

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 25 September 1984

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

PARLIAMENT: HISTORY

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members will recall that at a Press conference held early in January this year I was able to announce, in conjunction with the President of the Legislative Council the appointment of a top level committee to commission the writing of the history of the State Parliament of Western Australia. The function of the committee was specifically to advise the two presiding officers on the production of a one volume history to be published to coincide with the centenary of the proclamation of self-government in Western Australia in October 1990. In the process the committee is to oversee and report regularly to the presiding officers on the expenditure of funds committed for the project through the annual parliamentary vote.

Currently the committee consists of seven members: Chairman, Mr David Black, head of the School of Social Sciences at the Western Australian Institute of Technology and a well known political analyst; Professor Peter Boyce from the Department of Politics at the University of Western Australia, who will take up the post of Vice Chancellor of Murdoch University in 1985; Dr Tom Stannage, a prominent historian from the University of Western Australia; two parliamentarians, Hon. Colin Jamieson MLA and Hon. Phillip Pandal MLC; and the Clerks of the Legislative Council and Assembly respectively, Mr Laurie Marquet and Mr Bruce Okely. Until the commencement of his term as Governor on 1 July this year, Professor Reid was also a member of the committee, and he will continue to act as a consultant to the project and as an author on completion of his commitment to the Commonwealth parliamentary history project.

Others outside the committee who have agreed to write chapters for the history include Dr Brian de Garis from the History Department of the University of Western Australia; Dr Michael Wood, a political scientist and currently Secretary, Department of Local Government; Dr Campbell Sharman from the Department of Politics at the University of Western Australia; and Professor Geoffrey Bolton, Dr Geoffrey Gallop, and Dr Lenore Layman from Murdoch University. All of

the authors have been selected because of their academic merit and their ongoing interest and experience in the field.

Current plans are for the book to be divided into two parts, the first providing a chronological history of Parliament in WA from 1831 to the late 1980s, and the second consisting of a number of articles on such aspects as the relationship of Parliament to Governors, the Executive, the State and Federal Constitutions, other Parliaments and the community, as well as providing some consideration of the possible future of parliamentary Government in the State. The length of the book should be about 150 000 words.

Based on current values it is estimated that the total cost of the project would be about \$150 000 to cover research assistance, the secondment of the editor, secretarial assistance and the actual production costs. Such costs are quite appropriate for a project of this magnitude. It should be noted that while the Commonwealth has paid for three full-time authors plus a number of research assistants to produce a three-volume history, the authors in this case will not receive any fee or royalties. The tertiary institutions are also providing important financial assistance in the form of research grants to authors, secretarial assistance, and, in the case of WAIT, the personnel and accounting services for the payment of the research assistants.

The main activity has centred on the appointment of two part-time research assistants who have worked on specific research and bibliographical tasks for the authors, and a complete survey of the library and archive holdings of the State Parliament itself. This latter project should be of considerable value to the Parliament in that it is hoped the detailed report which should be available shortly will disclose what is actually held on behalf of each House and will enable decisions to be made about how and where the current records should be arranged, and what future policy should be followed with regard to such material.

The long lead time required to produce a history of this kind means that at this stage public awareness of the significance of the 1990 centenary is as yet limited. However it is hoped that as time proceeds other related activities will emerge, such as perhaps the production of a commemorative parliamentary handbook, and that interest will be aroused among the tertiary institutions and general public in a variety of ways.

In this regard the committee would like to produce a regular newsletter outlining its progress and encouraging the involvement of students and public alike.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite honourable members to contribute to the project to whatever extent they are able. It is our sincere hope that the committee's work will lead not only to the production of a very fine and permanent record of the history of parliamentary government in this State, but will also act as a catalyst in ensuring that the significance of 1990 as a centenary year is kept very much to the fore in the next few years.

ACTS AMENDMENT (FAIR REPRESENTATION) BILL

Second Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform) [2.25 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Last year I was accused by the members opposite of making a speech which was political and unhelpful in explaining the Legislative Council electoral reform Bill. I have asked myself how a Minister of the Crown might make a speech in Parliament about something which involves fundamental value judgments like the electoral system and at the same time be non-political.

Even though the criticisms of last year's speech may depend upon a certain point of view held by some members, I shall do my best to stick to the facts and ask that members opposite do the same. This might be as close as a group of parliamentarians can get to being non-political. To help keep us all on task, members have received a summary of the fair representation Bill and each Bill is accompanied by a set of explanatory notes. Similar material has been circulated elsewhere in an effort to ensure that there can be full and informed public debate of the proposed reforms.

The scarcity of explanatory material was a criticism made of the way the Bill was handled last year, and the wider provision of information this year is an indication of the process which has led to the emergence of the revised Bill. This process began with the bitter disappointment of defeat and with what appeared to be a bleak situation. At the risk of being "political", I feel I have to say that Opposition members were negative and unconstructive. They attempted no amendments and, with one notable exception, offered no positive suggestions. Loud cries of the need for consultation on electoral matters were uttered by those who had made three significant electoral changes in the last decade without any consultation whatsoever.

The 1983 experience may have been bitter, but even bitter experience can be a good teacher. At-

tention was turned to all the parliamentary and media comment and a careful analysis of all of these criticisms was made. This analysis revealed those areas of the 1983 proposal which were of concern to the Opposition. Where a criticism seemed sincere and was democratic it was converted into a positive suggestion for inclusion in the revised Bill. Along with the positive suggestions that were made last year, this process resulted in a compromise blue-print which was announced on 10 April this year. In addition to the process of analysis and response to criticism which produced this blueprint, the Government has issued an invitation which is still open for public comments and suggestions. Some talks have taken place with the representatives of two of the parties in this Parliament. As a result of these processes, many changes have been made to the 1983 Bill in the spirit of seeking a consensus.

I think it is fair to say that the climate of opinion about electoral reform has changed in Australia. Since the early 1970s significant electoral reforms have taken place in South Australia, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria, and also at Commonwealth level. Most of these reforms have been achieved with a high level of bi-partisan support, and this is what I would hope for for Western Australia. The situation that exists in Australia is such that vote weighting is now an embarrassing exception. Any party that continues to advocate vote weighting also makes itself into an undemocratic exception, and this fact should be clear to the Western Australian Branch of the Liberal Party.

I sincerely hope that the effort that has been put into the creation of this 1984 compromise Bill will demonstrate both the sincerity of the Government's belief in the need for reform and the wish to create an electoral system acceptable to all Western Australians.

There is one possible interpretation of the 1984 compromise Bill with which I would like to take issue at the outset. None of us should make the mistake of thinking that the Government is now ashamed of the 1983 Legislative Council electoral reform Bill. In saying that, I am aware that the previous conservative Government steadfastly refused to ever admit it had made an error, even though it was patently clear to all that an error had been made. I am of the opinion that this tactic, so similar to little boys whistling in the dark, was resolutely adhered to in the mistaken belief that to admit error was to lose face.

Mr Clarko: Whoever wrote that is a fool. One can hear little boys whistling in the dark. You should have said "winking in the dark". That is a poor analogy.

Mr TONKIN: I am pleased to say that this Government has no hangups of that nature. Mature men and women can compromise in the certain knowledge that it is a sign of strength, not weakness.

So, while being prepared to admit error when that is appropriate, let me assure members that we have changed the Bill in the spirit of compromise, not because we resile from the principle involved in the 1983 Bill. That proposal was to have 22 instead of 34 Legislative Councillors and to elect half of the 22 at every election by proportional representation. The whole State was to be a single electorate. This remains a very democratic proposal. Within each State at Senate elections and in South Australia and New South Wales such a system works perfectly well. The accuracy of the match between votes gained and seats won in the whole-State proposal is superior because of the lower quota involved.

I might add that the whole-State proposal was of great benefit to minor parties and independents because of the lower quota provided.

Members should view the fair representation Bill as a compromise created as a constructive response to the events of last year.

On 9 November last year, the Acts Amendment (Constitution and Electoral) Bill was rejected by the Legislative Council. The division figures of that rejection encapsulate what the electoral reform debate is really all about. Unequal enrolments permit the representatives of a minority of electors to impose their will on this Parliament and on the people. Of the 32 MLCs who voted in the division which rejected the Bill there were 19 Noes representing 44.7 per cent of electors, and 13 Ayes representing 49.4 per cent of electors.

Mr Clarko: That is nonsense and you know it.

Mr TONKIN: Figures like this ought to be impossible in a democracy. In fact, they ought to be illegal when the fundamental premise is the counting of heads to see who has the majority.

Mr Clarko: If you have 10 members who win by one vote and one member who wins by 10 000 votes, should he have a bigger say?

Mr TONKIN: For the edification of the member for Karrinyup, I was not talking about electoral support. Those figures show the number of people represented in those electorates, not those who vote for the members.

Mr Clarko: It proves nothing. If 10 men win by one vote and one by 10 000 votes, should he have a bigger say?

Mr TONKIN: The member missed the point again. It has nothing at all to do with the voting

results or with elections. Those figures are obtained by adding up the number of people living in each electorate.

Mr Clarko: You could have one-vote-one-value. If 10 members are elected by one vote, and one member is elected by 10 000 votes, what does it prove?

Mr TONKIN: It has nothing to do with voting; the member continues to misunderstand.

Mr Clarko: It is irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TONKIN: The figures I quoted are based on the assumption that a member comes to this place to represent people. As the member for Morley-Swan, for example, I represent however many are on my roll—19 000 electors. I am talking about those figures, not the number who voted for me. I am referring to the 19 000 I represent here whether they voted for me or not. Those figures have nothing to do with elections.

Mr Clarko: It is equally valid for the other point.

Mr TONKIN: To continue, I repeat: Figures like this ought to be impossible in a democracy. In fact, they ought to be illegal when the fundamental premise is the counting of heads to see who has the majority.

Mr Rushton: You are suggesting a dictatorship.

Mr TONKIN: A standard statistical measure of the degree of malapportionment expresses as a percentage the lowest possible number of electors who may be represented by a majority of members in Parliament. This is known as the Dauer-Kelsay index figure and it should of course slightly exceed 50 per cent in a perfect system and should never stray far from that number.

It gives the Government of this State no satisfaction whatsoever to point out that among all the Australian States and Territories the Dauer-Kelsay indices of the Western Australian electoral system are the lowest.

Mr Clarko: Western Australia is the biggest and most sparsely populated State.

Mr TONKIN: Amongst lower Houses the 35.6 per cent for the Assembly is 5 per cent worse than the index for Queensland, which by now is a bad electoral joke.

Mr Clarko interjected.

Mr Brian Burke: Give him a go! He is trying to make a speech without interjection.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I. F. Taylor): Order!

Mr TONKIN: Among upper Houses the 27.8 per cent for the Council is 17.4 per cent worse

than the Tasmanian upper House. Among the 13 Houses of Parliament in the States and Territories, only four are malapportioned. Western Australia bears the shame of being host to the two worst cases.

Without a doubt, the single most significant principle which forms the inspiration for this fair representation Bill is the belief that everyone's vote should be equal. The Government believes that each Western Australian has a right to an equal say in the basic democratic decision-making situation of an election. Artificial criteria like income, race, ownership of property or place of residence should have nothing to do with the worth of the vote an elector may cast. In the current electoral system of this State, one of these criteria, namely place of residence, is used to discriminate in a gross way among electors, giving some groups more representatives and others less. Justification for such vote weighting is usually sought in the contention that somehow unequal enrolments can compensate for the difficulties of distance and isolation. But is this not really saying that people in some areas should be given additional representation so that they will be able to offset the opinions held by a majority of people who live somewhere else?

Those who advocate vote weighting favour a "case work" view of the member's role which plays down the role of policy formulation, legislation, and the supervision of administration.

This approach to representation often makes an assumption that difficulties of communication produced by increasing area depreciate the value of representation. This assumption has not been validated to my satisfaction. Last year I pointed out that people in country areas are just as capable of getting a political point across as any other group, and in fact to argue for over-representation of these people should be interpreted as an insult to their capabilities.

The case which proves that country electors operate at a disadvantage when it comes to influencing the political process has yet to be made. If it is possible to make out such a case, the advocates of malapportionment must demonstrate how unequal enrolments can overcome the perceived problem as well as devise a scheme by which it may be applied and criteria against which it may be evaluated. I am not aware that any of this thinking has been done or if it is even possible. Poverty, illiteracy and a myriad other problems also affect political participation, and so the question of compensatory vote weighting is a nightmare of impossible value judgments about why, who, and how much.

To illustrate the confused thinking on vote weighting that is embodied in the current electoral system, a few Legislative Assembly examples should supplement the Council examples given last year. If malapportionment is implemented to help solve the communications problems that distance and isolation pose, where is the logic in these electoral decisions which I now quote—

- (1) The Kimberley district is more remote than the Gascoyne district and Kimberley is also 4.8 times the area of Gascoyne. Yet the present Opposition arranged for Kimberley to have over 12 000 more electors than Gascoyne.
- (2) Within the metropolitan area, the Electoral Districts Act requires the commissioners to give equal enrolments to Rockingham and Scarborough but their areas are approximately 273 and 13 square kilometres respectively.
- (3) Within the agricultural, mining and pastoral area, the commissioners have been directed to allocate equal enrolments among the districts. Esperance-Dundas is more remote and is 1 216 times the area of Kalamunda and, according to the present Act, both areas are in the country. I repeat that figure: Esperance-Dundas is 1 216 times larger than Kalamunda and they are both adjudged by the present Act, not by the commissioners, to be in the country.
- (4) So, in this largest State of Australia, what is the justification for Kalamunda, which is so close to Perth, having more? Fewer people in that electorate vote than do people in the electorate of Kimberley, which is the most remote area from Perth.

In these examples, area and distance are obviously irrelevant criteria. Frankly, I cannot see any consistency or logic in the present system and with remarkable restraint I shall refrain from any specific discussion of the 1981 boundary manipulation.

Much criticism was made in 1983 of the presentation of the Legislative Council half of the system in isolation. The member for Stirling said, "I would have been more prepared to accept the bona fides of the Government if it had introduced a composite Bill relating to both Houses". Both Houses are included in this Bill.

This Bill is of a special type envisaged by section 73 of the Constitution Act and cannot become law without the approval of the people. The Bill stands or falls, as a whole, on a referendum de-

cision. This is made clear in the enacting words which set out the four essential steps through which the Bill must pass in order to become law. If the Houses of Parliament approve the Bill, the actual question to be put to electors would be taken from the enacting words and would read as follows:

Do you approve of the Bill entitled,—

A Bill for an Act to provide for fair representation of the people in Parliament so that each elector has the right to cast a vote that is, as nearly as practicable, equal in value to each other vote cast, and for incidental and other matters?

Of course, under the Referendums Act, adequate information about the details of the proposed reforms would be made available so that electors could make up their own minds.

Rather than follow the structure of the Bill which groups together the proposed amendments to each Act, at this stage of the debate it may help to group together the proposals for each House. Some amendments apply to both Houses.

Changes are proposed in clauses 14 and 16 to your voting rights, Mr Speaker, and to those of the President of the Legislative Council. Reasons exist to make these changes important reforms in their own right as well as being a necessary consequence of other parts of this Bill. Recent problems in the South Australian Parliament also confirm the approach now proposed. In this House the ridiculous situation can arise where a member may bring about the defeat of a Bill by not voting! This situation can occur in an equally divided House on a Bill where an absolute majority is required. The Speaker can be denied the necessary casting vote to pass the Bill by a member abstaining! The Bill may have "passed" in the ordinary sense of the term but it is defeated because it has not received the necessary absolute majority. This absurd situation has been mischievously exploited by both major parties in Opposition. In a Chamber with an uneven number of members, the casting vote rule for the Presiding Officer invites this mocking exploitation.

It should be noticed that in the proposed transitional phase to a Legislative Council of 32 members there will be a period in which the Upper House also has an uneven number of 33 members.

With proportional representation, the Government and the Opposition, whichever party they may be, are likely to be quite evenly matched if the people maintain their past patterns of relatively even levels of support for the two groups. Seventeen seats out of 32 would be a good result for any party and after appointing the President,

that party would have a 16:15 majority on the floor and be unable to pass Bills requiring an absolute majority. This does not seem a fair reward for winning. More importantly, it does not seem to represent accurately the wishes of the people who voted for the winning side, whichever it may be.

In a more general sense the Speaker and the President are elected here to represent people and those people have as much right to have their views recorded as any other group of electors. For this general reason and for the reasons I have outlined that are more specific to each House, the Bill proposes that the Presiding Officers of this Parliament shall have the opportunity to cast a deliberative vote on all questions with a tied result being resolved in the negative. I assume that, in the vast majority of Bills, they would not exercise such a vote. This is the practice in the Australian Senate where the impartiality of the President is accepted.

Some of the strongest criticism was directed at a proposal made last year to consider a ballot paper formal even if the paper carried a name or mark that would enable the elector to be identified. In an impassioned defence, the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, "The very cornerstone of the secrecy of the ballot is that voters may not be identified with their ballot papers and with their voting intentions". I was convinced, and no such proposal is included in this Bill.

Clause 38 proposes changes to the rules about the refund of election deposits. Where five members are to be elected, the deposit will be refunded to candidates and members of groups who receive at least half a quota or about 8 1/3 per cent of the votes. Where one member is to be elected, the deposit will be refunded to all candidates who receive at least 10 per cent of the valid votes. An examination of the application of this proposed 10 per cent rule to the 1983 State election results showed that 25 candidates would have lost their deposits.

Under the existing requirement where a candidate must win 20 per cent of the leading candidate's primary vote, 26 candidates lost their deposits at the 1983 election. The present rule is not very fair because a candidate with 2 500 votes could lose his or her deposit in a safe electorate but with 2 500 votes could easily retain it in a closely contested electorate where a large group of candidates offered themselves. I believe that the present deposit rule discourages contests in safe seats and should be reformed.

One of the objectives of the Fair Representation Bill is to make voting easier. Governments should

do all they can to encourage the full and effective participation of the highest possible percentage of people in the political process.

Members will be aware that that activity is consistent with other Government activities since it came to office. The Government changed the Electoral Act to make it easier for people to get on the electoral roll by dispensing with such absurd provisions as the requirement for an elector's signature to be witnessed by a justice of the peace. When that situation was introduced a few years ago, the then Premier, Sir Charles Court, made no attempt to justify it. He did not say that there had been any evidence of people getting on the roll falsely. It was put into the Act clearly in order to retain the Kimberley seat for the Liberal Party. I am pleased to say that the Parliament, not just this Government, has now legislated to alter that Act. Members will therefore see that this attempt to make voting easier is in accordance with the general thrust of our policy.

At every election approximately 2.8 per cent and 3.7 per cent of votes cast for the Assembly and Council respectively are classified as informal. Some of these ineffective ballots are no doubt deliberate but many are honest and trivial mistakes which a slightly broader definition of a valid vote could retrieve. The broad thrust of the amendments proposed in clauses 57, 58, and 59 is to place the emphasis on whether the voter's intention is clear.

Criticisms of the relevant section have led to a re-examination of the reforms recently adopted with support from both sides of the Commonwealth Parliament. A rewording of the proposals has clarified how a vote may be classified as formal or informal. In the same way that the present Electoral Act permits certain types of error in voting like "X's" and a blank square, the amendments add two other permissible errors, provided the voter has marked a first preference and at least the same number of preferences as there are candidates to be elected, a repeated preference or a gap in the sequence of preferences will not invalidate a vote. Such a vote will be formal and counted as far as the voter's intention is clear. In other words, it will be counted up to the point of error.

Making voting easier is also the objective of the amendments in clause 54 which propose that the marking of preferences beyond the number to be elected should be optional. In Assembly elections this means one preference is essential while in three of the Legislative Council regions it will mean five preferences are necessary. The Government believes that this reform will be very popular because it gives an additional option to electors

without affecting existing voting rights. Voters may continue to mark preferences for all candidates if this is what they desire.

