'CONNOR: I venture to say that by the end of this year the people of New South Wales and Australia as a whole will come to see the disaster existing in New South Wales brought about by its Labor Government; and they will see just how badly managed that State has been.

Mr Bertram: Why the end of this year?

Mr O'CONNOR: The people of Australia will find that a number of things that should have been done were not, and the reflection financially will rest on the shoulders of the people of New South Wales. Such things will not occur in this State because it has a sound base provided by a Liberal Government, and that has been the situation for a long period, and will continue to be.

Mr Bryce: Are you confident about the maintenance programme of our SEC?

Mr O'CONNOR: I have little time left to answer interjections.

My final comment relates to the victory this morning of Malcolm Fraser. It was overwhelming and one that will do much good for this country. I was criticised in this House the other night for backing Mr Fraser because it was said that if he did not retain his position this State would be in jeopardy. Well, I did back him and therefore this State may receive extra credits for that support.

The majority claimed by Mr Fraser today was one we all would like to have at some stage. I hope the Liberal members of the Federal Parliament who voted against Mr Fraser today will settle down and get on with the job they ought to be doing. I hope they assist Mr Fraser in every way they can.

*Leave to Continue Speech*

Mr O'CONNOR: I seek leave to continue my speech at a later stage of the sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

## QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

## ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Premier)  
[1.01 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 April.

Question put and passed.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Closing Time*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I wish to announce that, in accordance with the statement I made to the House yesterday, questions for Tuesday, 20 April will close at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, 15 April.

*House adjourned at 1.02 p.m.*



## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### FUEL AND ENERGY: COAL, NATURAL GAS, AND OIL

#### *Cost of Producing Power*

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

What are the comparative costs of producing power using the following fuels:

- (a) natural gas;
- (b) oil;
- (c) coal?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (a) to (c) Coal and oil are currently used for different generation duties by the State Energy Commission, with coal being used for base load generation, and oil for peak load generation. However, it is possible to compare their use directly in Kwinana power station, where both fuels can be used. When using coal, the fuel component of total generating cost is presently 1.9 cents per unit of electricity generated; and when using oil the fuel component of total generating cost is presently 5.6 cents per unit.

Two factors have to be taken into account when comparing the total cost of generation using natural gas and coal. Firstly, the cost of gas fuel compared with coal in Western Australia, and secondly, the cost of the respective capital cost components for power generating plant in the total cost of generation.

The capital and operating cost components for coal-based generation is far greater than using oil or natural gas. In general terms, it is the balance between the composite capital and fuel cost which will determine the respective use of gas and coal for power generation in this State, when a supply of natural gas becomes available to permit its use for this purpose.

### TOWN PLANNING: SWAN VALLEY

#### *MRPA Objectives*

490. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Does the Government support the Metropolitan Region Planning

Authority objectives as stated in the Swan Valley project progress report, as follows:—

- "3.1 Introduce more certainty into the market for grapes;
- 3.2 maintain or increase overseas demand for table grapes;
- 3.3 encourage WA retailers to promote sales of local wines;
- 3.4 increase markets for WA wines in the Eastern States and overseas."

Mr OLD replied:

I will be recommending that the Government support in principle the objectives as stated in the Swan Valley progress report dealing with "marketing" in the horticultural industry. These detailed objectives relate to the overall general marketing objective, which is to "ensure that the viticulture industry is able to respond quickly to changing market demands".

### HEALTH: MENTAL

#### *Fairhome*

491. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the property known as "Fairhome" in Market Street, Guildford, to be used to accommodate mentally ill patients?
- (2) If "Yes", when is it likely to be used for this purpose?
- (3) Will he also detail the location of other properties in the metropolitan area to be used by the Mental Health Services for this purpose?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No. It is used and will continue to be used to accommodate intellectually handicapped persons.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) The question is unclear. However, if the member wishes I shall provide him with a list of Mental Health Services' facilities in the metropolitan area for both intellectually handicapped persons and those receiving treatment, rehabilitation, or follow-up for psychiatric illness.

## POPULATION

### *Western Australia*

492. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

What was the population of this State as at 1 January in the following years—

- (a) 1960;
- (b) 1965;
- (c) 1970;
- (d) 1975; and
- (e) 1982?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (a) to (e) Population statistics are compiled by the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics and the information is available from the Parliamentary Library.

## SOIL: WIND EROSION

### *Jerramungup*

493. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Primary Industry:

Will he table a copy of the report on wind erosion in the Jerramungup area compiled recently by officers of his department?

Mr OLD replied:

The report is a preliminary one to the department. It is currently being examined; and when the final report is prepared a copy will be tabled.

## WATER RESOURCES: IRRIGATION

### *Camballin Project: Submissions*

494. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Primary Industry:

Pursuant to his reply to question 198 of 1982 relating to the Camballin project, will he table a copy of the comments provided to the Government on submissions made by Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. on the Camballin project to which he referred in his answer?

Mr OLD replied:

It is not policy to table comments of this nature.

## WATER RESOURCES: IRRIGATION

### *Camballin Project: Submissions*

495. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Works:

Pursuant to his reply to question 199 of 1982 relevant to the Camballin project—

- (a) did the Public Works Department provide comments to the Government on the submission made by Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. on the initial Camballin project;
- (b) will he table a copy of these comments?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (a) Yes;
- (b) no, it is not the Government's policy to reveal interdepartmental advice of this nature.

## EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

### *Toodyay*

496. Mr HERZFELD, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) In the light of his predecessor's answer to my question 23 of 1981, does he acknowledge arts and science accommodation at Toodyay District High School is strained to the limit in the current year?
- (2) In view of the projected growth in enrolments for 1983 and 1984, what action is proposed to alleviate this problem?

Mr CLARKO replied:

- (1) There are five more secondary pupils for 1982; and the use of the special facilities is unchanged.
- (2) Proposed additions and improvements in the science, manual arts, and administration areas are being documented at present; and the works will be undertaken in the coming financial year subject to availability of funds.

## LAND: AGRICULTURAL

### *Release*

497. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is it intended to release any land in the Scott River area, south of Nannup?

(2) If "Yes"—

- (a) when is it expected that such land will be released;
- (b) what area of land will be released?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

(1) and (2) There are no proposals for land release in the locality the department recognises as the Scott River area.

However, the question of land release in the Lake Jasper area has received considerable attention over many years; and recently an officer committee was formed to reconsider land release in the area.

Investigation is current on the suitability and viability of the release of Nelson Locations 12889, 12890 and 12900.

498. *This question was postponed.*

#### SUPERANNUATION

##### *Collection of Information*

499. Mr I. F. TAYLOR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) With reference to his answers to questions 55 and 383 of 1982, could he indicate whether the smaller superannuation schemes referred to receive any input of public funds?
- (2) If "Yes", is it still considered that there is no purpose in instituting regular collections of information about investment and assets of these funds?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) In the case of these schemes an employee contributes five per cent of his salary, which is matched by a contribution from the employer equivalent to 10 per cent of the salary. The contributions are paid to the respective insurance company.
- (2) Yes.

#### HEALTH: RADIATION

##### *Radiological Council: Annual Reports*

500. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will he table annual reports of the Radiological Council since the Radiation Safety Act 44 of 1975 was proclaimed?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes, except for the 1981 report, which will be tabled shortly.
- (2) Not applicable.

*The reports were tabled (see paper No. 159).*

#### PUBLIC WORKS: CANNING RIVER

##### *Channel Fence Posts*

501. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has the Government any plan for the removal of the channel fence posts in the Canning River between the Shelley bridge and Salter Point?
- (2) Have there been any previous schemes to remove these posts?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of such a venture?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not to my knowledge.
- (3) Not known.

502 to 518. *These questions were postponed.*

#### MINISTER OF THE CROWN: TREASURER

##### *Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry*

519. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions, and other forms of major public inquiry, conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—
  - (a) 1974;
  - (b) 1975;
  - (c) 1976;
  - (d) 1977;
  - (e) 1978;
  - (f) 1979;
  - (g) 1980;
  - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h)?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?

- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (6) The information required in order to reply to this question and identical questions asked of the Ministers for Transport, Fuel and Energy, and Conservation and the Environment, will be researched, collated and made available to the member in due course.

# MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR FUEL AND ENERGY

## *Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry*

520. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) What is the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions, and other forms of major public inquiry, conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years:
  - (a) 1974;
  - (b) 1975;
  - (c) 1976;
  - (d) 1977;
  - (e) 1978;
  - (f) 1979;
  - (g) 1980;
  - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h)?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (6) I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the answer given to question 519.

521. *This question was postponed.*

# MINISTER OF THE CROWN: MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## *Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry*

522. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) What is the number of committees of inquiry, Royal Commissions, and other forms of major public inquiry, conducted into matters and affairs within his administrative responsibilities in each of the following years—
  - (a) 1974;
  - (b) 1975;
  - (c) 1976;
  - (d) 1977;
  - (e) 1978;
  - (f) 1979;
  - (g) 1980;
  - (h) 1981?
- (2) What is the subject and name of each inquiry identified in (a) to (h)?
- (3) On what date was the report of each inquiry identified in (2) released to the public?
- (4) What are the names of the reports of the inquiries, if any, that he or the Government has not released to the public?
- (5) Why has he withheld each report, if any, identified in (4)?
- (6) When does he expect that the reports identified in (4), if any, will be released to the public?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) to (6) Refer to the answer to question 519.

523. *This question was postponed.*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## *Busselton Shire Council*

524. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Did the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust offer a loan to the Busselton Shire Council in 1980?

- (2) If "Yes" to (1)—
- (a) what was the amount offered;
  - (b) when was the offer made;
  - (c) what were the terms and conditions of the loan offered by the trust;
  - (d) did the Busselton Shire Council accept the loan?
- (3) Were there any changes to the terms and conditions offered by the trust upon acceptance by the Busselton Shire Council?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) I am advised that the trust did do so.
- (2) I am advised—
- (a) and (b) \$200 000 was offered on 15 April;
  - (c) the loan was offered for a term of 10 years at the ruling interest rate as approved by Treasury;
  - (d) yes.
- (3) I am advised that the loan was funded in accordance with the terms and conditions detailed in 2(c).