The same rules about marking the ballot papers are applied to elections in both Houses. It is in the marking of Legislative Council ballot papers that the benefits of the proposed optional preferential voting should be highest. Like most States, Tasmanians have registered up to 10 per cent informal votes for Senate elections under the old system where a preference had to be shown for every candidate. The same Tasmanian electors register approximately 3.8 per cent informal votes at their own Assembly elections in which a preference must be shown for the number to be elected, which is seven. In other words, where there is optional preferential voting.

Western Australians cast 3.7 per cent informal votes at the most recent Legislative Council elections, but I have every confidence that with optional preferential voting, the long ballot papers in the proposed multi-member elections will present no great problem to Western Australian electors.

When the casting of preferences is optional, some votes may have to be set aside as exhausted because no further preference is shown and the vote cannot therefore be distributed. Members may be surprised to learn that in Tasmanian Assembly elections as few as 3 per cent of votes are set aside as exhausted. In most elections, the votes of the major contenders are seldom distributed.

With these reforms to the marking of ballot papers the Government seeks to make voting easier and wishes to reduce the informal vote to the lowest possible percentage. I hope that we do not hear reactions based on the argument that these proposals are the thin end of the wedge towards optional voting because it is neither the policy nor the wish of the Government to change from that Australian custom; that is, the custom of compulsory voting.

Promises made to the people prior to the 1983 State election are fulfilled in the proposal for the electoral system of the Legislative Assembly. In clause 7 an alteration is proposed to the Constitution to ensure that at future redistributions the enrolment allocated to each Assembly district shall be within a range of from 10 per cent below to 10 per cent above the State average district enrolment. If the State average district enrolment is about 15 000 this means the commissioners have a range of approximately 3 000 from 13 500 to 16 500 to make allowance for things like community of interest, means of communication, distance from the capital, physical features, and the

boundaries of existing districts. To these five existing guidelines in the Electoral Districts Act, clause 77 proposes that a sixth be added; namely, "the trend of demographic change".

A guideline such as this is included in other electoral systems where it is available to assist commissioners in the preparation of a redistribution which will remain accurate for a longer period. It simply does not make good sense at a redistribution to set two districts at the same enrolment if all available demographic information indicates that one is likely to decrease in population while the other is likely to increase. If our Electoral Commissioners had been able to give consideration to population trends we would be less likely to already have a range of enrolment from 16 500 to 25 000 in the Perth metropolitan area less than three years after the 1981 redistribution.

A constitutional addition which is complementary to equal enrolments in Assembly districts is the requirement that each district must have the same number of members, whether that be one or more than one. This addition is designed to prevent another form of electoral abuse. If all districts had equal enrolments but some had two members while others had one, it would obviously be unfair.

This example would produce the same imbalance that exists among Assembly districts now where a group of approximately 20 000 electors in Perth has one representative but the same number of electors in the country have two representatives.

Bipartisan support in South Australia enabled the principles of the electoral system to be entrenched in the Constitution. The fair representation Bill proposes to entrench only two principles—that districts have enrolments within plus or minus 10 per cent of the State average and that they each return the same number of members. Like the wording of the South Australian Constitution, the proposal before us would permit a Tasmanian style multi-member system which places the same number of members in each district.

Unlike the South Australian Constitution, the entrenchment proposed here is restricted to the essential core principles.

Predecessors of members opposite brought a significant reform into the electoral system of this State when in 1974 they renounced the control of Parliament over part of the redistribution process. Under our present Electoral Districts Act a redistribution becomes law when the commissioners have completed their task, and this is how it should be. The Government would like to make

some logical extensions to this concept. Three refinements are proposed to enhance the automatic redistribution arrangements. Firstly, in clause 73 the independent Electoral Commissioners are established as standing appointments instead of being called into existence under the phrase "the Governor may appoint". It is no good to have automatic arrangements for a redistribution if the people necessary to perform the task are not available to do so. In 1961 all the conditions existed to require a redistribution yet nothing happened. The Government of the day, which happened to be a Liberal Government, had to be ordered by the Supreme Court before the work was commenced.

Most recent redistributions in Western Australia have been brought about by changes in the numbers of members and changes made by Parliament to the boundaries of the three electoral areas. A criterion to bring about a redistribution is included in the Electoral Districts Act. Enrolments at each Assembly election must at present be reviewed and if eight or more districts exceed the quota by more than 20 per cent, a redistribution is required. Apart from the fact that the four statutory seats of the north-west are excluded from this review, the criterion is both excessively loose and infrequently applied.

The Government proposes in clause 79 that the criterion for an automatic redistribution be when eight or more districts exceed the State average district enrolment by more than 10 per cent for a period of not less than two months. Since a redistribution takes approximately six months, clause 79 also prevents the commencement of a redistribution within the last 12 months of an Assembly term. If a redistribution became due in that period it would have to wait until after the election.

It is also proposed that Parliament should lose the power to order a redistribution by resolution. The only other situation where a redistribution could be required under the proposed new arrangements is if the number of members were altered, in which case Parliament could order a special redistribution in the same way as this legislation proposes in clause 75.

The third refinement to the automatic redistribution arrangements is found in the deletions proposed by clauses 74 and 80. No boundaries are to be written into the Act and no longer will Parliament and parliamentarians be involved in the drawing of electoral boundaries. This job must be handled exclusively by independent Electoral Commissioners.

Mr Rushton interjected.

Mr TONKIN: It is sad but true that history shows when those in power take up the electoral

boundary pencil they find it extraordinarily difficult to resist the temptation to cheat.

Mr Clarko: Would you do that yourself?

Mr TONKIN: I find the interjection from the member for Dale amazing because we are proposing that three commissioners carry this out. We have a situation at present where the member is a member of this Parliament only because he drew the line on the map. That is not fair.

Mr Clarko: How would you draw the line?

Mr TONKIN: I will not draw any lines.

Mr Clarko: You will get commissioners from the Labor Party hatchet bag to decide.

Mr TONKIN: Suffice it to say that examples of this corrupt art form are close to hand! With these three refinements our system will be starting to look respectable. The drawing of all electoral boundaries will be placed in the hands of trustworthy authorities who must work according to agreed democratic principles.

To make the system even better, the Government believes that there is scope for greater public involvement in the redistribution process. Clause 75 sets out a new procedure modelled on the reformed Commonwealth Electoral Act which has just been successfully tested through a redistribution in all States. Briefly, the proposal is for the commissioners to invite written submissions from the people, to invite comment on these submissions, to publish initial recommendations to which objections may be made and then, after considering all the evidence, to make their final report which will automatically become law.

This Bill presents an historic opportunity to rationalise all boundaries. I believe that the commissioners ought to seize this opportunity and seek the views of the people about the natural communities of interest that may exist. Our present boundaries are partly the legacies of past population distributions, partly the result of self-seeking *ad hoc* decisions, and partly the useful contributions of dedicated commissioners.

Of course, the comments I have made about the boundaries today and on other occasions can never in any way be taken as a criticism of the commissioners who have done their job fairly and well within the parameters they have been set. Once set, boundaries have a habit of persisting and I was even tempted to propose the temporary suspension of the guideline which requires the commissioners to give consideration to existing boundaries.

Mr Clarko: Does this Bill totally embody the one-vote-one-value principle?

Mr TONKIN: This could have really freed the commissioners, but I think that the scope of the reforms will permit a sensible rationalisation of boundaries to occur. I have said that this Bill is an attempt at compromise.

Mr Clarko: A compromise like a half-virgin? There are some things on which you cannot compromise. You either believe in one-vote-one-value or you don't.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Clarko: Forty-eight pages contain a lot of words to listen to.

Mr Carr: I do not know why you are allowed to get away with these interjections for such a long time. You are abusing the parliamentary system.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TONKIN: Just what decisions are made, which districts will be abolished and what precise effect will occur in each area, are matters for the commissioners alone. However, some broad statements can be made about the meaning of a redistribution done according to the principles proposed. Pilbara is the district with the enrolment closest to the State average, but remote Kimberley has more than 2 200 electors above average.

The two desert electorates of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre have incredibly low enrolments of 68.9 per cent and 75.8 per cent respectively below the State average. Drastic changes will be necessary to bring these enrolments back inside the 10 per cent allowance. Districts in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area need approximately 4 900 electors to bring them up to the State average, while districts in Perth have approximately 4 400 electors above the average. Of course these estimates are purely conjecture because only the commissioners can decide where to utilise the plus or minus 10 per cent margin of allowance.

My calculations indicate that electors in and around the metropolitan area are entitled to approximately eight additional districts. Since an Assembly of 57 districts is proposed as a constant, these eight seats become available as a result of the redistribution correcting the over-representation in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area by about seven and in the north-west statutory area by one. Only the next election is capable of telling us the effect in party political terms, but these rules will ensure a fair contest.

Malapportionment allocates representation unfairly and when it is reformed we must face up to the fact that those who previously benefited must lose their unfair advantage while those pre-

viously treated unjustly must be placed on an equal footing.

It is crucially important that the Assembly be elected democratically. We cannot risk the possibility of government by the representatives of a minority of electors. This very risky situation is possible under the present system of malapportionment. It is risky because the legitimacy of every Act and the whole fabric of government rests on the legitimacy of the Parliament to make laws. Every citizen is equally obliged to obey these laws and should, therefore, have an equal say in electing those who formulate the laws. By passing this Bill, our Parliament will leave Queensland as the only example in Australia where a Government can be elected from unequal enrolment electorates. Western Australians should no longer have to suffer the embarrassment of having the most malapportioned lower House in the country.

Last year, Hon. Graham MacKinnon MLC made the constructive suggestion of a regional proportional representation election system for the Legislative Council. The idea seemed to offer an interesting compromise midway between the existing provincial structure and the defeated proposal for a Statewide single electorate. More importantly the regional proposal appeared capable of providing constructive and satisfactory answers to most of the criticisms that were made of the whole State electorate. Members will be aware that the National Party recently introduced a Bill which proposed a similar idea and in the debate last year the Australian Democrats floated a four region scheme as an alternative worth consideration.

With this promising background, the regional idea seemed worth investigating. Some places where regional proportional electoral systems operate were identified—namely, Norway, Ireland and Tasmania—and each of these systems was investigated. All three were found to work very well and their very democratic characteristics had earned each of them an exceptionally high level of acceptance in their respective communities. This level of acceptance by electors and parties alike is a goal which I sincerely hope can be achieved by the fair representation Bill. Certainly the fair representation Bill contains the best features, bar one, of these other systems in addition to incorporating the best of other Australian electoral experience. I say, "bar one" and that one is, of course, vote weighting to which I shall return in a moment.

The main criticisms of the whole State electorate were that parties based in Perth would control who was endorsed and therefore elected; that members of the Legislative Council would focus

on Perth where most electors live and would ignore country people; that members would not be accountable to any group in particular and, therefore, electors would not have identifiable members in the upper House; and, finally, that the large areas made accessibility to members a factor that ought to be considered in Western Australia.

As a result of these positive suggestions, research into other systems, and the desire to produce a compromise acceptable to Parliament, clause 79 of this Bill proposes that the State be divided into four regions from which members are to be elected to the Legislative Council. Each region is proposed to contain a contiguous group of whole Assembly districts as follows—

a northern and eastern region of three districts analogous to the present north-west statutory area;

an agriculture region of 16 districts analogous to the present agricultural, mining and pastoral area;

a north metropolitan region of 19 districts; and,

a south metropolitan region of 19 districts.

The word "analogous" is deliberately chosen because it is the Electoral Commissioners who will decide which districts are placed in which region according to the broad geographical descriptions set out in clause 79.

The linkages proposed between council regions and assembly districts are automatically renewed at each redistribution so that the proposed structure and weighting is maintained into the future.

Each region will have identifiable upper House members who are directly accountable to the electors in that region. Sensible political parties that wish to enhance their electoral prospects will have to make sure that there is a strong regional influence on the preselection process, especially in the country. Sensible members would establish an electorate office in their region to keep in touch with local opinion, and especially in the country, they would be wise to arrange these offices carefully throughout the whole region. No part of any region can be neglected politically because votes from every corner contribute towards the final result.

The system of election could in this way help to change the treatment of many electors in safe country seats from neglect to interest. The ALP State Conference has recommended to the Government that the electorate office of each country member be equipped with a 008 telephone facility so that any country elector may contact his or her member for the cost of a local call.

Clause 10 allocates an uneven number of MLCs to be elected at each election in each region as follows—

northern and eastern = 1 per election, making 2 members in all;

agricultural = 5 per election, making 10 members in all;

north metropolitan = 5 per election, making 10 members in all;

south metropolitan = 5 per election, making 10 members in all;

Both the National Party and Hon. Graham MacKinnon proposed even numbers to be elected at each election, but I must point out that an uneven number is superior. With an uneven number elected by proportional representation, the group winning a majority of the votes is guaranteed a majority of the seats. With an even number to be elected—say six—a party could win three seats with any vote in the range from a magnificent 57.1 per cent down to a disastrous “defeat” of 42.86 per cent. The vote necessary to win a majority of seats is so high that it makes it difficult and the result is therefore likely always to end up undecided with equal numbers won by the Government and the Opposition. In a sense, all the voters of the region are disfranchised.

Tasmania has one of the best multi-member schemes with the five electoral divisions each returning the uneven number of seven members. Ideally, every election ought to be for multiple members; in fact three at least.

However the geography and population distribution of our State make it very difficult to achieve this ideal in the north. With three districts in the proposed northern region, an allocation of three members per election would create gross malapportionment of the order of 75 per cent below the State average per member. On the other hand to allocate additional districts to the northern region so that it contained sufficient electors to bring the weighting within a reasonable variation would mean the extension of the northern region until it covered two-thirds of the State. For these reasons the proposal is to elect one member at each election to represent the northern region.

One of the tests of an electoral system is that it should not allow control to be won from a narrow, sectional base. I believe that the proposal can ensure that the upper House system will pass this test. To win a Council election a party must win in three of the four regions. No party will be able to win with exclusively metropolitan or exclusively country support. What a contrast this is with the present system, where it is possible for a party to win control of the Council without having to win

so much as a single province in the metropolitan area where two-thirds of the people live!

Critics of proportional representation last year said it was all an ALP plot to gain absolute power, it would produce a tied House, and it would also hand the balance of power to small parties. The member for Karrinyup managed to squeeze all these contradictory points into one speech. I think the internal inconsistencies in these criticisms are so startling that they can be discounted. I think it is fair to say that most people agree the upper House should be elected differently from the lower House. The larger regional electorates and proportional representation will encourage a broader regional viewpoint in the upper House.

It is the definition of the proportional representation system that parties will win seats in proportion to the votes they receive.

For each quota of approximately 16.7 per cent of the votes won in a five-member election, a party or group must gain a member. Minorities and independents are more likely to win a seat, and for these reasons I believe the proposal is absolutely fair to political parties. The relatively even match between the support of the Government and the Opposition would be faithfully reflected in the Council instead of the shockingly biased representation that exists there now.

It will be fairer to women too, because under a similar system in Norway, 25 per cent of the members are female, and I hope that our parties and electors will use the system to increase female representation in our Parliament.

The most important participants are the electors, so is the fair representation Bill fair to electors? Multi-member elections give the voter a far greater choice of candidates, both within and between political parties. There is no such thing as an uncontested seat any more, which means no elector will be denied the right to participate. The vote from every elector in the whole region is counted and contributes to the final result.

In an election for a single member it is possible for 49 per cent of the votes to be wasted on the losing candidate. When five are to be elected the wasted votes cannot exceed 16.6 per cent and this means that most electors—in fact about 75 per cent of electors—see a person for whom they voted become elected. To me this seems a great improvement, because in safe Labor areas a Liberal voter at present would not have a Liberal member and in safe Liberal areas the opposite is true. It is not a matter of members saying they represent everyone, it is a matter of the elector knowing there is a member with whom he or she will feel comfortable, and in combination with the regional struc-

ture this should ensure that there is a personalised element for members and electors alike.

The increasingly volatile behaviour of Australian electors has shaken the confidence we have traditionally placed in the single-member electorate. The Liberal Party newspaper, *The Western Reporter*, of June 1984 lamented the wildly fluctuating Federal representation in Western Australia. A quotation from that paper reads like an argument for proportional representation—

In general terms, it would be preferable for a bigger proportion of the seats to be relatively safer and for the remainder to be decidedly more marginal.

This would achieve the dual effect of a reasonable level of stability, while also allowing the mood of the electorate to be reflected quickly.

One final point about proportional representation relates to the proposed method of counting votes in schedule one. The proposal follows recent Commonwealth Electoral Act reforms to the vote-counting method for Senate elections. These reforms were adopted with bipartisan support. Under the old system, when a surplus had to be transferred, a random sample of votes was taken. In a close election this was a very doubtful procedure and had proved to be capable of producing a different result at a recount. Instead of taking a random sample when a surplus has to be transferred, the proposed system transfers all of the successful candidate's votes on to his or her next preference, but at a reduced value. This method will produce the same result at a recount. It is more accurate and retains more of the votes in the count.

In clauses 34 and 64 members will find that there is a regional focus to the conduct of elections. Just as districts and provinces have a returning officer at present, the proposal is that each region would be similarly organised. Nominations, the count, the declaration and all the normal election processes are decentralised to the regions.

When a casual vacancy occurs amongst members elected from the proposed regions, clause 11 provides for a replacement to be appointed to serve out the remainder of the term. These arrangements are comprehensive and are set out in amendments to sections 8C, 8D and 8E of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act. The intention of these amendments is to ensure that casual vacancy replacements are of the same party. Reference is made back to the ballot papers of the relevant election and out of the group from which

the vacancy has arisen a replacement can be appointed, provided that person is willing to serve and is a member of the same party. In the case of independents or where no member of a party can be found, provision is also made for a joint sitting of this Parliament to appoint a replacement.

A closely regulated appointment system seems the fairest way to replace a casual vacancy. There are two reasons for this: Firstly, proportional representation is likely to produce close results, and in this situation I am sure that nobody would like to see another Albert Field appear. Secondly, a by-election in a region would almost certainly hand the seat to a member of a major party, but the vacancy could easily have occurred in a seat which had been held by an independent or a member of a small party.

Members will note this proposal was made to direct small parties and independents who came from one of the major parties.

A small amendment to the Constitution in clause 7 is necessary to make these appointments possible.

In making the transition from the present provincial structure to the proposed regional structure the Government could have opted for a completely fresh start. Clause 10 shows that a gradual transition is proposed instead. At the next election it is proposed that 16 councillors be elected from the regions and that these people will serve alongside the 17 who were elected in 1983 from the provinces. At the election after next, the final step to the new system will be taken when the other 16 members are elected from the regions. In the interim period it is proposed that there will be 33 members of the Legislative Council and that members elected from provinces will continue to represent their provinces.

Amendments proposed in clause 8 arrange for Legislative Councillors to be elected for two terms of the Legislative Assembly. A general election is proposed to mean an election in every Assembly district together with an election for the longest serving half of the councillors in each region. In other words, it is a proposal for simultaneous elections of both Houses.

The present fixed six-year terms permit absurd situations to occur. In 1983 defeated councillors actually sat in this Parliament and voted while their legitimately elected replacements had to wait until 22 May before taking their seats. The Government believes that two Assembly terms constitutes a significantly different term of office and that the proposed change to proportional election will guarantee that the Council is clearly differentiated from the Assembly.

Fears that this sensible reform may affect the independence of the Council are not substantiated by experience in those States where simultaneous elections occur. The franchise reform of 1965 also sensibly brought elections into alignment by changing the Council from biennial to triennial elections. Ever since that reform, elections for the Assembly and the longest serving half of the Council have been run simultaneously and it is a logical follow-through to consolidate this linkage.