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: NULLARBOR REGION

### *Management: Report*

525. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Did the Department of Conservation and Environment commission a report on the management of the Nullarbor region of Western Australia by the Australian Speleological Federation in 1978?
- (2) (a) Was the report presented to the Department of Conservation and Environment or the Environmental Protection Authority subsequent to the commissioning of it;
- (b) if so, when was it submitted?
- (3) What are the various recommendations of the report and how many of them, and which, have been implemented?
- (4) Of those recommendations which have not yet been implemented why have they not been implemented?

- (5) Is he aware of the extreme concern being shown by various people due to an increase in the visitations to many of the very delicate caves in the Nullarbor region and consequential possible irreparable damage occurring to these caves?
- (6) What protection aimed at preserving the delicate nature of these caves is currently in force?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Yes.  
(b) The report was received on 17 November 1978.
- (3) The report embodies a wide range of recommendations relating to the provision for the preservation of caves, viable examples of the natural ecosystems, rare, unusual or endemic cave-dwelling fauna and mineral formations. The recommendations also relate to the provision of opportunities for tourists and for education and interpretation about the caves and for increasing awareness of other interesting aspects of the Nullarbor environment. Recommendations concerning two caves have been implemented.
- (4) The balance of recommendations have not yet been implemented as they have to be considered by the EPA following the recent collation of comments on the report by concerned bodies.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) While many caves are protected to some extent by their isolation, positive protection measures will be considered by the EPA.

## HEALTH: MENTAL

### *Eden Hill Units*

526. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Have fears been expressed by residents of Eden Hill and the Bassendean Town Council about Mental Health Services proposal to house a number of patients from Swanbourne Hospital in home units at Eden Hill?
- (2) Can he give an assurance that the patients will pose no threat to nearby residents and can he also provide details of the type of patients to be accommodated?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. Patients will be elderly persons, male and female, mildly confused and requiring minimal care which will be provided on a full-time basis. The units will accommodate not only patients discharged from Swanbourne Hospital, but will also take suitable clients from the local area.

Mr HASSELL replied:

Statistics are only kept by financial year—1 July to 30 June. In the financial year 1 July, 1980 to 30 June, 1981—

- (a) 250 were charged;
- (b) 182 were convicted;  
68 were withdrawn or dismissed;
- (c) 9 were charged;
- (d) 9 were convicted.

## EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

*Merredin*

527. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

- (1) Is he aware that when the Merredin Senior High School was advised of the termination of the Education Department's student driver education programme they were also advised that arrangements were being made to provide an alternative programme through the Road Traffic Authority (now the Police Department)?
- (2) Why has no programme been provided?
- (3) If it is not intended to provide a programme at the school, are there any alternatives that may be offered to the school's students outside school hours?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) An alternative programme is in the research stage to develop the necessary refinements and respective roles of the departments involved, including establishing the manner in which the scheme will be financed.

## LIQUOR

*Under-age Drinking*

528. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

In 1981—

- (a) how many juveniles were charged with under-age drinking offences;
- (b) how many were convicted;
- (c) how many persons licensed to sell or supply liquor were charged with selling or supplying liquor to juveniles;
- (d) how many were convicted?

## HEALTH: NURSES

*Accommodation: Rentals*

529. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has there been any recent increase in weekly rental rates for nurses' accommodation in country areas?
- (2) What was the amount of the increase and when was it applied?
- (3) How do rentals compare with rental for similar accommodation made available through the State Housing Commission or the Government Employees' Housing Authority?
- (4) Approximately what percentage of take home pay would the rentals represent?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Except in towns where hospital houses are available for matrons to rent, accommodation available for nurses in country areas is provided in staff quarters. Charges for lodging in staff quarters are covered by the Board and Lodging (Public Hospitals) Award, which is generally amended with cost of living increases.  
Matrons who occupy hospital houses are charged a rental, which has been recently increased.
- (2) The most recent increases in the lodging charge for accommodation in staff quarters were—  
30c per week for staff occupying single rooms  
20c per week for staff sharing rooms  
60c per week for staff occupying self-contained furnished single accommodation.  
These increases applied from 16 November 1981.  
The increase in rental for matrons occupying hospital houses was \$6 per week from 1 January 1982.

- (3) Accommodation in staff quarters—not comparable because of difference in type of accommodation.

The rental for houses occupied by matrons is lower than State Housing Commission or Government Employees' Housing Authority rentals but is gradually being brought into line by six monthly adjustments.

- (4) Accommodation in staff quarters—not applicable.

This information is not readily available in respect to matrons who occupy houses, but the basic award weekly wage rates for matrons in country areas range from \$390.70 to \$523.60. Currently rentals represent percentages of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent of gross wages (excluding penalty rates and overtime).

530. *This question was postponed.*

#### EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

##### *Class Sizes: Average*

531. Mr COWAN, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) (a) What are the average class sizes in primary schools;
- (b) how does the average compare with previous years;
- (c) does the department have a policy on class sizes in primary schools;
- (d) what is it;
- (e) has the policy been achieved?
- (2) (a) Has there been a reduction in the hours allotted to each school for the employment of non-teaching staff;
- (b) can details be given?

Mr CLARKO replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) As statistical information about class sizes in schools is not collected the details requested are not available.
- (c) and (d) The primary school staffing formula is structured on the basis of a teacher for 30 year one students and a maximum average of 35 for other classes.  
Secondary staffing is based on classes of 32 in lower school and 25 for upper school.
- (e) The staffing policy is adhered to.