Some Opposition members seemed to believe last year that the ghost of abolition of the Council could be used to discredit the Government's reform proposals. At the recent Australian Labor Party National Conference the Western Australian Branch sought unsuccessfully to delete the abolition clause from the Federal platform. Since it is impossible for any Federal Government to abolish a State House of Parliament it is a meaningless item unless a State Government agrees. This Government and the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Labor Party do not have a policy of abolition. In fact, I hope that if these proposed reforms are adopted the Legislative Council will grow in stature into a truly useful part of this Parliament.

Members opposite are also fully aware that neither House of this Parliament may be abolished without the approval of the people at a referendum. There are few stronger safeguards available in a democracy. So, if the abolition ghost is stirred again, perhaps we will all know that the person responsible is avoiding discussion of the real issues in this Bill.

Last year several members were very unkind in their comments about special parliamentary superannuation arrangements. The member for Katanning-Roe said it was the "candy in the package" while the member for Gascoyne said bluntly that the Government was trying to "buy" approval for the changes. I am pleased to announce that no special pension arrangements are proposed this year.

Trenchant criticism was delivered in the 1983 debates of the proposed reduction of the Council from 34 to 22 members. Opposition spokespeople thought that such a reduction was excessive, that it would reduce country representation, and that it would undermine the status of the Council and make the committee system unworkable. In fairness, the Legislative Council has had 30 members for most of its history, so the Government reconsidered this matter in the light of criticisms. Both Hon. Graham MacKinnon MLC and the National Party proposed a Council of 32 members, which is a slight concession to the fact that we already have an excess of politicians. Sixteen

members retiring at each election also permitted the creation of the logical regional structure I have described.

Vote weighting is the final aspect of the proposed Legislative Council regional system that remains to be explained. By now everyone here ought to be aware that the Government would prefer the whole electoral system to be built on the principle of one-vote-one value.

South Africa is newsworthy at the moment because the electoral system there does not permit over 70 per cent of the population to have any representation in the Parliament. In Western Australia the current electoral system restricts 70 per cent of the population to half the representation that it should have. The difference between the two systems is, to me, a matter of degree. Neither is democratic, nor is it democratic to have a one-party house which we effectively have had ever since the Legislative Council was formed.

In the interest of seeking a compromise that may be acceptable to the whole Parliament the Government now proposes that there be some vote weighting in one House, the Legislative Council, in an analogous way to the Senate. There does not seem to be much logic in the present system of weighting which disadvantages the same group of electors in both Houses of Parliament.

By allocating a different number of districts to each region, the fair representation Bill has built in a structural weighting in favour of the proposed agricultural and northern regions. If a comparison is made between the State average enrolment per member and the enrolment per member in each of the regions, the metropolitan regions are each 7 per cent above average while the agricultural and northern regions are respectively 11 per cent and 17 per cent below the average.

On top of this built-in weighting, recall that the Electoral Commissioners may allocate district enrolments anywhere from 10 per cent below to 10 per cent above the average district enrolment. Although it is unlikely to occur, it is possible that the commissioners could choose to use the extremes of the 10 per cent margin of allowance. If they did so the number of electors per member in the northern region could be 24.2 per cent below the State average, while the metropolitan regions could be 17.3 per cent above.

Another way to look at vote weighting is to ask how many votes are required to enable a candidate to become elected in different regions. In the metropolitan region a quota of votes will be approximately 47 200. In the agricultural region the figure will be 39 600; and, in the northern region 22 000. The ratios among these figures are

2.14: 1.8:1. It will take more than twice as many votes for a candidate to become elected in Perth than it takes for him to become elected in the north.

Of the regional vote weighting *The Australian* of 12 April 1984 said in its editorial entitled, "A Special Case For The Country Voter"—

Its purpose is to enable rural voters to obtain a more generous representation in the Council than their numbers may justify and to retain some balance in favour of the remote parts of the State.

This proposition is a reasonable compromise. The provision of proportional representation for Upper House elections will enable minority voices throughout Western Australia to be heard, and there are many who believe that in a State the size of Western Europe, adequate representation for people living vast distances from the capital can only be ensured if there is some electoral loading in their favour.

The State Liberal Party should be very cautious in its approach to the Government's plan. If it seems it is reluctant to accept a fairer electoral system, even one which takes account of the special needs of country voters, it will make a mockery of its claims to uphold the principles of democratic parliamentary Government.

Members will notice that *The Australian* editorial did not mention the equality between city and country that is also promoted by having two regions each.

The editorial of 12 April 1984 in *The West Australian* said of the revised electoral reform proposals that "... in the main they represent a welcome advance". Like *The Australian* editorial, *The West Australian* also rang a warning bell when the editor said—

Liberal MPs are apt to quote high sounding principles in defence of the present system, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to see their unwillingness to accept reform as anything other than a stubborn refusal to surrender their hold on a system that has served them well.

Members of the Legislative Council in this State struggle to maintain the dignity, prestige and legitimacy of the upper House while all the time their endeavours are undermined by the electoral system. When the wishes of the people are accurately reflected in the representation to the Council, the status of both councillors and their House will surely be enhanced. This fair representation Bill offers all members and especially councillors

the opportunity to participate in a reconstructed Parliament capable of earning the respect of all Western Australians.

Electoral reform was promised to the electors as a matter of priority in 1983. The promises made include many of the concepts in the Bill before us, such as making voting easier and ensuring fairness to electors and to parties. Experience in other Australian States and overseas shows that there is a direct relationship between the degree to which an electoral system is democratic and the degree of acceptance of the system. Nobody can pretend that there is general acceptance of the electoral system here.

A more accurate description of the way people are coming to regard our electoral system could be summed up by the phrase "General dissatisfaction". The Opposition is said to be exploring alternatives, the Democrats advocate reform, and the National Party has presented a reform Bill. Defenders of gross malapportionment are becoming harder and harder to find.

Electoral reform is a process which often faces a "catch 22" situation. Those who complain about the system are usually not in control of setting the rules, whereas those who benefit from the existing electoral arrangements have to put principle above self-interest before reform may come about. This may seem a lot to ask, but I believe that there are men and women of principle in our Parliament who are prepared to accept reform if it is a fair thing.

Everything the Government could reasonably be expected to do has been done in the preparation of this compromise Bill. After the long process of rejection, review, analysis, discussion, and compromise, I believe the Government has produced a fair proposal. Because all this is a rather special Bill, the ultimate judgment about whether it is a fair thing is up to the people; but the judgment about whether the people should be asked to decide is the responsibility of this Parliament. The recent vote to do away with capital punishment shows that a majority of members is prepared to accept reform.

None of us here would doubt the ultimate authority of the people and I suggest that Parliament has a duty to ensure that the people are consulted on the fair representation Bill. The people should be given the opportunity to adopt an electoral system that will allow us all to be proud to make comparisons between our Parliament and those in other States and countries.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Mensaros.

PAWNBROKERS AMENDMENT BILL*Second Reading*

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [3.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This is a short Bill—and hence the short second reading speech—which is designed to overcome a particularly unsavoury practice which has been adopted by one pawnbroker operating in Perth.

The problem which this Bill seeks to remedy was brought to the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs earlier this year following unsuccessful prosecutions instituted by the Police under the Pawnbrokers Act against City Loan Office.

These proceedings indicated that City Loan Office was avoiding the operation of the Pawnbrokers Act by purchasing goods which consumers had intended to pledge or pawn and then granting to them an option to repurchase those goods at a later time and at a far greater price than City Loan Office had purchased them for.

The court held that this was not a pawnbroking transaction, and that the obligations, little as they are under the Pawnbrokers Act, did not apply and the pawnbroker could dispose of them before the statutory limit of three months.

Consumers often did not know the nature or effect of the documentation they were signing and most did not realise that what was happening was in fact a sale of goods. Certainly they did not intend to sell goods to the pawnbroker.

As well, this practice effectively disguised what rate of interest was payable by the consumer in the event he repurchased the goods.

Inquiries have indicated that on a number of documents sighted by police officers at the premises of City Loan Office, the principal of the firm has noted an effective rate of interest on the option to repurchase transactions. These rates are not disclosed on the consumer's copy of the agreement but recorded effective rates up to 240 per cent per annum.

Common rates noted by police officers were 80 per cent, 66.6 per cent, 100 per cent, and 56 per cent. It is little wonder this business sought to hide its rate of interest in the manner outlined above.

The Minister for Consumer Affairs sought to discourage this practice within the pawnbroking industry, writing to all pawnbrokers seeking that they desist from the practice. To the Minister's knowledge only City Loan Office continues in this vein.

The Minister for Consumer Affairs is reassured by other pawnbrokers who do not act in this fashion and who disapprove of the practice as a means to avoid the operations of the Pawnbrokers Act.

This amendment, to prohibit the practice, is designed to ensure that a licensed pawnbroker reverts to the normal arrangement of taking a pledge over goods. It does this by prohibiting a licensed pawnbroker from purchasing goods from another person and, having so bought, granting to the seller an option to repurchase within a particular period for a higher price than the price at which he purchased the goods in the first instance. It will mean he cannot effectively charge interest if he wishes to engage in the practice as he would be obliged to sell at the same purchase price. This seems unlikely, if the pawnbroker wished to remain in business.

This amendment, with significant monetary and punitive sanctions, will effectively discourage the practice of City Loan Office and cause it to revert to a normal pawnbroking transaction.

This Bill is, however, only an interim measure. The Government is proposing a review of this legislation by the Law Reform Commission. It is expected that this review will be completed within 12 months and, thereafter, thoroughly modernised legislation be introduced to replace the existing Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Trethowan.

WHEAT MARKETING AMENDMENT BILL*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 20 September.

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [3.36 p.m.]: This Bill was only introduced late last week. It is an urgent Bill and the Minister for Agriculture contacted me later in the week and asked whether the Opposition would be prepared to debate the legislation today. We have readily acquiesced to his request.

The Bill is urgent, because the arrangements for pricing to which it refers must be put into place by 1 October, which is the date of the new year for wheat marketing. The difficulties would not be insurmountable, but it would be awkward if this amending Bill were not passed by the Parliament in time to complement the Commonwealth Bill which, I understand, will be put in place by that date.

This Bill is a stopgap measure. I understand the Federal Government intends to introduce a new Wheat Marketing Act which will be followed by

complementary State legislation. We would be very keen to study that legislation to ascertain what it entails.

It is apparent that some of the measures which will be dealt with in that legislation are those which have been discussed widely by rural organisations and the Australian Wheat Growers Federation. Those issues include permit selling, which has created some debate to date, and which doubtless will be a matter which is discussed keenly when the Bill comes before the House.

The two main factors in this Bill are, firstly, the ability to change the pricing formula for wheat for human consumption. In the past it has been claimed at one stage or another that, under the previous formula, wheat growers have subsidised the consumer to a degree.

Approximately three or four years ago, the position was rectified and it was hoped the formula would carry us through for some time. Now it has been decided to change the formula and I believe the new formula which has been put forward is acceptable; that is, that the average export price f.o.b. in each of the three preceding quarters will be taken as the acceptable price for wheat for domestic use.

On top of this, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry has the power to approve amounts which are costs incurred by the Australian Wheat Board in selling wheat for human consumption, costs which are greater than those associated with selling wheat for human consumption on the export market. That might sound fairly complicated, but in fact it is not.

What it does is guarantee the producer of wheat throughout Australia a fair price compared with that attained on the international market, and it also guarantees the consumer the same fair price. I understand that, with the pricing arrangements to be put in place, there will be a reduction in the price of wheat sold for human consumption, and this news will be received gladly by consumers. The Minister in his second reading speech estimated, from memory, a possible reduction to wheat and flour millers of about \$25 a tonne. Again, that will be appreciated by consumers. Of course, that amount will fluctuate as the world market price for wheat fluctuates.

The second major amendment in the Bill relates to the levying of a toll to cover the Tasmanian freight equalisation programme, and I understand that the toll will be in the order of \$3 a tonne on all wheat sold for domestic human consumption.

The freight subsidy to Tasmania has been the subject of debate for many years. The Commonwealth Government, in its wisdom, decided to

compensate our only island State for not having rail communication between it and the mainland States. That compensation has been in the form of a subsidy on the freight for goods going into and coming out of Tasmania.

This has caused some heartburning in the industry, and with some justification, because some wheat producers believe that this decision by the Commonwealth Government should be a charge upon the taxpayers of Australia. They believe that any subsidy to the Tasmanian transport system should be provided from Consolidated Revenue rather than being a charge applied to just a section of the community. The wheat growers have a very valid point. Spreading the toll over the entire community would not involve a very great charge, and at the same time it would relieve the wheat growers of an impost which, although seemingly small, will, by virtue of a diminishing margin in the growing of wheat, have a fairly significant effect on returns to growers.

As a matter of interest I can indicate that some years ago, when this matter was discussed as it is regularly at Agricultural Council meetings, one aspect of the subsidy brought to the notice of the council was that Tasmania not only had a virtual freight advantage, but also was able, to a degree, to nominate the ports from which it would get its grain. As a result, it was nominating ports from which it could get hard wheat and high protein wheat.

It was really getting the best of both worlds, so much so that one of its major manufacturing industries—and it does not have a tremendous number of them—became the manufacturer of starch. Mainland manufacturers found they could not compete with Tasmania because that State was buying its wheat at a price not available to the mainland States, and was also able to ship the manufactured product back to the mainland with the help of the freight subsidy. We did not get too serious about the matter because, as I have said, Tasmania does not have a great number of manufacturing industries. Nevertheless it is an interesting point that reinforces the thoughts of wheat producers that, if there is to be a subsidy, it should be a subsidy applied equally throughout the taxpayers of Australia. I go along with that concept.

The other amendments contained in the Bill are fairly small. We recognise the urgency of having the Bill passed today and I assure the Government that the Opposition fully supports these amendments.

MR EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [3.47 p.m.]: I record the Govern-

ment's appreciation of the Opposition's co-operation in allowing this measure to go forward today. The unseemly haste is not altogether the fault of the Government, but goes back to a delay in the Commonwealth's preparation of its legislation. The only solution to take advantage of the offer of saving the \$25 a tonne to millers was too good an opportunity to miss. The Bill seeks an extension of the existing arrangement. We will have the opportunity to discuss some of the problems mentioned by the member for Katanning-Roe when the complementary legislation to the Commonwealth Government's new Act is before the House. I reiterate that this is an extension of the existing provision. Again, I thank the Opposition for its ready co-operation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Evans (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

STATE ENGINEERING WORKS BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

MR McIVER (Avon—Minister for Works) [3.52 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** The question before the Chair is that the Bill be now read a third time. I should not really have to put that question, but I was not sure whether the member for Floreat was seeking my call. Members should indicate whether they are seeking my call because they have a habit of standing up and down in this place without seeking my call. Is the member for Floreat seeking my call?

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [3.53 p.m.]: Mr Deputy Speaker, having handled the Bill and having dealt with it so far, I did not think there was any doubt about that.

Mr Tonkin: Members are standing up all the time. One does not know whether they are seeking the call or not.

Mr MENSAROS: I want only very briefly to say that—

Mr Tonkin: I would not bet on that.

Mr MENSAROS: —after lengthy debate in the second reading, we put our amendments in the Committee stage and I want to emphasise that the fact that we did not divide should not be interpreted to mean that we were not very strong on the amendments which we advocated. We reluctantly do not oppose the Bill; however, it does not provide fair competitive conditions to the State Engineering Works, which was put forward as a reason for the Bill's existence by the Government. I hope my point will be noted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 15 August.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [3.55 p.m.]: I take up the debate for the Opposition on this Bill. The Bill proposes the repeal of the Forests Act, the National Parks Act, and parts of the Wildlife Conservation Act, and provides for the creation of a Department of Conservation and Land Management and for the establishment of three separate authorities, the Lands and Forest Commission, the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and the Forest Production Council. The Bill also provides for a category of marine parks and marine reserves to be established, and makes provision for the vesting of all public reserves in the authority or the commission, bearing in mind those bodies will have the control of the bulk of public land in Western Australia, and the Government has indicated it will increase the security of tenure and purpose on public land reserves for special purposes. This will completely encompass the existing Forests Department, the National Parks Authority, and the wildlife services.

While the Government has called this conservation and land management legislation CALM legislation, I assure the Government that the proposal is anything but calm; in fact, it is creating a storm in the community; and if the Government has its way, it will result in the creation of a mega-department, which department will create mega-problems for proper land management in this State.

Also, it is important in the consideration of this Bill that we look at the reasons that the Government has introduced the legislation—its genesis or where the first seeds were sown. My research took me back to the days when disputes arose relating to wood chipping and to the days when disputes occurred over bauxite mining. It is very interesting that the people involved in the planning and conservation field today experience some of the problems experienced by those working in the same field in yesteryear.

In *The West Australian* of 7 February 1979 under the headline, "Bauxite sit-ins to continue" appears the following article—

The WA Campaign to Save Native Forests is planning more protests at alumina industry development sites in an effort to stop what it claims is the destruction of Darling Range jarrah forests.

"Nothing is more certain," the CSNF president, Mr Alan Tingay said yesterday.

It also said—

"It is only a matter of working out the place, the time and the tactics," he said.

The same dispute continued month after month and on 28 May 1979 under the headline, "Wagerup Protest: Day-3 hint of trouble", appeared the following article—

WAROONA: A second occupation of Alcoa's Wagerup alumina refinery site by protesters went without incident in the weekend—but the possibility of a confrontation looms today.

The 25 protesters held a secret strategy meeting at their camp site yesterday and then released a brief statement through Mr Neil Bartholomaeus, an organiser for the Campaign to Save Native Forests.

Mr Bartholomaeus, a member of the occupation party, said that the group had discussed potential action on the work site this morning.

There were legal reasons why the group could not even talk about the possibility of obstructing machinery.

It is interesting to note that Bartholomaeus not only played an active part in that organisation, but was also a candidate for the Australian Labor Party, was a member of that party's executive and was also a person very much to the fore in the structuring of the current forest and environment policy of the ALP both at the 1980 and the 1982 Conferences, and is still within the seams of the political organisation today.

A third campaign was held, and a spokesman was Mr W. Haire. *The West Australian* of Saturday, 1 September 1979 referred to the third campaign of illegal occupation of the Alcoa site.

The following was reported in *The West Australian* on Friday, 20 October 1983, under the headline "Protesters may occupy refinery"—

Environmentalists have been trained in methods of non-violent action in preparation for a possible occupation of the Wagerup alumina refinery site

Mr Neil Bartholomaeus, of the Campaign to Save Native Forests said yesterday that it seemed inevitable that the occupation would take place once the Government had approved construction of the refinery.

He said: "Regular camps have been held recently where concerned people have been instructed by two experienced people from America in methods of non violent action and passive resistance.

Such was the nature of the some of activities which took place in the 1970s. That point is important, because the Government stated in its second reading speech notes on this Bill that the previous Government adopted a confrontationist attitude. I will have something to say about that in due course, because that attitude was not adopted by the previous Government, but by some people who were working against the decision of the Government, and who were pursuing a political purpose rather than an environmental cause.

It is important for members in this House to note that in March 1981 class action was taken out in the court in the United States of America by the Conservation Council. That was the first time such action was taken out by an Australian organisation. The class action was sought to prevent bauxite mining in the Darling Range, but was unsuccessful.

That illustrates the actions of groups in the 1970s, and in the early part of the 1980s. While I do not condemn any environmental group—I have been involved in the commencement of many—I do believe some people involved with the groups have pursued a political viewpoint rather than the interests of the conservationist and environment movement. I believe those people have done the movement a great disservice.

With respect to the issues before us today, I would like to know where those key people are now. The Government has announced that it will spend \$26 million on the Mandurah area. I am sure those people who expressed their opinions loudly in the 1970s will wish to make their opinions known on this issue. There are a number of

questions to answer. What will happen to the marine life in Mandurah? What will happen to the ocean area? Will there be any degradation to the dunes, or any changes made to the beach as a result of the channel which will be made in the area?

I am suggesting that the environmental and conservation groups were active when a Liberal-Country Party was in Government.

Mr Brian Burke: We are spending \$900 000 to find out the answers.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Government may well be spending that money, but I will come back to that point about the seeking of further opinions and advice at a later stage. The point I am making is that during the 1970s, and the early part of the 1980s, the former Government was harassed continually by people who were politically motivated and did not have the best interests of the State in mind.

The Government is spending \$900 000 to ascertain whether a casino should be built on Burswood Island.

Mr Brian Burke: We are just doing an environmental impact statement on that.

Mr BLAIKIE: It is very interesting for the Premier to say that the Government is "just doing an environmental impact statement" on Burswood Island. Let me remind the Premier, and have it recorded for the House, that the reason the Government is proceeding with the EPA study is that the member for South Central Metropolitan Province—

Mr Brian Burke: That is wrong!

Mr BLAIKIE: —Hon. Phillip Pandal wrote to the Environmental Protection Authority and requested that a report be prepared. That action was not initiated by the Government. It is my belief the Government would have built the casino without holding an inquiry, or seeking a report.

Burswood Island is an important open area within Perth city. It is an area which ought to attract the attention of environmental groups and people involved in the conservation movement to ensure that the Government makes proper use of it. However, the environmental movement appears to be relatively quiet on this matter. I look forward to receiving some comment from the movement on this matter, the Austmark development, and on the smelter proposal for the south-west.

The Premier should not be under the misapprehension that I am against development; I do support balanced development, with environmental safeguards built into it.

During the 1970s and the early 1980s some key people who were identified with the Australian Labor Party were beating a very big drum. My criticism of those people now is that they are now silent. They have taken a softly, softly approach with this Government. Such approaches will ensure that the conservation and environmental movements will end up with nothing.

As a result of the influence of the people I have mentioned we have been saddled with a disastrous forests management policy. We all know that the Government has issued an order to stop the cutting of timber in the Shannon River basin area. That decision meant that some 20 per cent of our hardwood supplies was effectively denied to the timber industry. That is a statement of fact. In order to meet that guarantee, which the Australian Labor Party made at its 1982 Conference, timber will come from "other" areas within the Forests Department according to working plan No. 87.

The timber will come from road reserves, stream reserves, and fire buffer areas—again, a statement of fact. The Government has directed that the Forests Department eat into those areas, which were previously held in reserve and overcut to meet the dictates of the Australian Labor Party.

Of course, after working plan No. 87 expires in 1987—as is structured under the current Forests Act—it will be an entirely new ball game, because the timber on road and stream reserves will be gone. The Shannon River basin has been effectively shut down, and my prediction is that there will be a further mammoth reduction in available hardwood to be taken from State forests.

The Government has not told the industry of this yet, but the industry is patently aware that that will happen. The Government has also made a determination on the planting of pine trees in native forests. The Government is following its policy in this regard of not clearing forest areas for exotic species.

As far as the Donnybrook sunklands are concerned, I am advised clearing programmes have stopped and pine planting programmes, if not stopped, will be severely curtailed. The Government has indicated to the Manjimup area that because of its Shannon decision that hardwood log production will be curtailed in due course, and it is now attempting to have pines planted in that area to make up the leeway. It ran into a "minor" problem; its own policy said it was not allowed to clear native forest areas to plant pines, so it has

been purchasing private property. Sixteen per cent of the Manjimup Shire is privately owned, and this Government is proposing to further reduce the amount of private property in the shire, or alternatively to ensure that that percentage of land available to agriculture in the shire is directed to Government forestry plantations.

Notwithstanding the Government's wishes, the shire has protested to the Premier, the member for Warren, and the Government. All those protests have fallen on deaf ears. The Premier attended a public meeting in the shire last year at which 300 or 400 people were present. That meeting gave a very clear indication that it did not want the Government to proceed with its forest policy. The member for Warren was also at the meeting when the people of the area indicated the Government's forest policy was wrong.

Despite those comments this Government, which boasts it is a Government of consensus and that it is prepared to listen and negotiate, is soldiering on with its forest policy and pine planting on private property. It ignored the local authority.

A series of inquiries have been carried out in order to assist the local authority to "make up its mind". The Treloar inquiry was commissioned by the Government to ensure that the people of the shire understood the so-called virtues of the Government's policy and of tree-planting.

The Manea inquiry also was set up to indicate that pine planting would be of benefit to the shire.

I have a report prepared for the Manea committee by the Shire of Manjimup. I do not intend to read it all, but it is important that part of it is read so that it can be recorded in this debate and understood. The shire stated in its note—

Without a great deal of time to fully investigate this subject and without the backup research staff that the Government has the Manjimup Shire Council would like to make the following observations.

All the steps the Government has taken in regard to forest management have always been with a rip, tear, or bust attitude in mind. People have been confronted with a situation in which they had to make decisions today because tomorrow would be too late. That first sentence from the shire's notes is a positive indication of the problems it faced. The shire went on as follows—

The Manjimup Shire welcomes the establishment of a softwood industry in this region, particularly on existing Crown Land, however, it is strongly opposed to the Government encouraging the planting of pines on broadacre basis on private property. The

basis for this opposition is that Council believes existing studies conducted by the Government have been extremely shallow and have not addressed numerous concerns/issues. Some of these concerns/issues are listed below (not in any special order of priority and certainly not conclusive.).

I seek leave to table these papers so that all members will have an opportunity to look at them and consider the reasons the Shire of Manjimup has advanced.

A very important aspect of the shire's opposition is contained in that part of its statement in which it said the studies conducted by the Government had been extremely shallow. That is an indication of the quality of the studies the Government has carried out and the way in which it has addressed the questions those studies supposedly have attempted to resolve. The shire went on as follows—

1. That as a starting point to assist the Government to meet its timber resource this Committee recommend:

- (a) Review of Shannon Basin decision—portion of this 60,000 ha forest should be made available for timber production as Manjimup Shire Council proposed in the "Save the Shannon Sensibly" pamphlet.
- (b) Government review its policy to avoid clearing of degenerate or any native forests and many of such vast areas be planted with softwoods.
- (c) Government concentrates on other areas of Crown controlled land such as water catchments, clearing ban land, Harvey-Peel Estuaries hinterland etc.

In relation to point (c), the shire was saying "for goodness sake, get out of the Manjimup Shire and go to the Harvey-Peel Inlet area or the hinterland, but please leave us alone".

The shire's final recommendation was as follows—

2. That only after the above avenues have been fully explored and the land resource is almost exhausted should broadacre pine planting on private property be encouraged by the Government. Prior to such a decision being taken a broad indepth study should be undertaken on the economic, social and environmental impact that the pine planting proposals will have on the local district, region and State.

That was the response from the shire to the Manea report—without avail.

It is interesting to see how the Government got itself into such trauma. It arose from a decision made at the ALP State Conference in 1982, which conference carried a number of resolutions relating to environmental and forests policies. One was to ensure that the Shannon River basin area would be declared a national park and that a further area of the northern jarrah forest, comprising not less than 100 000 hectares, should have national park status as well.

This is where the Government ran into its predicament. I have indicated the trauma that has arisen in the Manjimup Shire and areas associated with timber production. The Government also has come up with a task force report; the task force was appointed in May 1983 to investigate land and land administration. It was headed by Dr Mulcahy, Mr Norman Halse, and Dr Shea. The structure and terms of reference of the task force were such that it was directed into a very narrow political framework. The inquiry's terms of reference were as follows—

"To investigate, evaluate and make recommendations consistent with the implementation of Government policy on the most efficient and effective means of co-ordinating the administration and management of land resources in the South West of Western Australia.

It went on to give a number of other factors which were to be taken into account.

I want to come back to the first point; that is, that the task force was responsible to make recommendations consistent with the implementation of Government policy. So, notwithstanding whatever the task force may have decided or any of the recommendations that it may have wanted to make, it was committed to writing a report that was consistent with the Australian Labor Party platform. Here I give the Premier time to interject if he wishes to.

Mr Brian Burke: Did you expect us to write terms of reference that asked the task force to draw up recommendations which reflected Opposition policy?

Mr BLAIKIE: It is very easy for the Premier to try to answer this matter in a very offhand way.

Mr Brian Burke: That is what we were elected to do—to implement our policy, not yours.

Mr BLAIKIE: It may be right for the Premier to indicate that that is what the Government was elected to do. However, I say to the Premier that, notwithstanding the dangers inherent in blindly following a policy that will be proved to be inadequate and against the best wishes of the people of Western Australia and against the best interests of

the services that the Government proposes to amalgamate, he is still prepared to continue to set up a task force to look at how the Government's policies will be put into place.

Mr Brian Burke: You see, we don't share your views.

Mr BLAIKIE: That may well be the case. However, the Premier is expecting Parliament to give support to a politically oriented report that will change the structure of land management in Western Australia.

Mr Brian Burke: Governments are usually based on political parties.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Premier used to be able to do a bit better than that. Of course they are.

I have indicated already that the Government commissioned a report that, of its very nature, was politically based. I indicate also that one of the members of that task force, a Dr Syd Shea, was the political adviser to the Premier on environmental matters.

Mr Brian Burke: A highly respected scientist, drawn from the Public Service.

Mr BLAIKIE: Notwithstanding the Premier's view of Dr Shea—

Mr Brian Burke: Notwithstanding the facts, you mean.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Premier ensured that a political appointee, a person who was previously on the ALP Executive and a person who was a member of the Premier's staff, was one of the authors of the report. So, notwithstanding Dr Shea's qualifications, he was probably put there to keep the other members of the task force in order.

Mr Brian Burke: What an insult to Dr Mulcahy that is! The Opposition, these days, practises character assassinations on the Public Service and on people who apply for jobs in the service.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Premier can say whatever he wants to say. However, I assure him that he will not bring me to tears.

The report came out at the end of November 1983. I do not know how widely it was distributed, but I certainly challenge the extent of its distribution. I do not believe its distribution was as widespread as it should have been. People had approximately six weeks to respond to the interim report prior to the drawing up of the final report.

Members need to understand that, as the report was distributed at the end of November, it did not leave much time until the end of the year. The final report was given to the Government on 24 January 1984. As a result of that report, we now have this legislation before the Parliament.

In my view, and in the view of a number of other people, the report has been found lacking in a number of areas. The report has not given sufficient consideration to the agencies and departments which it proposes should be amalgamated. It has been roundly condemned in many quarters and especially by conservation and industry groups.

Many aspects of the report have been roundly criticised. Rather than the Government's accepting the report and then saying it would act on its recommendations, the final report should have allowed time for further input. It did not do that.

It was inconclusive. It did not give any assessment of the financial benefits that would be created.

The Conservation Council of Western Australia wrote to the Government and criticised the report. It said that it was long on rhetoric and short on fact.

Mr Brian Burke: Five minutes ago you were saying that the report was the product of that conservation and environmental movement. Now you are saying that it criticised it.

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes, the Conservation Council has criticised the task force's report.

Mr Brian Burke: I cannot see how it can criticise the child it brought forth. A moment ago it was some Machiavellian monster that it hatched.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Premier will still find that the environmental movement has criticised it and I have further information about that which I will be producing in due course. The movement did not support the recommendations of the report.

The report paid scant or little recognition to a number of industries. What about the fishing industry? It will certainly be affected under this legislation because the Bill provides for the creation of marine national parks. I am not aware that the task force held any negotiations or discussions with the fishing industry or whether the task force sought its views. The report certainly indicates that the fishing industry will be very much affected by this legislation.

Local government will also be heavily involved in the implementation of the report. However, I again question the number of occasions that the task force sought the views of local government. I am aware that the chairman, Dr Mulcahy, went to a number of local government ward conferences to explain the recommendations in the report.

I am also aware of the lukewarm response from a number of councils to the explanations given. To

say the least, local Government is less than enthusiastic about the recommendations contained in the report.

Under this report agriculture will be subject to a very strict set of controls. Paragraph 4.4 on page 26 of the task force report relates to private land. It states the following—

Conclusion. In summary, we propose extension of land use planning in rural areas as a framework for management controls on private land where necessary.

I have not been able to discover how many local authorities or people involved in rural industries made submissions to the task force. I do not know how often members of the task force went into rural areas to ascertain what would be the full import of their recommendations. I do not believe such investigations have been made and the Government has acted hastily with regard to a number of matters.

A number of Opposition members will be looking at the areas relating to local government, agriculture, national parks and so on with regard to the implications contained in the Bill and the task force report.

The Premier said earlier that he thought the task force report was of some substance. However, as the Premier appointed the task force, obviously he wants to believe that it was of some benefit.

The task force recommended that a number of bodies should be amalgamated under a land management body. In his Press statement when the task force report was accepted by the Government, the Premier said that four additional agencies would be included as well as those of forests, national parks, and wildlife. I ask the Premier to indicate what other agencies the Government intends to include. I am not aware of them and I doubt whether any members of the community are, apart from those in the inner sanctum of Government.

The legislation proposes that public land should come under the control of the new body. I can only comment at this stage to again say that the Government was wrong to accept both the advice and the report of the task force as it did. The Government should have used the report as an interim report and sought comments from a wider range of industry groups and people involved with land management, both private and Government, to obtain further information before acting. However, the Government has acted unilaterally in this matter.

I condemn this report out of hand because it was commissioned on a political basis. I compare it with the earlier report produced by the Conser-

ventions Through Reserves Committee, which had been established by the Environmental Protection Authority. I indicate the difference between that report and the task force report. The CTRC was established in 1972; the committee was chaired by the then Director of the Western Australian Museum, Dr Ryde, and its members were Mr J. F. Morgan, the Surveyor General; Dr B. E. Balme, Reader in Geology at UWA; and Professor R. T. Appleyard, Professor of Economic History at UWA. That committee drew up those land areas throughout the State that would form the basis of future reserves to the twentieth century and beyond.

There is a world of difference between the structure and nature of that committee and the task force set up by the Government. I am not aware of the political leanings of Dr Ryde, Mr Morgan, Dr Balme or Professor Appleyard or whether they had any. However, I am aware of the political leanings of one of the appointees of the Premier, who happens to be a political appointee. The final report of the CTRC was released in October 1983; it was the System 6 report which encompassed the whole of Western Australia and which divided the State into separate areas. It is interesting to compare the system under which that committee operated with the mode of operation of the task force set up by the Premier. By comparison, the task force was ineffective. The following procedure was adopted by the CTRC with regard to submissions—

The procedure adopted by the Committee for all the systems, except for Systems 6 and 7, was for their inquiry to be introduced by advertisements seeking submissions and recommendations from the community. One hundred and three written submissions which were received from individuals and organisations wishing to put forward ideas in relation to ten systems were considered by the Committee in the initial stages early in 1972.

On the completion of the Committee's report, comment was sought from the public on its recommendations. Copies of the report were placed in city and relevant country libraries and sent to State and Commonwealth departments and instrumentalities, local authorities concerned, Members of Parliament whose electorates were involved, conservation groups and interested members of the public. Members of the Committee and the technical sub-committee visited Geraldton, Busselton, Margaret River, Manjimup, Albany and Kalgoorlie to discuss the recommendations with those interested.

That is the basis on which the CTRC operated; it placed advertisements, received input from interested persons, and having received that input went into the community again for further information. It then received a further series of submissions from the community. Dr Mulcahy would be aware of the role he played as a member of the special technical committee of the CTRC which again received public submissions following the initial report. It was an ongoing inquiry and the whole process took something like four years before final decisions were made.

My final point is that it is absolute nonsense for the Government to claim that the report of its task force has any credibility. The Government should look at the report of the System 6 committee, of which it is well aware. It would be a far better foundation if this legislation were presented as a result of deliberations of a committee with community standing and community input.

The task force has been very successful in achieving one thing: It has ensured the demoralisation of the staff in the Forests Department, the National Parks Authority, and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. It has ensured that all those bodies are in a state of flux. It has acted without proper referral too, or regard for, the functions of those organisations and the roles played by the people employed in them. The Government has said that it will ensure public service security for the people moved around as a result of the recommendations of the task force. To me that smacks of political patronage. If any officer dares to speak in public against the Government's current actions, one can imagine that he would be found an alternative post east of the Warburton Range.

Mr Laurance: They will be put on the very lengthy list of unattached officers; about 300 of them are floating around.

Mr Brian Burke: Attached officers.

Mr Pearce: You are making a very general comment on those lines as far as the member is concerned.

Mr BLAICKIE: This is one of the difficulties that the report has created. I wish to spend some time commenting on the Minister's second reading speech. It is full of a number of inaccuracies and unwarranted political attacks. The attacks were of such a nature that it would appear the Government is being deliberately provocative, hoping there will be some reason for the Opposition to throw the Bill out.

On page 18 of the second reading speech notes the Minister, when giving the reasons for the introduction of the Bill—and I have read the Bill

and the second reading speech very closely to see whether there are any valid reasons, and it is very difficult indeed to find them—said the following—

The Government believes that the most effective way of avoiding the confrontation that has been a feature of public land management in the past decade and replacing it with a consensus approach, is by providing formal mechanisms for public participation in policy formulation.

That is absolute rubbish and the Premier well knows it. What will happen under this new proposal is that we will have a Land and Forest Commission, a National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and a third management group. Those groups are expected to come up with a consensus approach so that if one likes icecream, another likes gravy, and the other likes cheese, in order to have that consensus approach one mixes the whole lot together and that is what they eat.

Mr Pearce: That is absolute nonsense. It has nothing to do with the proposal.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Government is taking people from different disciplines and is expecting them to apply different management techniques while trying to marry the lot together.

Mr Pearce: That does not mean one has the same management technique in all the different areas. It is like saying because the Education Department runs primary education, secondary education and to some extent tertiary and technical education, we use the same techniques for all of them.

Mr Evans: They are doing it now.

Mr BLAICKIE: What the Government is attempting to do in this Bill is to marry resources with conservation and the Opposition contends that will not work.

Mr Evans: They are doing that now. The Forests Department is managing a whole range of areas with different purposes.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Minister for Agriculture had better shout louder, because the people of Manjimup cannot hear him from here.

Notwithstanding what the authorities have done—

Mr Evans: Are doing.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Government is going to dismantle the Forests Department. I will come back to that later.

Mr Brian Burke: Not too much later, please

Mr BLAICKIE: The Government expects to have a land resource and conservation department working side by side.

Mr Evans: Haven't you heard of management priority areas?

Mr BLAICKIE: The Minister who introduced the Bill said that large amounts of resources were consumed in emotional confrontations between Government agencies, community groups, and industry. That also was an understatement and, as I said earlier, I believe to a large degree some of those confrontations were aided and abetted by the Opposition of the day, the current Government. When one considers such people as the Government's own political candidate, Bartholomaeus, and the role he played, one asks: Where did the confrontation start? It started with the Government. It has a lot to answer for.

Mr Laurance: The Premier had to get down on bended knees. That is how bad it was.

Mr Brian Burke: How is your sports store going?

Mr Laurance: Very well.

Mr BLAICKIE: On page 27 in the second reading speech—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not much interested in sports stores at the moment.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Minister in charge of the Bill also said—

Unfortunately under the previous Government the Forests Department was placed in a position of confrontation with sections of the conservation movement. That was the fault of the Government not the department or foresters.

I would ask the Premier to indicate in his reply whether the Government supports bauxite mining.

Mr Brian Burke: Yes.

Mr BLAICKIE: Does the Government support the wood chipping programme?

Mr Brian Burke: Yes.

Mr BLAICKIE: It would have done the Government and the State a wonderful service if in the period between 1970 and 1982-83 the present Government had been sufficiently farsighted to indicate its support of those projects.