- (2) (a) and (b) The reduction in allotted hours for clerk/typists and library aides has only been applied to those schools which exceeded the departmental formula entitlement. A general reduction was applied to teacher aides whose working times exceeded 13 hours per fortnight.

532. *This question was postponed.*

#### HOUSING: SHC BUILDING

##### *Cleaning Contractor*

533. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that of the 26 tenders received for the cleaning of the State Housing Commission building in Plain Street, the very lowest—\$15 800—was accepted which varied considerably from the successful tender—\$58 000—in the previous year?
- (2) Is he also aware that the new contractor employs only four cleaners for 2 hours per night as compared with the eight previously employed?
- (3) Is it a fact that the new contractor has apparently been prepared to lodge a low tender by under-paying his cleaners to the tune of 53 cents per hour?
- (4) Is he aware that despite the fact that the Main Roads Department passed on the November CPI increase of 19 cents per hour for cleaners employed by the firm with the cleaning contract for that department, the increase has not been passed on to the employees concerned?
- (5) Is the practice by Government departments accepting tenders at the lowest quotes encouraging exploitation of cleaning employees and a fall off in standards?
- (6) Is he aware of the problems created by such employees bringing in husbands or wives and even children, not on the payroll, to enable them to complete their work in the reduced time allowed, when such supplementary workers are not covered by workers compensation or other insurance?

- (7) Will he ensure that when future tenders for cleaning contracts for Government departments are being considered that an itemised component representing a realistic assessment of labour costs will be demanded, as a measure of his Government's commitment to the maintenance of proper standards for wages and conditions in the work place?
- (8) If not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (8) The matters raised will be investigated and a reply given to the member when all aspects have been studied.

- (3) What was the reason for discontinuing the practice?

Mr CLARKO replied:

- (1) The Education Department employed a part time speech therapist for a brief period during the mid 1970's when a qualified teacher of the deaf was not available to help several deaf children in a small country town.
- (2) The therapist worked part time for the equivalent of a day a week.
- (3) The therapist withdrew from the position and a visiting teacher of the deaf assumed the role.

## HOSPITALS

### Speech Pathologists

538. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many speech pathologists are appointed to each of the regional hospitals?
- (2) Are there any vacant positions and, if so, where?
- (3) Apart from regional hospitals, are there any speech pathologists in Government employment in any other country areas?
- (4) If so—  
(a) how many; and  
(b) where are they located?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Albany 1  
Bunbury 2  
Carnarvon Visiting service from Geraldton  
Geraldton 1  
Kalgoorlie 1  
Port Hedland 1
- (2) A position at Narrogin Regional Hospital and an additional position at Albany Regional Hospital have recently been created and advertised.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) (a) 5—plus a position being created and to be advertised shortly, at Merredin Hospital;  
(b) Murray District Hospital, Pinjarra  
Esperance District Hospital  
Mandurah Community Health Centre  
Busselton Community Health Centre  
Halls Creek.

539. *This question was postponed.*

534 and 535. *These questions were postponed.*

## HEALTH: SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS

### Number

536. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Referring to question No. 329 of 31 March 1982 regarding speech pathologists, have the vacancies referred to been brought about by financial restraints or shortage of trained persons?
- (2) If a shortage exists, what specific action is being taken to recruit speech pathologists in sufficient numbers to overcome such shortage?
- (3) Are sufficient people being trained in Western Australia to meet the demand in this State?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No. Vacancies are due to positions being newly created or through resignations. The exception is at Royal Perth (Rehabilitation) Hospital where RPH has elected to leave the position vacant.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Yes.

## EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT

### Speech Pathologists

537. Mr DAVIES, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Education:

- (1) When, if ever, did the Education Department employ speech pathologists?
- (2) What numbers were then employed?



# COMMUNITY WELFARE: SOCIAL WORKER

*Coolbellup, Hamilton Hill, and Southwell*

540. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware of the vital role played by the social worker in the large State Housing Commission complexes of Coolbellup, Hamilton Hill and Southwell, whose position was formerly funded under the family support services scheme?
- (2) Is his department concerned that the decision not to renew this funding will put an end to the only localised social work service in the Cockburn area with a commitment to meeting the needs of families on very low incomes and to the development of community services and that services available will be reduced to those based outside the area which are only able to respond to crisis situations?
- (3) What efforts, if any, has he made to seek a reversal of the decision to withdraw funding for this much needed social work family support?

Mr SHALDERS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The Commonwealth-State management committee responsible for the administration of this scheme recently met to consider and make recommendations to me in relation to the funding of a number of projects including that at Cockburn.  
I was advised that the present financial situation within the family support services scheme in Western Australia was such that Commonwealth funds made available for the continuation of the scheme were fully committed and that on current assessment there would be insufficient funds available from savings to permit refunding of the Cockburn project.

541. *This question was postponed.*

## LOTTERIES COMMISSION

*Labor Party Raffle*

542. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

Further to my questions and his answers

regarding the raffle promoted by the member for Perth on behalf of the Australian Labor Party and represented as being for the benefit of the Perth Social Club, has the Chief Secretary yet had a response from the Commissioner of Police and, if so, with what result?