Mr Brian Burke: Have you forgotten the Tonkin Government signed some of the agreements?

Mr BLAICKIE: I have certainly not forgotten the number of forest debates here in which Government members tried to silence the then member for Mundaring, Mr Herzfeld.

Mr Brian Burke: When was the wood chipping started?

Mr BLAIKIE: Notwithstanding when it was started—

Mr Brian Burke: Notwithstanding anything, that proves you are wrong.

Mr BLAIKIE: —this Government has a lot to answer for in the conservation area. Currently its policies show it is setting a double standard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Would the member for Vasse resume his seat. The level of background conversation is unacceptably high. I am having great difficulty hearing the speaker and I am sure everyone else is, including *Hansard*. I am sure the member would not be very happy about that.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Minister in his second reading speech went on to say that, significant as this achievement was, the whole exercise would be academic if we did not provide the legislation, the administrative arrangements, and the resources to ensure that these reserves and parks are managed effectively. Having made a statement such as that, the Government still has not come forward to indicate just what are the resources it is going to provide. I would ask the Premier to indicate in his response what resources; what extra money are to be involved; what will be the staffing levels? Has the Government carried out any cost analysis on the proposals currently before the House?

While the Deputy Premier made quite a play on the administrative arrangements to be carried out under this legislation, we would be interested to know what is to happen to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Town Planning Department, the Lands and Surveys Department and the Department of Conservation and Environment.

What further changes are to be made down the line as a result of the Government's proceeding with this Bill? Who will be the Minister in charge of this legislation when it finally becomes an Act? Again, the Premier indicated that this legislation forms the initial part of the amalgamation. What other boards or bodies does the Government intend to include in the legislation in due course?

There are a lot of unanswered questions and a lot of matters about which the Opposition has not been given facts in order to understand the Government's reasons for establishing this mega-department.

The following can be found in the Minister's second reading speech—

The proposal to have an integrated land management department has received broad

support from groups representative of a spectrum of interests.

It goes on to say that the timber industry supports the proposal. What the timber industry had to say concerned the land management task force report, and we should bear in mind that this legislation is before us because of that task force report. The following is from a report of 30 June 1984 of the Forest Products Association—

The task force on Land Resource Management issued its Interim Report in November 1983.

The Association, other industry bodies and several Member Companies responded with extensive submissions followed by discussion with task force members.

The report of the task force to the Government of Western Australia was presented in January 1984.

The Association expressed strong reservations and some opposition to the interim findings of the task force in particular:—

- (a) It rejected any concept that might prejudice the ability of the Forests Department to properly manage the forest.
- (b) Opposed any further reduction in the area of state forest available for forestry production.
- (c) It also advocated a strong and independent Forests Department as being essential to the proper management of the state forest.
- (d) Strongly supported the multiple use management of forests.
- (e) Made the point that it believed the task force was constrained in its deliberations by a need to conform with aspects of policy imposed on Government by its political platform.

Bearing in mind those comments, the Government has been less than naive in saying it has received broad support from the timber industry.

The association said that it wanted a strong and independent Forests Department. This legislation will ensure that we do not have a Forests Department at all. Further, we will not have a conservator. The conservator and the department will be swallowed by an organisation that will be extremely difficult to identify.

I will read members the structure of the Forests Department, which structure can be found on page 5 of the Forests Act. It provides in section 7(1)—

There shall be a department of the public service called the Forests Department having, under the direction of the Minister, such powers, authorities, and duties as are provided for by this Act.

Subsection 2 reads—

(2) The department shall have the exclusive control and management of—

(a) all matters of forestry policy;

The Government is attempting to marry the Forests Department with a host of other departments, and this will completely destroy the department as it currently exists. It is completely wrong of the Government to say that its legislation has broad support.

The Forest Products Association, which is a body of millers, also said that it saw no justification for downgrading the position of Conservator of Forests or his department. This legislation, however, provides that there will be no conservator and no Forests Department. The Opposition parties believe that to be wrong, and we oppose the concept entirely.

This legislation is the result of the political direction I mentioned earlier. The task force was locked into presenting a report and, because of political direction, the end result was inevitable. The task force could report only on the political policies of the ALP.

Even within the conservation movement there is a great deal of concern about what is to happen.

The Bill has many implications, and I will comment on some while my colleagues will comment on others. Firstly, the Minister will be in complete control of the State's conservation and forestry areas. What the Government is trying to bring about is a return to pre-Lane Poole days. For people who do not understand forestry matters, I explain that Lane Poole was a Conservator of Forests who resigned in the 1920's because the Government of the day allocated land against his wishes.

Mr Brian Burke: We will be calling the jarrah reserve the "Lane Poole Park".

Mr Bryce: "Blaikie Reserve" sounds better.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am flattered. The Premier's interjection indicates the regard held by foresters throughout Australia for Lane Poole's attitude to forestry matters. The legislation under which the forest industry currently operates can be attributed in large part to Lane Poole.

Mr Brian Burke: You must support the jarrah reserve, or don't you?

Mr BLAIKIE: The original Act established the clear position of conservator and provided that his position should not be interfered with by the Government. His appointment was for seven years. The Act established a working plan which would last five years; it would cover two terms of a Government and would ensure an ongoing forestry policy.

Mr Brian Burke: When was this?

Mr BLAIKIE: This is as things currently exist.

Mr Brian Burke: When was it set up?

Mr BLAIKIE: This was done so that members of Parliament could not interfere.

Mr Brian Burke: Roughly what year was this system instituted?

Mr BLAIKIE: It is in the Forests Act. To be precise, it was 1919.

Mr Brian Burke: About 60 years ago.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Act has stood the test of time fairly well. This legislation will see a return to pre-Lane Poole days, because we will see the Minister in complete control; neither the Forests Department nor the position of conservator will remain. The Government of the day will be in charge of forestry management. We do not believe this is in the interests of the State or the State's forest reserve areas.

The Bill provides for the appointment of an executive director.

Mr Spriggs: Who doesn't have to be qualified.

Mr BLAIKIE: No. I notice that the Government has amendments on the Notice Paper indicating that the appointee will now be required to have certain qualifications. However, prior to those amendments being listed—which amendments may or may not receive the support of the House—the appointee could well have been a candlestick maker. That is the regard this Government has for proper forestry and conservation management.

The Bill provides also for the establishment of a Lands and Forest Commission, which will comprise the executive director and a representative of the timber industry and a person interested in conservation.

The Bill provides also for the establishment of the Forest Production Council, which will be a policy making body. Interestingly enough, the council will not have any trees to look after; it will just make policy. The Lands and Forest Commission, to be ruled over perhaps by a non-qualified candlestick maker filling the position of executive director, will have all the trees.

A further position to be created is that of a Director of Forests, and the appointee will be responsible for general forests policy administration. The interesting thing about this appointment is that he will not have any trees or even a honky nut. That indicates just how much this Government has downgraded the position of conservator. The Bill provides that the executive director will be in charge of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, the Forests Production Council and the Lands and Forest Commission.

The Director of Forests can have access to his Minister only through the executive director. The Director of Forests has no direct access to the Minister in charge of this legislation. He does not even have a honky nut to look after; he is not involved with any trees. That is how this Government has downgraded the position of forest management. The Director of Forests is a position without a purpose.

Mr Bryce: I think you know that is a big fib.

Mr BLAIKIE: I will make that statement again: The Director of Forests, as is set out in the legislation proposed by the Government, is a position without a purpose. He has no trees to look after; he is not involved with trees, he is an administrative officer.

Mr Bryce: I would be surprised if that were the case.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Deputy Premier may be surprised. The gigantic position the Government has created for the person who is in charge of trees may well mean that he could be a candlestick maker. That is how the Bill reads.

Mr Brian Burke: A what?

Mr BLAIKIE: He may well be a candlestick maker, in charge of trees.

Mr Brian Burke: Or a butcher or a baker.

Mr MacKinnon: What is wrong with butchers and bakers?

Mr Brian Burke: Nothing—the same as for a candlestick maker.

Several members interjected.

Mr BLAIKIE: I have just illustrated some of the points which have highlighted the deficiencies in the Government's proposed legislation for forests. I wish to quote from the response of the Institute of Foresters to the task force interim report, which highlights what I have just said. The task force and the Government have not understood the proper role of the Forests Department, how the new body will be administered, or the proper role of land management. The Institute of Foresters said—

Regrettably the Task Force has not presented an exhaustive or objective examination of the problems of land management in W.A. This is without doubt explained by the terms of reference given, the brief time allotted to the study, the constraints of party policy under which the Task Force clearly worked and the credentials of the Task Force members themselves. It must be pointed out that although Dr Mulcahy, Dr Shea and Mr Halse have all had distinguished careers in scientific research, none is experienced in land management or public administration.

That sums up the extent to which the Forests Department will be devastated under this proposed legislation. The people involved in the task force did not have a regard for the proper management of land or administration. The task force proceeded on its merry way to give reasons that there should be an amalgamation of the departments.

This matter was considered as early as 1976, when there was a proposal to amalgamate the Forests Department with the National Parks Authority, and other agencies concerned with the management of public lands. At that stage the Conservator of Forests (Mr Beggs), the Chairman of the National Parks Authority (Mr Jenkins), the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife (Mr Bowen), the Director of Conservation and the Environment (Dr O'Brien), the Chairman of the Public Service Board (Mr Doig), the Director of the WA Museum (Dr Ryde), and the Under Secretary for Lands (Mr Byfield), explored all the possibilities of that amalgamation. They came up in favour of the existing organisation. That organisation is opposed to what is being proposed today. Other members of the Opposition will talk about that aspect later in greater depth.

The Conservation Council also has made a substantial input to the Government on this legislation. I believe the comments of that council are important.

Another section of the Government's proposal is to amalgamate the national wildlife organisation with the Forests Department. This proposal has met with opposition also. The Government proposes to amalgamate those two mini-departments into a mega-department. It is my view, and a view which is certainly supported, that the people involved in the wildlife organisation will come under the influence of the forests officers.

When looking at the structure of the staff it is interesting to note that the paper, which has been prepared by the Conservation Council, certainly adds up. The Conservation Council said—

The conservation movement has strong reasons for believing that the proposed new Department of Natural Land Management would be dominated by the staff currently employed by the Forests Department, and that the strong "production" ethic imbued in many Forests Department professional staff by their conservative training institutes would influence policies for the management of national parks and nature reserves.

It went on to say—

Foresters generally have backgrounds, experience and training that are inappropriate for development of policy, management plans and, to a substantial degree, the implementation of plans for the management of conservation lands.

It continued to say—

Approximately 19 of the 25 most senior positions (76 per cent) in the three existing agencies are held by Forests Department staff.

101 of the 120 professional positions (84 per cent) in the three existing agencies are held by Forests Department staff.

1194 of the 1371 staff (87 per cent) in the three existing agencies are employed by the Forests Department.

As production forest management will continue to be an intensive task, most of the staff of the new Department would continue to work in this field, a factor that must influence the choice of the head of the Department and the policies he or she subsequently adopts.

I believe those comments are important and ought to be understood by all.

In the light of the statements made available to the Government, I cannot understand why it is proceeding as it is, and in this direction. There is a most definite fear that wildlife management, for example, will be impaired under this proposal; another colleague of mine will speak on that subject.

Another group concerned with this Bill is the South-West Forest Defence Foundation. While I have been sceptical from time to time of the direction taken by some members of that group, it is interesting that I find myself supporting the general thrust of the foundation's opposition to the Government on this occasion. I do not support it for the same reasons; but I support its opposition to what the Government is proposing. I will table the September newsletter of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, but part of it reads as follows—

The amalgamation of land management agencies that is proposed by the State government presents very serious threats to conservation in Western Australia. This is the firm conviction of the majority of those concerned with management of land for conservation in Western Australia. This is not surprising. The proposed amalgamation would create a mega-department comprising the large Forests Department, the small wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the minuscule National Parks Authority. The amalgamation of agencies concerned with the exploitation of natural resources and agencies concerned with the conservation of nature inevitably leads to conflict. The outcome of this conflict in Western Australia, in a mega-department in which the opposing philosophies are so unevenly represented, is a foregone conclusion. Conservation is certain to come off second and third best in a department philosophically and numerically dominated by foresters.

I agree with the observations that have been made on how the two disciplines will not mix. I do not necessarily agree with conclusions reached, but I agree that that the foundation has a very sound argument. The Opposition also believes that it has a sound foundation for its arguments.

The basis of the Opposition's arguments is that it is virtually impossible to expect a marriage to last when two groups relating to conservation and resources exploitation are being married. They have different disciplines and different responsibilities. Yet the Government is expecting the same group of people to be responsible for conservation and resources exploitation.

A further comment in the foundation's newsletter is interesting. It reads as follows—

Conservationists in Western Australia clearly perceived the danger to conservation from the proposed mega-department. Nevertheless, they did not mount a public campaign in opposition to the government initiative, although they did express their objections to the proposal in submissions, at meetings with politicians and in a number of isolated early public statements.

And further—

It is a fact that many of the most prominent people in the conservation movement in Western Australia are also active A.L.P. members: many hold office or aspire to do so. We believe it is the reluctance of these people to oppose publicly the Labor government, in combination with the novelty of the "softly-

softly" approach of the government, that until recently, has aborted all initiatives for united action against the proposed mega-department. Any conservation group that might have acted alone ran the risk of being branded extremist and dismissed as unrepresentative.

That is a pretty courageous statement from a conservation group that has sought the support of the Government in power. The foundation has seen fit to issue a public document indicating its concern for the policy being pursued by the Government.

Mr Bryce: Are you lining up with the greenies? Is that where you are putting yourself?

Mr BLAIKIE: The Deputy Premier will have his chance to make his own comments.

I repeat the following—

It is a fact that many of the most prominent people in the conservation movement in Western Australia are also active A.L.P. members: many hold office or aspire to do so. We believe it is the reluctance of these people to oppose publicly the Labor government, in combination with the novelty of the "softly-softly" approach of the government . . .

Leave to Continue Speech

I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of today's sitting.

Leave granted.

Debate thus adjourned.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 p.m.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [7.16 p.m.]: Prior to the tea suspension, I referred to a newsletter from the South-West Forests Defence Foundation, and I indicated that that movement was very concerned about the direction in which the Government was heading and that a number of prominent people in the conservation movement in Western Australia were active members of the ALP. The newsletter pointed out that any conservation group which acted alone in criticising the Government ran the risk of being branded as extremist and unrepresentative.

Those are the horns of the dilemma on which members of the conservation movement find themselves. That is certainly the case in respect of the body to which I referred. Conservationists believed they had access to this Government because of its actions over a number of years while in Opposition. They now find that the ALP Government in office refuses to listen to their representations.

Mr Pearce: I hope you are not posing as a champion of conservation. That would be a move away from everything you have stood for.

Mr BLAIKIE: I have further news for the Minister for Education. If he wants to denigrate those conservation groups—

Mr Pearce: I am not denigrating them, I am denigrating you.

Mr BLAIKIE: It is interesting that members of the Government are sensitive to those groups which dare cast any aspersion against the Australian Labor Party. That is precisely what this group has done.

The ALP in Government has not acknowledged the comments this group has made.

Mr Bradshaw: Is the Minister for Education saying the Forests Department could not look after the south-west?

Mr Pearce: I am saying the member for Vasse is the most unlikely champion of the conservation movement this Parliament has seen.

Mr BLAIKIE: I assure the Minister for Education I am a strong supporter of the principle of the right of freedom of speech of people. I also intend to ensure that the comments of those people who have been rejected by the ALP are heard in this Parliament and recorded. That does not mean I am a member of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation. I am ensuring that its point of view is recorded. It has conveyed its view to the Government, which has ignored it. In my view a special reason exists for the Government taking that line.

The newsletter goes on as follows—

Many of those involved in both conservation and A.L.P. politics are reluctant to antagonise the State government because they genuinely believe that more can be achieved for conservation by working within the A.L.P. and by maintaining good relations with the Government. Some argue that, in order to maintain good relations, it is necessary to compromise, to be 'pragmatic' about the proposed amalgamation. They maintain that conservationists should rely on them and their influence within the party to avert any

ill effects that may arise in the future from the amalgamation.

It is interesting that the South-West Forests Defence Foundation has said that antagonism should be avoided at all costs and the conservation movement should rely on those people within the ALP structure to care for them once the legislation is through.

At least one organisation has seen through the Government and does not accept the Government's view that the amalgamation is proper, right, or justified.

Mr Pearce: That is not supported by the quotation you have just read out. That quotation runs quite the other way.

Mr BLAICKIE: The letter says the foundation opposes the proposed amalgamation; it does not agree with it.

Mr Pearce: So what? It also indicates a lot of other conservationists agree with it. The conservation movement is no monolith; there is a range of opinion there, as elsewhere.

Mr BLAICKIE: I assure the Minister a range of opinion exists, but the bulk of it does not support the Government's proposal.

Mr Pearce: You are an unlikely spokesman for the conservation movement.

Mr BLAICKIE: I am not a spokesman for the conservation movement. However, in presenting material to the House, I am presenting comments and papers from other people who have approached the Government and made representations which the Government has ignored. The South-West Forests Defence Foundation is yet another organisation.

I have referred already to the Institute of Foresters. I do not represent that organisation in this House. I have referred also to local government and the fishing industry. I do not represent those industries either. However, I have indicated to the House the point of view of those organisations.

The newsletter of the South-West Forests Defence Foundation very clearly states that politics are playing an overwhelming role in land management in the State at this time. That organisation has rejected that situation and I support its point of view.

I have spoken about the national parks and wildlife authorities' becoming involved in this new mega-department. While the Government has said there will be no deficiencies because of the scale of operation of the new department, it will also provide for any department that may have been under-resourced to be completely buried in the bureaucracy. It will not be identified.

Mr Pearce: It is hardly a mega-department. It will have 750 officers; that is one-thirtieth of the size of the Education Department.

Mr BLAICKIE: Approximately 1 200 officers will be involved in the department.

Mr Pearce: The total is 794.

Mr BLAICKIE: From the Forests Department?

Mr Pearce: That is the lot.

Mr BLAICKIE: When the Minister makes his comments I will be delighted if he puts forward that information because we will certainly deal with those figures.

What will happen in the amalgamating of the departments is that the small wildlife research projects will not be readily identified. Those areas will miss out substantially. That is what will happen if the Government does not provide appropriate funding for them.

To continue in the same vein, proper management under a mega-department will not be identified.

Mr Pearce: It is not a mega-department.

Mr BLAICKIE: The Minister can call it what he wants. The Government is creating a mega-department and that will create mega-problems. The Minister can have his two-bob's worth at a later stage.

The other point I want to raise is that the centralisation of management and control will not guarantee that good management will ultimately emerge. There is certainly no guarantee that the different aims of conservation, recreation and production, and the bringing of those three areas together, will resolve conflicts. It is our contention that it will increase conflicts and give rise to tensions that may not exist at present.

A further point is that, because there will be such a large administrative department, the hierarchical structure of that department will be large anyhow and so it will require a greater ability for people to be able to communicate within that structure. That is vastly different from what happens in smaller organisations.

The Institute of Foresters, in submitting its evidence to the interim hearings of the task force, said—

"Big is Best" versus "Small is Beautiful"

Although the integration of State forests, National Parks and numerous other Boards and Commissions into one Department may be appealing in concept, there are some important disadvantages to consider. The two most important of these are:

- (i) Management scientists throughout the world are now presenting research which opposes increasing the size of organizational structures. The rule today is not "Big is Best" but "Small is Beautiful". Experience across a wide range of management and industry reveals that people function best when their own objectives and considerations are taken into account, and when they feel they are part of small autonomous units. In this situation, people identify with the goals and take pride in the achievements of their organization. This increases morale, job satisfaction and productivity.

If the T.F. Report proposals are implemented there will be a loss of identities for foresters, rangers and wildlife officers which may be a major factor in the productivity and effectiveness of the new organization. This effect will be most traumatic for smaller groups who face incorporation into what will seem to them to be a massive bureaucracy.

I believe that is a very valid reason and something that the Government has not answered. It has not explained why it is carrying on with the creation of this new mega-department.

All of the matters which have been raised have been referred to departmental officers who have advised the Government of the necessity for this legislation. Apparently, though, they have been ignored. The evidence of the institute continues—

- (ii) Although there is some overlap and some conflict in present arrangements, this is not all unhealthy. Differences in emphasis and viewpoint are essential for good and progressive management. There is a risk that if all land management decisions are confined to one Department, conflicting viewpoints or outlooks will become suppressed. This is the very situation the Task Force criticises in the Forests Department's supposed obsession with timber production.

Disorganisation is representative of the forests industry. It told the task force that there are no valid reasons for amalgamating the department.

I have already given reasons that the smaller departments do not want to be engulfed and this opinion has been expressed by the conservation and environment groups which also do not want it. The Institute of Foresters has also said that forest officers do not want to become involved in a total

mega-department management structure. Why does the Government ignore this expert advice?

Mr Brian Burke: The President of the Institute of Foresters helped to draw up the legislation, and he supports it.

Mr BLAICKIE: The President may well be helping the Government, and working from the Premier's office.

Mr Brian Burke: He is not. I do not think I have met him.

Mr BLAICKIE: Irrespective of where he is, that is a document attributable to the Institute of Foresters, which I will table.

Mr Brian Burke: What is the date?

Mr BLAICKIE: It is undated.

Mr Brian Burke: It could have been written at any time.

Mr BLAICKIE: It was not written at any time at all.

Mr Brian Burke: It must have been written at some time.

Mr BLAICKIE: That is obvious. The Premier is improving. Obviously his six weeks' holiday did him a world of good. He is not normally as bright as that.

There is no date, but the commentary was made in a written submission by the Institute of Foresters on views expressed to the Western Australian committee at meetings held in Como, Bunbury, and Manjimup during December 1983. It was commenting on the interim report advising the people who compiled the interim report that their recommendation for a mega-department was not soundly based.

Mr Brian Burke: The interim report is not before the House, this legislation is.

Mr BLAICKIE: This legislation is a result of the interim report.

Mr Brian Burke: It comes after it.

Mr BLAICKIE: This legislation will try to marry management of resources and conservation. We believe it will create conflict. It will put resources and conservation under one management; it will do away with the roles of the Conservator of Forests and officers of the Forests Department and bring the total management under one executive officer to be known as the "executive director". It will make management decisions more difficult than they are currently. I seriously question the Government's contention that the consensus viewpoint in the community is for the Government to proceed with the legislation. We have already indicated the concern expressed by local government.

My introductory comments said that the task force was the reason for the legislation. Two recommendations contained in the task force report do not appear in the legislation before the House: The first is the establishment of a timber bureau which would be a policy-making body under the auspices of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the second is the establishment of a land resource policy council which would also come under the auspices of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I submit that there is some foundation for the establishment of these two bodies, and there would be some advantage in it. However, it did not take a task force of this nature to arrive at those decisions because they are not included in the legislation and the Government will implement those matters anyway to assist in policy determinations relating to land matters.

In conclusion, the Government has failed to provide a cost benefit analysis of its proposed department. It has failed to provide any conclusive evidence that land management will be improved by this new system of centralised control. It has failed to produce conclusive evidence that forest management will be improved. By the same token there is no conclusive evidence that the management of wildlife and national parks will be improved. The Government has failed to give sufficient regard to the need for proper consultation with local government in both the compilation of the report and the setting up of this legislation. It has not had regard for the resource industries, which include fishing, mining, forestry and agriculture in the formulation of the legislation. The mining and fishing industries will be involved as a result of the Government's decision. Management decisions made to expand national parks, nature reserves, marine parks and reserves will impinge on both areas of industry. I am unable to find any area in which the Government has had full, in-depth consultation and discussed the full implications of the legislation with the industries concerned.

The Opposition submits that the new department will be administratively unwieldy and unworkable. The management of the State's forests will be at risk and the management of conservation and nature reserves will be swamped by disciplines foreign to those conservation areas. The legislation and the lead-up to it have had a wide effect and have destroyed the morale of Government officers in forest and conservation management departments.

There is an urgent need for the Government to withdraw the Bill to look further at the implications and allow proper public input into the proposals. There is a need for the Government to

allow properly qualified people to look at the legislation objectively without constraint. A task force should draw up a report which is not confined to presenting recommendations within the ambit of the ALP party political platform. Notwithstanding what the ALP wishes to do, many people in the community do not support the ALP and do not regard it as the be-all and end-all in efficient land management. The Government will ignore that advice at its electoral peril, which will be determined in due course. This concept is bad for the State, for the maintenance of forest values, conservation of the natural heritage and public land management.

The Opposition's objective is to ensure there is a separate division so that the Forests Department can function as it is presently structured. Improvement could possibly be made by amalgamating the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the National Parks Authority. There would be two separate departments with both operating autonomously as separate divisions. There is room for greater co-operation in the management of the available resources which should be considered and used to advantage by the State. However, the Opposition opposes the second reading of the Bill, and I call on members of the House to support the Opposition.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [7.38 p.m.]: As the member for Vasse has said, the Opposition will be opposing this Bill in every way it can.

It has been said that if the Government wanted to stamp out organised crime it would establish a Government department to run it and it would choke to death on the bureaucratic nonsense. This Bill does that.

Several members interjected during the Speaker's Order.

MR PETER JONES: I refer to the debate when the National Parks Authority legislation was before Parliament in 1976, and in a moment I will examine the points made by the present Government on that occasion and the way it has changed its attitude in relation to certain matters. Talk about an elephant going into labour and coming forth with an ant, a heap of ants went into labour and came forth with an elephant. If anything were designed to do nothing but confuse and create a lot of nonsense, it is this Bill. It has no useful purpose whatsoever. If the Government wants to produce legislation that is constructive and addresses areas where there is a need for some adjustment, it will probably receive the support of the Opposition.

As the member for Vasse has said, in the light of experience since legislation of this kind was last before the Chamber, it can be seen that some

areas may need fine tuning. That is not disputed. However, it is not necessary to choke everything to death with this rubbish coming from an interim report which was released during the Christmas period for a very short time for public submissions—which time, after considerable pressure, the Premier allowed to be extended. The Premier was asked in this Chamber the other day a question on notice regarding the number of people who responded and how many submissions were received. It would have been noticed that the informed body which headed the list was the WA Guild of Furniture Manufacturers (Inc.). One would have expected the Premier to do better than that; the guild was supposed to be the major body making a submission on the interim report.

We are now considering, and the Opposition is opposing, a Bill which is cumbersome, bureaucratic, and stupid. It is unbelievable. It is little better than a bureaucratic compost heap.

I address one matter that is not in the Bill! We have been told that one of the reasons this legislation must proceed is that the department proposed to be established is, in fact, already established. If not already legally established, it is nonetheless making decisions and going down an administrative path, appointments are being made, and decisions and policies are being made and developed.

Mr Speaker, you have addressed this House on many occasions on the way Parliament should be treated and given the respect and dignity it deserves. Yet we are told that one of the reasons that opposition cannot be countenanced is that the department it proposes to create is already functioning.

This represents an arrogant affront to the Parliament. It is a presumption that the Opposition will support this Bill; it is a presumption that the Bill in the way it is presented will, in fact, be passed by this Parliament and will become law. What an arrogant presumption by the Government and those associated with it in every way to assume that that situation will prevail. I have heard of divine right, but that is ridiculous!

We are left to conclude, having read the Bill, and having been through all the departments proposed to be created in the Bill, that it is just another part of the same progress in with which the Government is associated—a sort of evil juggernaut that is expanding its influence by whatever means it has at its disposal, supported by those various socialist acolytes with an eye trained to their future professional careers. It represents a sell-out of the public interest; it is not a support of the public interest in the broadest sense. It is a

sell-out in the broadest sense in order to find an accommodation for the sectional interests that apply certain pressures.

The Government has had, as the member for Vasse has said, very significant difficulty accommodating the views of those sectional pressure groups, and it has not succeeded in doing so. This is a sell-out of professional careers. No matter what the Minister handling the Bill permits, or what anybody else in the Government says, or whether they like to acknowledge it or not, they cannot deny the fact that people talk to the Opposition—people do come along and discuss the situation regarding their professional careers.

A number of people have had their professional careers affected. It is scandalous, and it is to the shame of the Government that this should have been allowed to happen to the departments for which I, at one time, had ministerial responsibility. These are officers who have served the State, not just this Government or the previous Government. They have served the interests of this State very well, very professionally, and very competently. They do not appear to have rated consideration at all; certainly not the consideration they deserve, and they are entitled to expect more consideration.

It is very interesting to go back to May 1976, when legislation to establish the new National Parks Authority was before this House. At that time, having introduced the legislation, I was very interested in the comments made by two members in particular. One was the present Minister for Agriculture and member for Warren. He was entitled to make a very significant contribution because the national parks legislation had been some years in the preparation—something like four years. It went back to the time when he, as Minister for Lands, had responsibility for the National Parks Board, which was established under the Parks and Reserves Act. It was to the great credit of the Tonkin Government that it started a process of establishing a single, separate, identifiable national parks body away from the Department of Lands and Surveys, one which was established and identifiable in its own right.

The present Minister for Agriculture started that; I inherited it. It produced an interim report something like 18 months before the Tonkin Government left office.

One of the first questions I asked was, "What were you doing for 18 months?" He replied, "What every responsible Minister ought to have been doing; that is, having produced the draft, allowing it to have the maximum amount of time to be discussed and considered by all those who

were to be involved". He described that in this Chamber in May 1976 when we discussed the National Parks Authority. I am certainly not going to dwell on it in detail the way he did.

He described four models which had been produced by all those who were involved in the working parties. He ended by saying not one of those models had been totally acceptable to the Tonkin Government, for various reasons. It took another year to refine those. When they were refined, a Bill came into this Parliament which established that authority and reflected exactly what the present Minister for Agriculture was saying and what he felt ought to be involved.

Let me remind him of some of those things.

Mr Blaikie: Just before you go on to that, it was a very exhaustive process of public submissions.

Mr PETER JONES: It took four years.

Mr Blaikie: Going back to the public, having committees look at it again; it was totally different from what this Government did.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister described the four models. He described how time was allowed for discussion. Let me concentrate on the points he made.

One was the identifiable involvement of local government authorities. The other was the question of whether the wildlife side of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, which had been previously called the Department of Fisheries and Fauna, should have responsibility for the national parks and wildlife service. At the time of the change of Government that was still undecided.

The recommendation put to me, and the one with which the previous Minister for this area had agreed, was the need perhaps to keep it separate but to provide the mechanism for ensuring that there was no overlap, or that the overlap was minimised. We did that by ensuring that the new National Parks Authority had on it, for example, the Conservator of Forests and the Director of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Although these different groups had different areas of responsibility, they were acting in isolation. It was ridiculous to suggest there was either a massive amount of overlap, or that there would be.

Similar questions were raised by the member for Morley, who actually handled the Bill for the Opposition at the time.

Mr Tonkin: Extremely well, I understand.

Mr PETER JONES: Let me say he spoke at length.

The present Minister should be reminded that he also referred to the wildlife situation being kept separate. He very strongly questioned the involve-

ment and membership of public servants on these bodies. He said they were busy people, they had statutory responsibilities, and he asked why they should be involved. Now, all of a sudden, the member for Warren, the present Minister for Agriculture, very properly says they need to be there to ensure co-ordination and liaison between the various sectors. So they have stayed in.

The present Minister asked about the role of local government; we will come back to this later. In answer to questions I asked of the Premier, we were told that after discussion with bodies such as the Local Government Association, and country shire councils—I know it will be suggested that local government was not by-passed because councils were written to, they were invited to make submissions, but that is rubbish in this situation and totally inadequate—bodies such as the National Parks Authority may have persons on their councils with knowledge and experience in local government.

Despite the pressure put on me at that time, I did not agree, as the Premier did not last week in answer to a question, that a specific local government body or organisation should have an entitlement as of right to nominate a member. I am not suggesting that. If such a provision were included I would oppose it; but there ought to be greater recognition of local government.

We will come to this later in the Committee stage, but it is suggested there is an opportunity for local government to be represented because there will be a member with "country interests".

What does that mean? It means nothing. The point is that there has been inadequate acknowledgement that local government exists and a failure to recognise the role it has within its own particular areas.

We now seem to have a position where the Premier was not advised about the contents of the second reading speech. I can assure him he missed nothing while he was away. I can tell him it was a most boring performance. It provided an opportunity for most of us to go out and watch a whole episode of "Bodyline". Some of the comments were misleading.

Mr Tonkin: You are hard to please. I bet you did not even like my speech this afternoon.

Mr PETER JONES: I did not listen to it.

Mr Brian Burke: Then you will criticise it later. You are fastidious.

Mr PETER JONES: It was not even a good tutorial. We had words like "rationalisation"—

Mr Brian Burke: That is hard.

Mr PETER JONES: —“confrontation”, and “the consensus approach”, this is not consensus. This is gang rape.

Mr Brian Burke: We are more fastidious than that.

Mr Barnett: You are just looking for a headline.

Mr PETER JONES: It was full of cloying phrases that mean nothing.

Mr Blaikie: The management structure was wrong, anyhow.

Mr PETER JONES: Could the Premier, when he responds to this debate, deal with two things? He mentioned extra resources which are needed. There would not be one area of activity in this area of the Government's responsibilities which has anything to do with nature conservation that could not do with more resources, not only financial but also human. They must take their share, the same as everybody else. Must we have this sort of department to provide extra resources?

Mr Brian Burke: The Bill is not to create extra resources. The rationalisation makes for efficiency to govern the distribution of the extra resources we are going to provide.

Mr PETER JONES: The Minister in his second reading speech, quite early, as I recall, referred to the need for extra resources and how the provision of those resources will be expedited through the use of this proposed mechanism.

Mr Brian Burke: Because it is more efficient.

Mr PETER JONES: I hope the Premier will tell us how it will be more efficient.

Mr Brian Burke: I shall be happy to do that.

Mr PETER JONES: It is an unfair indictment of the way the National Parks Authority has administered its funds.

Mr Brian Burke: Let me give one example in the bushfire item.

Mr PETER JONES: I agree. I said when the Premier was absent from the Chamber that there are areas—and the member for Vasse acknowledged it—where there could be a need. I will give another in a moment.

Mr Brian Burke: Some rationalisation.

Mr PETER JONES: My present view would be to lose it in forestry activities. We welcome that.

Mr Brian Burke: This Bill will do it for you.

Mr PETER JONES: Yes, it will. But it is like using a howitzer to shoot a sparrow. The Bush Fires Board could be fixed up without this.

Mr Brian Burke: The Bill does other things also.

Mr PETER JONES: I will say it does. It strangles Cock Robin.

Mr Brian Burke: In what clause does it strangle Cock Robin?

Mr PETER JONES: I do not know, but I bet there is one clause which does, because it does everything else.

Mr Brian Burke: I think you are misleading the House, because I have read through the Bill and there is nothing about the strangulation of Cock Robin.

Mr PETER JONES: The point I am trying to make is this: The second reading speech refers to extra resources, and there is no doubt they could be well utilised in every sense, particularly in the range of national parks activities. No-one will question that. But one does not need this enormous proposed department to do that. I indicated to the Premier there were two areas, and bushfires was one which could be considered.

When the Premier was not in the Chamber I discussed the consideration by the Tonkin Government and subsequently by me of whether wildlife should join with national parks and I explained that that idea had been discounted.

Mr Davies: Didn't the Select Committee from the Legislative Council recommend that they should join?

Mr PETER JONES: The Lewis committee did recommend that. From 1972 to 1976, when all these matters were being addressed, it was considered possible to institute not only a new managerial arrangement but also a greater co-ordination and liaison, and this was done by having a combined membership of departments so that there would be no overlap of exchanges, research, and officers.

Mr Brian Burke: No wasteful duplication.

Mr PETER JONES: The Premier might say there undoubtedly was some, and I suppose in some cases there was.

Mr Brian Burke: Not under this Bill.

Mr PETER JONES: I would not like even to pay for the photocopying in this new department. The point is that there could well be a case made out for bringing the wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife together with the National Parks Authority and having a new parks and wildlife service. That is the second of two examples I could suggest to the Premier. I could agree with that, as I have said previously.

Mr Brian Burke: What about conservation reserves that the Forests Department now manages?

Mr PETER JONES: What about them? Is the Forests Department not entitled to manage them?

Mr Brian Burke: We think it manages them perfectly properly, but the member for Vasse says it doesn't manage them.

Mr Blaikie: Rubbish!

Mr PETER JONES: I did not hear him say that.

Mr Blaikie: Since you have come out of hospital you seem to have had these strange figments of imagination.

Mr PETER JONES: I can assure the Premier that that is not what the member said, and the member has said that he did not say it. When the Premier responds, he can correct that error. But let us assume that we did have a national parks and wildlife service, something with which I could sympathise: Would the Government take away the nature reserves managed by the Forests Department?

Mr Brian Burke: No. We are using -

Mr PETER JONES: But if we had such a service -

Mr Brian Burke: But we don't.

Mr PETER JONES: The Premier is emphasising the fact that he does not want to discuss this point, an area where we might have found some common ground. He is saying that this is a hypothetical matter and that it is not an option; but what the Government is doing here is of such magnitude that there needs to be consultation about what the new department ought to do and be capable of doing, and about the manner in which certain of the State's natural assets ought to be administered and financed. One thing is clear: The Forests Department ought not to be pillaged in this way.

Mr Davies: The conservationists say that it is the other way around.

Mr PETER JONES: I am not interested in what they say. I am speaking now. It is my turn to speak now. Members opposite should watch my lips. The Forests Department ought not to be raped and put into this mess.

Mr Brian Burke: You are nearly talking without moving your lips.

Mr PETER JONES: It is hard to get a word in. I have previously mentioned the supposed support the Government has received for this Bill. The support is not strictly as outlined in the Minister's second reading speech; indeed some of the references were out of context and misleading.

Mr Brian Burke: Some don't even appear. The strangulation of Cock Robin is not even in there.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PETER JONES: The Bill states that the timber industry supports the legislation, yet I am told that it does not. This has also been indicated by the Forest Products Association. Certainly there have been statements of support for certain aspects of the Bill, and no-one disputes that; but the inference being made in the second reading speech, in public statements, and in answers to questions, is that there is broad support for the Bill. The Premier gave examples of people who supported the measure, and the first supporter mentioned was the Furniture Manufacturers Guild; then followed the Murray Shire Council and the Narrogin Shire Council—my God—the Fitzgerald River National Park Board and the Trustee of the WA Conservation Council. When the Premier was asked by the member for Floreat, "From whom have submissions of support been received?", that was the list given.

Mr Brian Burke: I have received support from the Shire of Rockingham, too.

Mr PETER JONES: Okay, we will add that one. And I missed the Housing Industry Association.

Mr Brian Burke: The Shire of Rockingham is not an insubstantial body.

Mr Blaikie: Very involved in forest management!

Mr PETER JONES: Had the Premier wanted to address the question of making more efficient use of the resources of both manpower and finance available for the management of this State's natural environment, he could not have done a worse job than to present this legislation; he could not have come up with a bigger bureaucratic compost heap.