Mr HASSELL replied:

The letter signed by the member for Perth on Parliamentary letterhead stated *inter alia*—

"We have also arranged a raffle which will be drawn by the Leader of the Opposition at the end of the dinner. Even if you are unable to attend the dinner you might be able to sell the tickets and return the butts and money in the envelope provided."

Mr Burke's words "we have also arranged a raffle" could be interpreted to be misleading and it was therefore a fair question for the member to ask.

The Commissioner of Police has advised that from inquiries made no evidence has been found to support a charge in respect to the conduct of this raffle.

Until the statutory declaration required by the Lotteries Commission is returned by the holder of lottery permit No. B 3904, the commission is unable to determine the use of the funds produced by the raffle.

543. *This question was postponed.*

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

*Fees and Charges: Review*

115. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

My question refers to the letter from the Under Treasurer about taxes and charges and I ask the Premier simply whether he is prepared to table copies of similar or the same letters that he says were sent out in each of the last three years.

Mr P. V. Jones: What nonsense! Come off it!

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I have spoken to the Under Treasurer who advised me that that previous letter

had been sent. I shall give the answer to be tabled the week after next.

In the meantime, I seek permission to table the other documents involved with that issue.

*The papers were tabled (see paper No. 160).*

## ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT

### *Full Court Decision*

116. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that the editor of *The West Australian* in today's issue, in commenting upon yesterday's Full Court decision on the constitutional challenge to the Government's 1981 amendments to the Electoral Districts Act said, inter alia—

The solution to the problem—which manifests itself most abhorrently in the Legislative Council—lies not just in Parliament but with the Liberal Party. As long as the corrupt boundaries remain the Liberals will control the Council.

A Government member: One man's opinion!

Mr MacKinnon: One journalist's opinion!

Mr BRYCE: To continue—

- (2) Does his Government intend to mend the ways of previous Liberal/Country Party coalition Governments and introduce legislation to democratise the Parliament or, in the terms used by the Editor of *The West Australian*, is the corruption to continue?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No. As far as I am concerned, there is no intention by this Government to make any alterations to the Electoral Act during this year.

## TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

### *Deficit*

117. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Local Government:

I understand the Minister has some notice of the question. What is the current estimated accumulated deficit or

surplus of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust for the year ending 30 June 1982 and the estimate also for 1983?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The answer is that for 1982, \$47 million and for 1983, \$40 million.

Mr Tonkin: Are they deficits?

## DAIRYING: CAPEL

### *Radiation Levels*

118. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the sample of milk taken from the Capel dairy to assess levels of radiation or otherwise been tested?
- (2) If so, with what result?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) The milk from a Capel dairy has been given the all-clear following testing by the Australian Radiation Laboratory in Melbourne. Testing, to the limit of sensitivity of the laboratory's equipment, had failed to find any members of the uranium or thorium series of radioactive substances from either samples at the Capel dairy or from a control sample of milk from Coolup. Had there been any contamination by radioactive substances from mineral sands tailings, members of the uranium or thorium series would have been present in detectable levels.

The milk samples were sent to Melbourne because the radiation laboratories were experienced in testing dairy products. The tests had found Caesium 137, which was a fall-out product still being found in milk throughout Australia following atomic tests in the 1960's and 1970's. Potassium 40, a naturally occurring isotope of potassium present in milk and most food stuffs, had also been found, but the levels were quite acceptable.

## PRISONS: PRISONERS

### *Mail: Censoring*

119. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

- (1) Is he aware that at a recent meeting of chief officers discussing, amongst other things, the censoring of prisoners' mail,

the Director of the Department of Corrections, Mr Kidston, advised those chief officers that particular attention in censoring mail was to be paid to mail addressed to myself?

- (2) Is that as a result of an instruction from the Minister?
- (3) In either case, will the Minister take the matter up and see that that is not the situation?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) If the member for Fremantle gives me the details in writing I will certainly follow it through and take the matter up.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE: PUBLIC SERVANTS

##### *Salary Claim*

120. Mr HARMAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that there is total dissatisfaction among professional public servants with the Public Service Board's attitude towards a salary claim lodged on behalf of professional division officers?
- (2) Is he aware that this salary claim needs to maintain the broad inter and intra-division relationships which have operated for many years?
- (3) Is the Public Service Board acting on its own initiative or following Government policy or directives in refusing to deal with the claim on an integrated basis?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the member for Maylands for some notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) The executive of the Civil Service Association has indicated that opinion to me.
- (2) Broadly, yes.

- (3) The board is acting within its statutory powers under the Public Service Act and Public Service Arbitration Act. The board has not been given—nor would it accept—a Government directive on how this matter is to be handled.

#### TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

##### *Deficit*

121. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Local Government:

This is a supplementary question to the previous question I asked as to whether it was an accumulated deficit or surplus. The Minister in her answer did not make it clear whether the figure she gave was a deficit or a surplus.

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I do apologise to the honourable member. The figure that was given represents a deficit figure. The House should be aware that that figure is for one year only and that in looking at the financial situation of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust one should also bear in mind the fund's accumulated assets and also the fact that the claims on the trust in any one year would not be likely to exhaust the amount of money available to the trust.

#### TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

##### *Operations: Intervention by Premier*

122. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

I preface my question by saying that most members have become quite alarmed at the publicity about the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. I ask the Premier whether he is prepared personally to look at the trust to see whether its operations conform with those with which he would like his Government to conform?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I am quite happy to do that. As the member would know, about 98 per cent

of the MVIT is now with the State Government Insurance Office. It is a very large part of it.

Mr Brian Burke: Eighty or 85 per cent, I think it is.

Mr O'CONNOR: It will be relieved of the position. The discussions I had with the SGIO about two weeks ago indicated that it could be increased—and it seemed at that stage on information given to me by Mr Rogers of the SGIO that it would be well up into the 90s. I am quite happy to have a look at the point.

Mr Davies: That is a bit rough. What is wrong with the Minister having a look?

## GAMBLING AND PROSTITUTION

### *Police Discretion*

123. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

Since it is his policy that the police should have a discretion as to when prosecutions should be made for offences involving casinos, gambling and prostitution, will he, in fairness and for the preservation of the rule of law, introduce legislation to render this police activity lawful and setting out for public information the criteria upon which the discretion will be based?

Mr Young: What did you do when you were Attorney General in the Tonkin Government?

Mr HASSELL replied:

I give the same reply to the member for Mt. Hawthorn; namely, that it is not my policy that the police should be given a discretion. The police have properly, historically and from the beginning of the introduction of the system of policing as we know it, had a very proper discretion in relation to law enforcement and I am frankly amazed that a man who sits in this House with a legal background, as the member for Mt. Hawthorn has, should seriously suggest that there is something unusual, untoward or improper about it.

Mr Bryce: Morally inconsistent!

Mr HASSELL: Of course there could be an improper use of discretion.

Mr Parker: Obviously there is in the case of gambling and prostitution.

Mr HASSELL: I do not believe it happens in relation to our Police Force.

Mr Parker: There are not many people in Western Australia who share that view.

Mr HASSELL: I have not found that to be the case and I do not propose to interfere in the long-standing and traditional policies of law enforcement.

Mr Parker: The evidence is manifested every day in the prostitution area.

Mr HASSELL: I remind the member for Mt. Hawthorn that not one member of this House has not written to me as Minister for Police and Prisons at some stage asking me to exercise a discretion in relation to traffic prosecutions.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish!

Several members interjected.

Mr Tonkin: When did I write?

Mr HASSELL: The letters come in every day—

Mr Tonkin: When did I write to you?

Mr HASSELL: They come from the public as well.

Mr Tonkin: Don't say "every member".

Mr Bryce: I have never asked you.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Brian Burke: Be more careful with the truth.

Mr HASSELL: That discretion is not ever exercised by me, of course. It is referred to the police and on occasions, in proper circumstances, action, other than prosecution, takes place.

I remind the member for Mt. Hawthorn that on many occasions motorists are very properly cautioned; they may have committed an offence but are not prosecuted. That, is an exercise of discretion.

It is clear the member for Mt. Hawthorn and the members of the Opposition, in their pursuit of a political policy, are trying to denigrate the activities of the police—

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish!

Mr HASSELL: —and their proper role of law enforcement.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish!

Mr HASSELL: I will not take part in their attempts to pull down the Police Force in this State.

## FISHERIES

### *Two Rocks Marina*

124. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Resources Development:

Further to my question without notice 86 of last Tuesday—

- (1) Has the matter of the separate fuelling berth at the Two Rocks marina for the private use of commercial fishermen holding pen leases at the Two Rocks marina been resolved?
- (2) Has the steel post barring entry to this berth been removed?
- (3) Is the Minister intending to issue an order to Yanchep Sun City Pty. Ltd. to dredge the old mooring basin as defined by the aerial photograph of November 1972 and tabled in this House yesterday by the Premier?
- (4) If the Minister is waiting for a Crown Law opinion on the matter, is he aware that a previous opinion sought from Crown Law by the previous Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife (the Hon. G. E. Masters) in connection with this same problem took five months to obtain?
- (5) In view of this and as the track record of Yanchep Sun City Pty. Ltd. in dealing with this particular problem proves the company most adept in the gentle art of procrastination, will the Minister give me an assurance that he will seek the assistance of his appropriate ministerial colleagues to expedite this matter with the utmost despatch?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing wrong with the question; I just want to establish whether or not that matter falls within the ministerial responsibility of the Minister for Resources Development.

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The matter has been referred to already by way of question and it falls under an

agreement Act with the State which is within my responsibility.

- (1) and (2) No, but following on from the questions of last week and the answer which the Premier gave, the matter has been pursued in relation to the matter of the fuelling berth.
- (3) to (5) With regard to the matter of giving an order for dredging to occur, as I have indicated already, there is some doubt under the agreement whether the Minister has the power to order the dredging to be done and this is the subject of examination by Crown Law. I have been advised that the opinion will be available next week, following which a decision will be made.