Imagine trying to get a decision in this new department. A remarkable diagram was incorporated in the second reading speech and it was a diagram which had to be altered because it was not right in the first place. I saw a senior public servant and asked him how he would go about getting a decision if he worked in an office like the one proposed, and how long it would take. The most important point he made related to the way in which this legislation will crush the professional initiative of a great many senior and middle order officers who have been imbued with the idea of serving within the department or the authority to which they have given their professional careers. That initiative will be absolutely ruptured because they have been given no consideration. They have merely been told that they will have to fit into a certain slot. The professional careers of senior and middle order public servants in the Forests De-

partment and the National Parks Authority have been destroyed in a completely irresponsible way.

Mr Pearce: Did you have approval of the Minister to talk to this senior public servant? I bet you didn't.

Mr PETER JONES: I oppose this Bill and all it tries to do.

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [8.09 p.m.]: I am very concerned about the ramifications of this Bill and the creation of a brand new bureaucracy, but in particular I am concerned about the dominance of the Forests Department over the new department, bearing in mind that the new department will draw 76 per cent of its staff from the Forests Department. I have nothing against foresters or the Forests Department provided they stick to that which they know best how to do, which they do well; but they are entering a new field of a mixed bag of conservation, recreation, forestry—many things. These people are dedicated to the conservation of forests.

My particular concern rests with the wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, which section is to be amalgamated into the new department, and for the effect this legislation will have on the fishing industry. Those two points are of great concern to both the fishermen and the people interested in conservation and wildlife.

It is not terribly long since the management of flora was given to the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife—I think it was in 1980. Now we see this responsibility about to be taken from that department and returned to the Forests Department. There were very good reasons for the control of flora being taken from the Forests Department, and I will comment on that later. Again, I make the point that the management of forests, the conservation of flora and fauna, and the management of fisheries are three entirely different exercises. I do not believe the Government or the senior civil servants involved in the framing of this legislation have taken enough cognisance of the ramifications of what will happen if this hastily presented Bill is accepted.

Earlier we heard talk about the Legislative Council Select Committee's recommendations about combining the National Parks Authority and the wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. I remind the House that the committee deliberated over a long period and it was some time before its report was received. That report was sent out for public comment. Finally no action was taken because it was generally considered that the recommendation was not practical.

But the exercise of presenting this legislation was undertaken by a task force on land resource management in November 1983. Today, less than 12 months later, we have a Bill embracing the major recommendations of that task force. The task force was dominated by the protagonists of conservation, to the detriment of the operations of the wildlife section of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, and certainly to the potential detriment of the fishing industry, something I will comment on further shortly.

The original recommendation of the task force involved some 30 million hectares of land in Western Australia and included State forests, national parks, nature reserves, unvested reserves, and vacant Crown land. Of a total area in Western Australia of 250 million hectares, that represented about 12 per cent of land in the State. Today, according to the Deputy Premier's second reading speech, the amount of land to be covered by this proposed management organisation totals 53 per cent. Whether that land is taken in now or whether it is land which can potentially be affected and brought under the umbrella of this proposed organisation is something for the Government to explain when the Premier replies to the debate.

The Premier's Press release in February 1984 stated that the Bill was a start to what was expected to happen in the future. I wonder who next will be on the list to be taken over by this new mega-department as it has been described by my colleague, the member for Vasse.

Originally, the committee recommended that the research division of the Agriculture Protection Board be taken into this department. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and that has not been done. I was very much opposed to the research section of the APB and the research section of the wildlife authority being brought into this legislation. I am pleased the APB escaped, but I am certainly not pleased that the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has been included.

If the Government tries to divorce research from the APB it will be on a disaster course, because without immediate access and complete intercourse between research and the practical side of the division there will be absolute chaos. As an example, two serious problems could well demonstrate this particular point. One is the wild dog problem in the north-west of the State where the research side of the APB has been carrying out experimental work for a number of years with radio transmitters to work out the movement of and areas covered by wild dogs. If that information were not readily available to the APB, and if the people who do that research were not ac-

tively involved in the actual exercise it would be quite useless.

Under the same Bill, the research into kangaroos, through the wildlife section, is vitally important in the control of kangaroos. Unfortunately, a minority of people in Australia and Western Australia do not understand that if kangaroos are not farmed, culled, or controlled, nature will take over.

Recently, in answer to a question, the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife, advised the House that the red kangaroo population had increased by some 90 per cent; that is a frightening figure.

Mr Evans: It was 90 per cent more than the expected increase.

Mr OLD: That is correct. I stand corrected: it was 90 per cent more than the expected increase.

The Minister is realistic enough to know that unless measures are taken to control this increase, and to bring the kangaroo population back to a manageable level, problems will occur in regard to the kangaroo population. The kangaroo population exists and increases only because of the benevolence of the pastoral and agricultural industry. The kangaroo population in the northern part of the State, where red kangaroos abound, has increased because of the provision of watering points by pastoralists. As the number of watering points increases, the kangaroo population increases. However, come drought time the kangaroo population is biologically equipped to cope. It is not biologically equipped to cope with overpopulation, therefore, mother nature will take care with some type of pestilence which has occurred historically with the human race.

If the new department is formed, and is responsible for 12 per cent of the land mass in this State—I have already posed this question—it is obvious the Commissioner for Soil Conservation and his department will be responsible for the remainder of the State. If that is the case, it seems to me to be a frightful waste of resources in a State which, the Premier has recently advised, has a surplus of civil servants to the extent that he has already made the public aware he intends to slash the Public Works Department by some 300-odd people.

If by doing that he is justifying the creation of a new department, I would say that that action is counterproductive. It is high time we had a good look at where we are headed. I fear this new department will have a negative effect on productivity in this State, because the Government wishes to take over the duties of the Commissioner for Soil Conservation. Is that one of the moves the

Premier has foreshadowed may occur in the future? If not, why not let the Commissioner for Soil Conservation continue the very good work he and his department have been doing to control the insidious encroachment of salinity and the wind erosion in the south of this State?

The department has grasped the nettle very firmly, despite the fact that figures show salinity is increasing. The increase in areas affected by salinity has been slowed down, and I believe that eventually the problem will be overcome.

Looking at the schematic diagram of the department, it is clear the decisions of this new department will depend to a great degree on the leanings of the director. In other words, if the director is a dedicated conservationist, everything will stop. I do not think that is the sort of risk we can afford to take.

Mr P. V. Jones: It will stop quickly.

Mr OLD: It will not stop at all, because we will ensure that it does not. Originally, the research section of the APB, together with the wildlife department, were to go to a new department. Maybe they are a little more compatible than has been put to us in this Bill, but I do not believe that they are compatible enough to be amalgamated. The two departments have different aims. Both departments perform well.

The new soil conservation committees which have been formed throughout the State will do a tremendous amount to assist the preservation of the ecology of this State, and the advancement of agriculture. I believe also that these soil conservation committees, which were formed voluntarily by producers and businessmen in various districts, are in grave danger under this new legislation.

There is sure to be some conflict between the competing organisations within the new department. This can only have a deleterious effect on the type of organisation to which I have referred, in those voluntary soil conservation districts.

We will have a department dominated by forestry people. A conflict will occur among production, recreation, and conservation which will be hard to resolve with a department dominated by those dedicated to timber production.

We have a conflict inasmuch as the Forests Department has a controlled-burning policy within the forests, while the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has a separate policy designed to protect flora and fauna. They are well versed in handling the problems which can occur through the various department burnings, and by co-operation between those two separate departments we have seen the proliferation of flora along the sides of highways. This is demonstrated well

on the Great Southern Highway where the burning by the Forests Department is very much controlled on the land next to the highway. During the last 10 days controlled burning has been carried out. It is a slow burn, right back to within 50 yards of the highway. This preserves the flora, but that is only because of the co-operation between the two departments.

We have had a tremendously active voluntary committee in the WA Wildlife Authority which has been in existence since about 1970. Some dedicated people have been on that authority such as Mr Henry Hall of Dargin.

Mr Brian Burke: It has been starved of resources.

Mr OLD: It was not starved of resources.

Mr Brian Burke: We will provide extra resources.

Mr OLD: Extra resources? We will come to that in a minute. We have had some very experienced people on this authority, but obviously they are people the Premier does not appreciate. People such as Neville Beech, and Angus Robertson; people who voluntarily gave their services, not paid civil servants. They were people who were prepared to go to Kununurra during the flood, and to Lake Argyle and help in Project Noah. Perhaps the Premier has forgotten about that. Perhaps he has forgotten about the work those people have done. Perhaps the Premier has forgotten that he sacked those people. It may not mean a thing to him, but it means something to them.

I wish to quote from a document which refers to the Western Australian Wildlife Authority. It states -

The authority was particularly concerned about the proposed change in vesting from a representative community group (the authority) orientated towards wildlife conservation to a department with a multi-purpose function.

That is what the Premier has done to them. It will be interesting to hear what the Premier has to say about his brand new approach to wildlife, because he has lost some of the best conservationists in this State: People who had a realistic approach to conservation; people who knew that to conserve one had to control, which is what they have been doing.

Unless the new department is completely altered in structure, and unless people who have a pragmatic approach to the conservation of wildlife in this State are placed in the department, we will find ourselves in trouble.

I will spend a few moments dealing with the effect to be felt by the fishing industry. That is one of the most important factors dealt with by this Bill because the industry has many people who are totally reliant on it, not only for their welfare, but also for their livelihoods. They have had a pretty bad time lately, when one takes into account the results of the tuna fishing inquiry and the total abandonment by State and Federal Governments of any responsibility to the people who were encouraged to go into the tuna fishing industry, and who are suffering because of that. Some of them will go broke; there is no secret about that. Under this Bill, we are faced with the possible closure of more fisheries.

Nobody quarrels with the concept of marine parks. I do not believe even the most hardened fisherman quarrels with the concept, because fishermen realise that marine parks have their part to play in the marine industries. However, we do quarrel with the cavalier approach of this Bill to marine parks. That can result only in the closure of more fishing areas. The fishing industry has suffered severely from closures. When I was the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife, a submission was put to me for the closure of Quobba, so that so-called amateur divers could undertake their recreation. This was resisted for years; but on attaining the status of Government, the Labor Party decided that Quobba should be closed to professional fishermen—another nail in the coffin of the professional fishing industry. Every time a fishery closes, albeit a small one, that has an impact on the fishing industry.

Under this Bill, it would only need, for example, somebody in the Shark Bay area to take a loving look at the dugongs and say that the fishery should be closed for the preservation of the dugongs and, in fact, that could become a reality in no time flat.

We could have divers going into Houtman Abrolhos—believe me, there is a problem there with divers. The last time I was at the Abrolhos, the professional fishermen were most concerned at the boats from Geraldton and the southern part of the State coming to the Abrolhos with divers who were fishing in hordes and depleting the area of fish. Nobody minds the amateur fisherman coming up with rods, lines, etc., and doing a bit of fishing; but this was a professional operation although the people were amateur divers. The divers could well put a proposition to the committee and have the Houtman Abrolhos declared a marine park, denying access to a very valuable industry. Maybe that is drawing a long bow; but under this Bill, which undoubtedly will become a Statute, it is a possibility.

The composition of the authority is causing great concern. The fishing industry has no representation on the authority; it has no voice. No protest will be raised if the divers or amateur anglers come along and want an area closed. No-one will be able to say what the professional fishermen think. There will be no-one there from the Field and Game Association, the members of which are conservationists. I received a phone call from a member of the executive of that association who said that the association does not have membership on the authority; but it feels that no organisation should be named as part of the authority. However, that is what is happening, because clause 23 (1) (b) (i) provides—

2 shall be representative of voluntary organizations having a special interest in conservation, being organizations that are affiliated with the Conservation Council of Western Australia Inc.;

In fairness, how can one organisation be named as having two representatives on the authority? The council would not be represented directly, but it would have two people affiliated with it as members of the authority.

The Field and Game Association is affiliated with the Conservation Council, but the association does not have representation on the authority. However, it wants somebody beyond that council dedicated to sensible conservation and management to be a voice for the association.

The professional fishermen of this State want direct representation on the authority because, without it, they are a voice in the wilderness. The professional fishermen are well served by the Australian Fishing Industries Council; surely to goodness AFIC is a big enough and important enough organisation to warrant a place on the authority. If it is not, the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife is not doing his job.

Fishing is a very important industry. The Minister tells us that on every possible occasion, and I agree with him. It is an important industry, and I know the Minister is keen to see it progress. I appeal to the Minister to go back to the drawing board with the Premier and ensure direct representation from the fishing industry, whether it be from the professional fishermen or from AFIC. The authority needs somebody who knows something about fisheries and what preservation through marine parks will do to the fisheries.

I cite the example of Ningaloo Reef, which is a well-known reef stretching from Exmouth to Coral Bay, having a length of 100 kilometres or thereabouts.

Mr Evans: It is a bit more than that.

Mr OLD: It is a fair length, anyway. It has been under consideration for designation as a marine park for some time. Discussions have been held between the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Conservation and Environment. We would all like to see Ningaloo Reef designated as a marine park; but we do not want to see an area 10 kilometres out to sea for 110 or 150 kilometres denied to the fishermen of this State.

Many people in this State are reliant on the fishing industry for their livelihood. Many people in this State rely on the fishermen to supply their seafood. It is a fact that conservation management and fishing can be compatible, and it will be up to the authority to ensure that they are. I ask the Premier, in his reply, to assure the House that the fishing industry will have a say on this.

I oppose the Bill in its present form.

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [8.39 p.m.]: I oppose the Bill on a number of grounds, but particularly on a philosophical and practical basis. It is the hallmark of socialist Governments that they wish to provide close control over the planning process—

Mr Pearce: Here we go with privatisation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TRETHOWAN:—with centralised planning control, which is important to the philosophical basis on which they see the State being run. They also have a very strong desire to become directly involved in the means of production.

At present, we are seeing a jigsaw slowly being put together. When the final pieces are in place, we will see a picture clearly emerging of the current State Government. This Bill is one piece of that jigsaw, another piece of which is the Western Australian Development Corporation, a body which was set up to become involved in the processes of development in this State. We have seen it becoming involved in the mining area and we believe it is likely to become involved in the financial area through joint partnerships or ventures with banks. We are now seeing one of the principal pieces of legislation that will put into effect the control of the planning process.

The other changes likely in that process have not come to fruition. However, they have been hinted at in chapter 4 of the task force report. This piece of the jigsaw deals with controls over the use of land, particularly in the area of conservation.

One of the hallmarks of the State Government's approach to implementing its policies is that it seeks to make the policies appear to be what they are not. The Government seeks to create charades

to divert attention from the purposes of the legislation it brings forward. I can conclude only that that is the reason for the most strange organisational chart that was presented to us in terms of the operations of the new department. It was quite significant that one line was left out of the organisational chart when it was originally presented to this House. That was probably a Freudian slip because it was undoubtedly the line that the Government wished to leave out as far as the public and the Parliament were concerned, because that line indicated most clearly the purpose of this legislation. That is the line which represents the very clear outline in clause 33 (1), indicating that the department is directly controlled by and directly superintended by the Minister, with the executive director being entirely responsible to the Minister. The department will be entirely responsible to the Minister, and it will really have nothing to do with the bodies that are being set up—the Forest Production Council, the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, and the Lands and Forest Commission. Apparently, they will be purely advisory bodies, as will be the people who originally were to carry out functions in the organisations of their particular departments—the persons named in the chart as the Director of Forests, the Director of Nature Conservation, and the Director of National Parks and Recreation. They will have no line management functions but purely advisory functions.

The confusion in the charts is amplified by the fact that in the current chart the executive director of the department is shown as having responsibilities in three directions. He is shown as being directly responsible to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, the Lands and Forest Commission, and the Minister.

Anyone who knows anything about designing organisational structures will know that it is an untenable position for any senior executive to be in. One may ask what is wrong with the design. What is wrong is that the lines which were drawn between the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and its executive director and the Lands and Forests Commission and its executive director should not have been solid lines, representing line direction, but should have been the dotted lines, the advisory capacity lines that relate between the Forest Production Council and the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and those supernumary directors who have no line function in the department—in other words, the Director of Forests, who has a dotted line, the Forests Production Council and the directors of the Nature Conservation Authority and the National Parks and Recreation Council who have

dotted lines to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. The authorities do not have the power to direct the executive director of the department any more than they have the power to direct the Director of Forests, the Director of Nature Conservation, or the Director of National Parks and Recreation.

The power lies in the hands of the Minister under clause 33(1). The Minister directs the executive director, controls the Forest Production Council through its appointment, controls the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority through its appointment, and controls the Lands and Forest Commission through its appointment.

It seems to me that the creation of this department is a very clear indication of the Government moving to gain more and more direct political control over the planning processes within this State. I believe, as is indicated in chapter 4 of the task force report, that this is already planned to tie in with the total restructuring of the Department of Planning, currently the Town Planning Board and the Town Planning Department, to be called, according to figure 4.1 of the report, the Department of Urban and Rural Planning.

Members in this House have seen another piece of legislation that helps one to understand how these things will fit together; that is, the South West Development Authority Bill. If members recall, that legislation established an effective regional planning committee which tied in a whole lot of the planning functions, and that committee had no representative from local government upon it. Local government was not there by right any more than local government has a representative on the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority by right, or the Lands and Forest Commission by right.

The result of putting these pieces of the jigsaw together will enable this Government to say "Yea" or "Nay" to almost any development that is envisaged in this State. It will be directly controlled by relevant Ministers—not an awkward independent authority, such as the Environmental Protection Authority, which might get in the way, or such as the Conservator of Forests whose powers go beyond those of a normal head of department. This Bill reduces it to the simplest form—the direction of the Minister. That is the reason there is considerable apprehension in local government as to whether it will be affected by this legislation. It is not so much about what is in the legislation presented to the House, but what can be added to it to have an increased effect.

Principally, the concern of local government regarding this piece of legislation revolves around its fear that land currently vested in it may be removed. It is not clear whether that possibility is excluded. Certainly, it is indicated that under normal conditions, such a situation will not occur. However, there are concerns that there is no clear statement that local government will retain the vesting of all the land currently vested in it.

Secondly, local government is concerned about the way in which the new department may interfere, particularly with the parks and reserves that are vested within local government. It certainly believes that in regard to those lands the role of the department should be restricted to purely an advisory one.

Local government also seeks, for its own protection, the right to be represented on the advisory authorities. I do not think that is a clear safeguard because, as I have said, the way in which the department is set up and the way in which the Bill is framed places the power directly with the Minister. If the Minister wants to do something, no-one has the power to oppose him.

I am concerned as to why one organisation interested in, for instance, the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, should effectively be given two representatives, and local government—the elected bodies in this State—should not be specifically allocated any representatives. I refer to the fact that two persons shall be representative of voluntary organisations, having a special interest in conservation and being affiliated with the Conservation Council of Western Australia. I ask you, Mr Speaker, why that has been included and why it has not been specified that at least one member of the authority should be a representative from local government, because many reserves are vested in local authorities. Local governments should, by right, have an input into what is said and done in the planning of that authority. It is just an example of the way in which this Government carries through its undertakings regarding increased autonomy in local government. With every opportunity and with every piece of planning legislation it brings in, the Government actually seeks to undermine the powers which local authorities already have.

Mr Burkett: What about the one your Minister tried to put through when you were in Government, to give the Government absolute power? You supported it.

Mr TRETOWAN: I am speaking about the Bill now before the House; I am speaking about the way in which the Government is undermining the autonomy of local government after a totally

clear and repeated commitment on the part of this Government regarding that autonomy. Is that how much the commitments of this Government are worth? Is the force that lies behind the Government's policy statement that on the one hand it will promise something and on the other hand it will seek, through diverse means, to take it away?

I grant that in terms of autonomy it is not a head-on confrontation or bulldozer job. What is being done is being done subtly. It is a question of introducing the white ants into the system to slowly erode the power of local government to control the parks and reserves in the planning and soil conservation processes. That is the concern that is expressed and which, quite rightly, is seen in the introduction of this legislation.