## GAMBLING AND PROSTITUTION

### *Police Discretion*

125. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

My question follows the recent reply from the Minister to a question asked by Mr Parker. As I cannot remember whether or not I have written to the Minister for Police and Traffic about a traffic matter, and as the Minister has said that every member in this House has written to him on behalf of constituents, in connection with traffic matters, will the Minister please table the correspondence so that members who say they have not written to him can ask for an appropriate apology?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL replied:

I do not recall having said that every member of the House—

Mr Tonkin: Of course you did.

Mr Bryce: You said, "every member of this House".

Mr HASSELL: I think I said that hardly a member of the House had not ever—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Tonkin: You did not, and don't alter your speech.

Mr Parker: Check the copy of your transcript.

Mr HASSELL: I am not casting any accusation against the members of the Opposition or the House and if I have unjustly reflected on any member of the Opposition then I withdraw that statement without reservation.

I did make it clear that members of the Opposition have certainly made representations to me for an exercise of discretion in relation to law enforcement. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition remembers having done so in relation to certain police officers who had been found guilty of corrupt practices.

Mr Brian Burke: Certainly I went to see you but it was not a traffic matter.

Mr HASSELL: It was an exercise of discretion and that is what we are talking about.

Mr Brian Burke: You said traffic matters.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will exercise my discretion in a moment and bring questions to an end!

## LOTTERIES COMMISSION

### *Liberal Party Raffle*

126. Mr GORDON HILL, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

- (1) Following the reference to him by the Premier of information concerning a raffle conducted on behalf of the Liberal Party recently, what steps has he taken to investigate the matter?
- (2) Has it been referred to the Commissioner of Police and, if not why not?

Mr HASSELL: replied:

- (1) and (2) The matter to which the member for Swan refers relates to the Lotteries (Control) Act which falls within the jurisdiction of the Chief Secretary. I do not intend to take over that jurisdiction, and if the member wishes some action to be taken he should direct his request to the Chief Secretary. As with another question he raised, he should direct the question and information in the proper way and it will be acted upon.

## POLICE: OFFICERS

### *Corrupt Practices: Representation by Leader of the Opposition*

127. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

Just to correct what I hesitate to say is deliberate misrepresentation by this Minister, I will ask him a further question. In reply to the previous question the Minister said I made representations to him on behalf of policemen who were involved—in Port Hedland—in claiming expenses. This was some time ago. The Minister said I was asking him to exercise his discretion.

I want to ask the Minister whether that is the same discretion—that is, the Minister's ability to decide one way or another as the law permits him to, in that instance—as the discretion that police officers have to enforce the law.

I am very serious about this point because the law I am referring to imposes on the Minister the burden to make a decision on a recommendation to him. That is not a discretion in the way that we have been talking about discretion which is used by the Police Force to enforce the law or not. I consider that is a deliberate misrepresentation by the Minister.

Mr Laurance: You are splitting hairs.

Mr Brian Burke: You tell the truth in future.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL replied:

I will certainly answer the Leader of the Opposition's question. The point I was making was that there was a discretion to be exercised in relation to some officers who had been found guilty of corrupt practices.

Mr Brian Burke: On a recommendation from the commissioner.

Mr HASSELL: The Leader of the Opposition very properly represented those people who wanted him to ask that a discretion be exercised in favour of those men so that they be not removed from the Police Force.

Mr Brian Burke: The decision to be made was not a discretion; the decision had to be made one way or another.

Mr HASSELL: There was a discretion to be exercised and the police have a very real discretion, recognised by the law—

Mr Brian Burke: Why don't you answer the question?

Mr HASSELL: —and in the history of police matters, whether or not, in certain circumstances, prosecution should be taken.

The Attorney General also has a special discretion which is recognised by the law in that way. That is the point members of the Opposition cannot understand: It is a proper discretion; it is not discrimination and it is recognised by the law in history for the proper protection of the community.

Mr Brian Burke: Are you saying it is the same discretion?

Mr HASSELL: It is a discretion, not the same discretion. One comes under an Act, and the other arises in another way.

Mr Brian Burke: I do not know whether it does at all, but that is what you always flee to.

Mr HASSELL: If the Leader of the Opposition had read the Dixon report, instead of condemning it before he read a word of it, he would know it contains an entire chapter dealing with this matter. He should also know the report of the 1975 Royal Commission contains chapters dealing with the subject. If he reads these reports, he might have a proper understanding of the matter, and would not have to continue to score political points in pursuance of his announced policy of legalisation of gambling. He is trying to support his announced policy of legalisation by attacking the policy he wants to change. However, he should not do it at the expense of the Police Force of this State which is doing its job.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

### *Amendment*

128. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Local Government:

Does the Minister intend to introduce a Bill to amend the Local Government Act—

(a) to increase the level of the maximum-minimum rate;

(b) to provide for differential rating;

in time to allow the Bill to be promulgated before 1 July 1982?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(a) and (b) A second reading speech was given this day which indicated that the legislation was now before the House to raise the maximum-minimum rate. I regret that the member for Merredin was not aware of that.

Mr Cowan: So do I.

Mrs CRAIG: Regarding the matter to which he refers I can indicate to him only that while I am hopeful of bringing before this House another rating change prior to the commencement of the 1982-83 financial year I am not prepared to disclose at the moment just exactly what that change will be.

## STATE FINANCE: EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

### *Savings*

129. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

I refer to a question I asked last Tuesday when I queried his comment on commercial radio that the savings effected by the Cabinet expenditure review committee had, or would effect savings of \$40 million in a 12-month period. I also draw his attention to question 468 which was asked by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday when he said that the savings were \$32 million. Would he advise which figure is correct and what proportion of the savings have already been made?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I did indicate on radio that the figure was about \$40 million. The member will recollect that it was an approximate figure which had been given by the then Premier after it had been calculated by the expenditure review committee. I am quite happy to review the matter and to give the member for Victoria Park total details of the anticipated amount in a full 12-month period.

## HOUSING: INTEREST RATES

### *Increase: Impending*

130. Mr WILSON, to the Premier:

The Premier will probably be aware that measures with deregulation connotations have arisen out of the Federal Treasurer's arrangement with the banks on housing finance and that these measures have grave implications for the building societies market share. In view of the fact that building societies in this State have already sought, and in some cases gained an increase in such rates, and in view of the fact that the proportion of the home mortgage market which is covered by building societies in Western Australia is significantly over 40 per cent, has he had any discussions with permanent building societies in Western Australia about any impending increase in interest rates here and, if so, with what result?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

About two weeks ago I discussed certain issues with members of four or five building societies. If the member wants to know what was considered on that occasion I suggest that he put his question on notice.

## MINING: MINERAL SANDS

### *Industry: Radiation Levels*

131. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Would he explain why it has taken him so long to supply the information I have requested on three occasions over two weeks by way of questions on notice about the radiation levels to which workers in the mineral sands industry have been exposed? The information I have requested dates back to 1981 and it is peculiar that the Minister has been unable to supply the information over these two weeks.
- (2) Could he give an assurance that he will supply the information?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) I apologise to the member for Melville if he feels he is being slighted in any way. I will take the matter up with him and assure him that if the information he is obviously seeking is available, I will obtain it for him. I do not know whether the member is suggesting I have failed to answer specific questions in this place.

Mr Hodge: You said you would get the information and supply it to me, but that was a few weeks ago.

Mr Young: I will check it out.

## POLICE: OFFICERS

### *Corrupt Practices:*

### *Representation by Leader of the Opposition*

132. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

I ask a further question of the Minister. I hate to keep picking up his inaccuracies. The Minister informed the House that certain officers were guilty of corruption, and that their position was the subject of representations by me. My understanding is that the charges against the policemen were dismissed under the appropriate section of the Act so that, in other words, they were not convicted.

Mr HASSELL replied:

I think the Leader of the Opposition is referring to a different case from that to which I am referring. The case to which I refer—I do not want to identify the officers or do them any damage because they are long gone from the Police Force—relates to officers being found guilty under the disciplinary process of corrupt practices, I think, regarding claims for allowances.

Mr Brian Burke: Your words were "they were convicted", but the matter went to court and the charges were dismissed.

Mr HASSELL: I do not know that the matter went to court. I was referring to the disciplinary proceedings taken within the force, as I recall. There may be some slight inaccuracy in my memory in that respect.

Mr Brian Burke: I think so.

Mr HASSELL: However, the fact of the matter is the officers were in that



position. There was no doubt of their having committed practices which justified their being considered for dismissal; that was the issue.

Mr Brian Burke: And the decision was yours?

Mr HASSELL: No, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to be technically and pedantically accurate, the decision was the commissioner's to make, with my consent.

Mr Brian Burke: So if you did not give consent—

Mr HASSELL: That is right; there is no argument about that.

### EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

#### *Driver Education Programme*

133. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Police and Prisons:

My question relates to the answer given by him today to question 527. I ask—

- (1) Why was not the research conducted last year prior to the termination of the Education Department-managed driver education programme?
- (2) Can he give a guarantee we will see a student education programme conducted by the Police Force operating in schools before the end of this year?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) The actual programme had a number of deficiencies in that it was limited to certain schools in the State, was not universally available, and was limited to students within these schools.

Mr Cowan: It was better than nothing, which we have at the moment.

Mr HASSELL: Let me finish my answer. There is not a stronger supporter of driver education than I; I must live with the situation. The previous programme contained certain deficiencies in its

limitations to schools and to the fact that it was available only to school students.

It was eliminated as an economy measure and we had to try to find a way to introduce another programme which would not have the deficiencies of the former programme and which would provide for overall needs.

- (2) I cannot give a guarantee a new programme will be implemented before the end of this school year. Certainly I am very hopeful we will have a new programme for the beginning of the next school year.

Mr Parker: Last year you told us there was going to be a better programme and you had already worked it out with the people of the industry.

Mr HASSELL: I do not think I ever told the member that.

Mr Brian Burke: You have trouble remembering what you said earlier today, let alone last year.

Mr Bryce: People who are careless with the truth must have good memories.

Mr Parker: I think it was in answer to a question from the same member.

Mr HASSELL: I have never said there will be a programme. The Treasurer said in his Budget speech last year that we were examining alternative arrangements.

Mr Parker: You said there would be a programme and it would be a lot better than the one it replaced.

Mr HASSELL: The matter is progressing as fast as possible and as soon as arrangements can be made for a better programme they will be implemented. It is my understanding that in the meantime certain schools have begun arrangements to operate programmes on an entirely voluntary and local basis and those who have done so will be given full encouragement.