In regard to the appointment of representatives of local government to the various responsible authorities, I will quote from a statement that was made in a letter from the Premier to the Country Shire Councils Association. Remember, the Conservation Council specified two members from organisations associated with that council. However, when the Country Shire Councils Association wrote to the Premier he replied as follows—

It would have been impossible to ensure that all organisations be represented on the authority and secondly, it was decided to frame the legislation so that particular interest groups were represented rather than associations.

The Conservation Council is mentioned, but certainly not either of the local government associations. I am not advocating that one or other of the local government associations should be specified. What I am saying, and what I believe local government is asking, is that representatives of local government should have the same opportunity of being represented on that authority as are people associated with the Conservation Council of Western Australia.

Earlier I expressed concern about where the processes of this legislation would lead. I particularly mentioned chapter 4 of the task force report which is headed, "Management of Private Land in Rural Areas". The task force report makes a major recommendation; that is, that this department, in the long term, should have control over alienated land. It promotes changes in the Town Planning Department. One might say that it pre-empted the inquiry that is currently being undertaken. I found it very interesting to read that report, to learn how the Government interpreted that report and to find out how closely it matches what was outlined in January this year in the final report of the task force into land management.

The chapter to which I refer states—

Our proposals for land use planning and control apply mainly to land held privately, whether freehold or leasehold. Within a framework of Government policy they can be seen as operating at three levels—statutory planning, regionally co-ordinated where necessary; controls on management practices and technical advice and extension.

The last two levels are clearly covered by this Bill and the other relates to changes in the planning system. However, it is clear that the intention is to exercise increasing governmental control over private land, particularly in rural areas. The question is, "How far can that control go and how far will that control go?"

I think that should cause considerable concern not only to those who live within the rural areas, but also to all of us. It seems to me that the purpose of the Bill is to place increasingly direct power into the hands of particular Ministers, and that power will allow control in this case over the environment. It will relate also to the forests and their use, to the national parks and their use, and it will intrude into a very large number of areas which relate to the economic development of this State. As has been indicated, it will intrude very directly into the whole area of agricultural production in this State, and that power is vested in the Minister.

The Forest Production Council, the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority, and the Lands and Forest Commission, together with the Director of Parks and Recreation, the Director of Nature Conservation, and the Director of Forests, are purely advisory bodies. There is no real power in them; the power rests with the Minister.

Local government is right to be concerned about the way in which this Bill has been presented; about what it endeavours to do and about the way it will affect the autonomy of local government in this State. I believe that it is only part of a process of collecting power over the planning process and putting it directly into the hands of the Government so that it can use that power at its will. On those very bases I believe that this Bill should be opposed.

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

HERD IMPROVEMENT SERVICE BILL

Council's Amendment

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Barnett), in the Chair; Mr Evans (Minister for Agriculture) in charge of the Bill.

The amendment made by the Council was as follows—

Schedule, Clause 4(2), page 21—Add after the word "chairman"—"or a majority of members".

Mr EVANS: To make the position clear, the relevant part of the schedule of the Bill contained on page 21, clause 4(2), states that a special meeting of the board may at any time be convened by the chairman. The Legislative Council has sought the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly to an amendment to add the words "or a majority of members" after the word "chairman".

No relevant reason was given in the other place. I can only assume that the Legislative Council operated along the same lines of logic as the member for Katanning-Roe previously in this Chamber.

I can see that it is of no great moment. It could have some deleterious effect—probably that is not the word, but it could give rise to situations which might cause abrasion within the operation of the board.

Be that as it may, if the situation becomes intolerable, something can be done about it at that stage. It is really nitpicking; as I have indicated, the reasoning is not strong, but the Government is not prepared to take issue on the matter. I move—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr OLD: I thank the Minister for his acceptance of the amendment. I agree that it is not a world-shattering thing; it is something I brought up here when the Bill was being debated on the basis that if the chairman were unavoidably absent, or permanently absent through his demise, there is no mechanism for calling a special meeting. The Minister did point out that he or the incumbent Minister would have power to do so, and I was happy to accept that on the basis that the Minister undertook to have the Crown Law Department look at this. I do not know the result of his inquiries with Crown Law, but obviously the Legislative Council thought there was a shortcoming. It is certainly not going to alter the context of the Bill; it will not make any difference to the herd improvement scheme. The Minister has taken a pragmatic view of the amendment in saying he will accept it, although he does not feel it is of great moment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Report

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL

(No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 August 1984.

MR SPRIGGS (Darling Range) [9.12 p.m.]: The amendment strengthens the Child Welfare Amendment Act of 1982, which enables the Children's Court, among other things, to apply a community service order as a penalty. However, the court is denied the same opportunity as far as costs are concerned.

In addition the Bill safeguards the identity of children in the Children's Court and in other courts. It will give continued protection to the child in his later life and prevent the child from being described as a ward of the State.

All these measures have our total support. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Wilson (Minister for Youth and Community Services), and transmitted to the Council.

YOUTH, SPORT AND RECREATION REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 August 1984.

MR PETER JONES (Narrogin) [9.14 p.m.]: This is a very straightforward Bill and the Opposition supports it. I would like to join with the Minister in the comments he made during his second reading speech when he acknowledged the work of those who have served on the committee and on the various subcommittees.

I introduced the legislation establishing this committee in 1978 at a time when the department was established to succeed the Community Rec-

reation Council. It was there for specific purposes. As the Minister rightly said, while it was not acknowledged as an interim measure at the time, it was recognised there was a need for a broad-based community input. A voluntary process was undertaken which might have brought forth the need to change the structure of the advisory committee itself, or perhaps go as far as the Minister has gone in this case, and that is to get rid of it altogether. That is a decision which the Government has made in the light of the advice given to it today. The Bill is certainly not opposed by the Opposition.

I shall make one comment: I am aware of the way in which the Minister has become greatly involved in these activities, and that is to his credit. I have no doubt he is familiar with the competing pressures which exist, not only in respect of the scarce dollars which are provided, but also for the Minister's ear, whoever the Minister might happen to be from time to time, regarding the two thrusts in this area. They are the thrust for a broad-based, recreational, participatory-type of activity and a role for the department which encourages the greatest number of people to participate in recreational pursuits, or a thrust which concentrates on the more elitist type of sporting endeavour.

When I was Minister I made no secret of the fact that I favoured the maximum involvement of the greatest number of people in healthy recreational pursuits. The department was aware of that policy and it aimed to achieve that end. However, elite sports were given a place.

The Alcoa Sports Institute was established and funds were committed to various activities. Indeed, we provided assistance for the WA Sports Federation in the form of secretarial services and in respect of its headquarters, even though that body was not part of the council.

The then President of the WA Sports Federation (Senator Jack Evans) certainly did not agree with the approach taken by the Government—an approach which tended to concentrate on the maximum involvement of the greatest number of people. Subsequently people like Professor Bloomfield have created a situation which is not totally to my liking and which is certainly not to the liking of some of the people who are now being displaced as a result of the abolition of the committee.

However, the wheel turns and, as the Minister said in his second reading speech, it is necessary for Government to have some role in these matters. I disagree to some extent with one comment made

by the Minister in his second reading speech, as follows—

Sport and recreation have become an increasing responsibility within the State and it is essential for the Government to have an appropriate advisory structure.

If the Government chooses to be heavily involved, undoubtedly it must have an appropriate advisory structure. However, I question strongly whether the Government needs to become heavily involved. I say that, because this department has grown considerably, not only in numbers, but also in the kinds of activities which people expect of it.

Therefore, my criticism, if it can be termed such, is not directed at the Government, the Minister, or the department so much as at the community itself.

As Governments do more, so they create an expectation, and the expectation in regard to these activities is that not only will money be provided to fund supporting staff, coaching, equipment, and capital facilities, but also that the Government will take an active role in many ways in doing things which community groups ought to be doing for themselves.

I point out that whichever Government is in power at any time, it is called upon increasingly to meet an expectation on the part of the community that "Government will provide". Well, Government is not going to continue providing, because it cannot provide to the degree people want. More particularly, not only can Government not provide, but also it should not be providing, because by that means it weakens the resolve which existed at one time, and which to some degree still exists within sporting bodies and communities that they should provide for themselves.

The Government's role is a supportive and complementary one—one which allows things to happen and which allows things which people want to do to occur. The basis on which a maximum of one-third of the capital funding of a project was provided by way of grant was that Government was seen to be assisting people who wanted to do things for themselves.

We support the measure, but suggest to the community at large that there is a limit to expectations and the Government is in a position where it cannot continue to satisfy unreasonable expectations.

MR WILSON (Nollamara—Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.20 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition, in particular the member for Narrogin, for its support of the Bill and the remarks which were made.

I do not quibble with the comments made by the member for Narrogin. What he has said is very sensible. It is always good to hear the Opposition say that the community should not ask the Government for more funds. It is hard for the Government to convince people that that is the case, and when we have the Opposition's support for that, it strengthens our position.

However, I agree, and it is our policy, that we should attend to both ends of the spectrum. We look at this as a triangle; the apex is the support for elite sports which, in turn, extends the base of support and public participation at the broad end of the triangle.

I am very pleased to have the Opposition's support for this Bill. It is a small measure, but a significant one in the implementation of our sport and recreation policy.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Wilson (Minister for Sport and Recreation), and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2): MESSAGES

Appropriations

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

1. Acts Amendment (Fair Representation) Bill.
2. Industrial Arbitration Amendment Bill (No. 2).

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TRADE

Australia-Korea Businessmen's Association

736. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) Was the State Government represented at the recent meeting in Melbourne of the Australia-Korea Businessmen's Association?
- (2) Does the State Government support the recommendation of the Australian Steel Industry Authority that "developing country" preference in trade with Korea be phased out where steel purchases from Korea are concerned?
- (3) Having regard to the important and developing relationship between Western Australia and the Republic of Korea, what initiatives is the Government taking to ensure that the increasing pressure on the Federal Government from Eastern States-based manufacturing and processing industries is not successful in its efforts to remove the access to Australian markets currently enjoyed by the Republic of Korea?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Government's position is that the question of "developing country" preference for Korea should be considered in the context of total Australian trade with Korea. It is an issue of general trade policy and therefore should not be viewed from a single industry perspective.
- (3) As above.

ALUMINIUM SMELTER

Tenders: Local Content

740. Mr PETER JONES, to the Premier:

- (1) With regard to the proposed aluminium smelter/power station project in the south-west, is the Government aware of concerns expressed by the Amalgamated Metals Foundry and Shipwrights Union, the Confederation of WA Industry, and the Metal Trades Industry Association that the proposed level of local tenders and contractual work is unacceptably low?

- (2) (a) Has the Government entered into discussions with the above organisations regarding the percentage of professional services, fabrication, equipment and parts supply which will be locally sourced?

- (b) if "Yes", what has been the result of these discussions?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes, the Government has taken significant steps to keep the various interested parties and potential participants in projects advised of the progress of the initiatives and has addressed the concerns of a number of organisations.
- (2) (a) and (b) Yes. Those concerned have been advised that the project will proceed under a State agreement Act which will incorporate local content provisions. Further discussions are continuing with industry, unions and the smelter consortium on these issues.

COURTS: LEGAL AID

Lawyers

771. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister representing the Attorney-General:

- (1) How many lawyers does the Government anticipate will be employed by the Legal Aid Commission at the end of 1985 and how many in Bunbury?
- (2) How many private practitioners practise in Bunbury?
- (3) Insofar as the dissemination of legal aid is concerned is the Government assured that legal aid cases are better handled by staff lawyers rather than by the private profession?
- (4) Insofar as the proposed Bunbury office is concerned, did the Government consult with local practitioners before the implementation of the plan?
- (5) Would the Attorney General advise why the local private practitioners were not consulted before the implementation of the plan, particularly in view of the provision of section 15 (10) (ab) of the Legal Aid Commission Act?
- (6) With regard to the proposed Bunbury office, has the Legal Aid Commission or the Government considered the impact on local practitioners?
- (7) If "Yes" to (6), what does the Government consider the impact to be?

- (8) Has there ever been a cost analysis of the Bunbury proposals, and if so, can the Attorney General give details?
- (9) Has the Government or the Legal Aid Commission studied the question as to whether or not the public would prefer their Legal Aid cases to be dealt with by a staff lawyer or by a member of the private profession, and if so can the Attorney General give details?
- (10) What is the anticipated need in the Bunbury area for a Legal Aid Commission office?
- (11) Does the Government agree with the policy of the Commonwealth Attorney General to increase the ratio of cases handled by staff lawyers?
- (12) Has the Government considered the establishment of a community legal centre in Bunbury as distinct from a Legal Aid Commission office?
- (13) If "Yes" to (12), can the Attorney General give details?
- (14) Is the Government aware that under section 15(1)(d)(iii) and section 38 of the Legal Aid Commission Act it is possible for a person to make an application for legal aid requesting that a certain practitioner act on his behalf and for the Legal Aid Commission to then assign the case to a staff practitioner against the wishes of the applicant?
- (15) Would the Government consider amending the Legal Aid Commission Act to ensure that an assisted person is always entitled to choose the practitioner of his own choice?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Numbers will depend on decisions to be made and announced in the context of the forthcoming Budget.
- (2) According to the 1984 *Law Almanac*, 11.
- (3) Legal aid is based on a proper balance of private and salaried services.
- (4) The Legal Aid Commission is an independent, statutory body and the proposal to open a Bunbury office was formulated by it, not the Government. The Government took into account any impact the office might have on the private profession in the Bunbury region.
- (5) and (6) I am advised that the commission's proposal to open a Bunbury

office was formulated in compliance with the duty imposed by section 15(1)(b) of the Legal Aid Commission Act 1976-1982. I am also advised that discussions have taken place between the commission and the South West Regional Law Society in respect of the proposed establishment of the office.

- (7) The commission anticipates that there will be an increase in the legal aid work available to local practitioners.
- (8) Cost estimates have been made for alternative office structures. Details will be available when Budget decisions are announced.
- (9) No.
- (10) The south-west statistical division has the largest concentration of population outside the metropolitan area. The Bunbury office will enable more effective delivery of legal aid services by both staff and briefed solicitors.
- (11) See answer to (3).
- (12) No.
- (13) Not applicable.
- (14) Yes.
- (15) No.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Hotel-marina Complex: Site

815. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

Referring him to his letter to me of 5 June which was in response to my question 3310 of 10 May—

- (a) which Rottneest Island Board representative asked the applicants to allocate a suitable site for the hotel/marina complex;
- (b) when was the request made;
- (c) was the request confirmed in writing;
- (d) were all applicants notified of this request?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (a) Subcommittee chairman, Tony Ednie-Brown, discussed with the four short-listed applicants that the study should incorporate a recommendation, or otherwise, of a marina/hotel complex in Thompson Bay, and if considered appropriate, where it could be located;
- (b) during preselection interviews;

- (c) no;
- (d) only those four short-listed.

LAPORTE AUSTRALIA LTD.

Effluent: Disposal

825. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) With regard to the treatment and disposal of effluent from the Laporte plant at Australind, what studies are currently under way regarding the treatment and disposal of effluent from Laporte?
- (2) What progress is being made with any studies and when is it anticipated they will be completed?
- (3) (a) Is the Government moving to acquire additional land for the disposal of effluent;
(b) if "Yes", for what reason was acquisition of additional land delayed?
- (4) When is it anticipated that any additional land will commence to be used for effluent disposal?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Three studies are currently in progress—
 - (i) A study of effluent treatment and disposal methods being developed or used elsewhere in the world for similar effluents;
 - (ii) A first stage environmental review and management programme to determine the most appropriate long-term strategy for effluent disposal, based on the present state of knowledge and giving due consideration to the various social, economic and environmental issues;
 - (iii) an environmental management programme for the existing, and possible extended, effluent disposal areas on Leschenault Peninsula
- (2) Studies in relation to the "VLD" process of effluent treatment and engineering aspects of extending the present effluent disposal scheme have been completed. The three studies currently in progress are expected to be completed within the next month.
- (3) (a) Resumption of the additional land has been actioned;
(b) there were no unusual delays.
- (4) Use of any additional land for effluent disposal is dependent upon continued

satisfactory disposal in the existing area and the outcome of current negotiations with SCM Chemicals Ltd., the new owners of Laporte Australia Limited.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Agreements: Unions

827. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) (a) Has the State Energy Commission entered into any work agreements with the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union;
(b) if "Yes", what is the nature of the agreements entered into?
- (2) (a) Is the State Energy Commission, or officers and employees of the State Energy Commission, still party to negotiations with the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union or any other union regarding work "agreements";
(b) if so, what is the nature and substance of any such discussions?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes;
(b) they relate to work to be done in the construction and workshops branch.
- (2) (a) Yes;
(b) discussions with work force go on from time to time in relation to work to be performed.

ENERGY: STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Agreements: Unions

828. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) (a) Is it fact that the State Energy Commission, and/or officers or employees of the State Energy Commission, have entered into an agreement with the Electrical Trades Union and the Building Workers Industrial Union regarding work which will be done within the construction and workshops group of the State Energy Commission;
(b) if "Yes", what is the nature of the agreements entered into and when were the agreements discussed and finalised?

- (2) Have the so-called "agreements" been approved by the Commissioners of the State Energy Commission?
- (3) Were the discussions which resulted in the "agreements" initiated by the Government, the State Energy Commission or the unions?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes;
 - (b) they relate to work to be done in construction and workshops branch.
- (2) This is not necessary as the decision is one of a management nature.
- (3) Initiated by consultation with the work force.

TRANSPORT: SCHOOL BUSES

Contract: Charter Work

838. Mr McNEE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When he advised this House on Tuesday, 18 September, of a school bus for sale in the hills area was he aware that an amount of approximately \$6 000 was included in the gross return which was earned from charter work?
- (2) Before answering that question did he have access to the profit and loss statement?
- (3) Would he inform the House of the deductions from the gross value of the contract to enable the net result to be arrived at?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (3) In the House on Tuesday I quoted from an advertisement in *The Sunday Times* Readers' Mart of Sunday, 16 September. For the information of the member, I table a copy of that advertisement.

If the implication of the member's question is that the advertisement does not correctly state the profit involved in this contract, he should make a complaint to the Consumer Affairs Department. I would be happy in that case to make available to Consumer Affairs the cost statements supplied by this operator.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 155).

MINERALS: COAL

Western Collieries Ltd.: SEC Funding

843. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Adverting to the reply given to question 559 of 22 August 1984, what contractual arrangements prevail between the State Energy Commission and Western Collieries Ltd. under which all funds received by Western Collieries from the State Energy Commission are paid?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (a) Prior to August 1984 coal supplies from Western Collieries Ltd. were made under an interim contract the term of which was extended by exchange of letters.
- (b) In August 1984 the commission and Western Collieries executed a heads of agreement for the supply of coal over a 20-year period. The heads of agreement back-dates price arrangements to 3 January 1984 in accordance with a basis of agreement signed in February 1983.
- (c) Western Collieries in conjunction with Western Collieries and Dampier Pty. Ltd. undertook in 1983 an exploration programme, the subject of a separate agreement with the commission.

HEALTH: NURSING HOMES

Conditions

860. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Did he see the *Daily News* of 29 August 1984 under the headline "Nursing Homes—Shock Report" which contain allegations by Senator Giles that she knew of at least six homes which should be closed because of deplorable conditions?
- (2) Is he aware of such nursing homes in Western Australia?
- (3) Was Senator Giles referring to any nursing homes in Western Australia?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), would he name them?
- (5) If "Yes" to (3), what action has he taken?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) I am aware of allegations made by Senator Giles about nursing homes in general. They were not apparently specific to Western Australia.

(2) No.

(3) to (5) This question should be referred to Senator Giles.

861. *Postponed.*

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Management Powers

862. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Environment:

Referring to the reported review of beach erosion and coastal management in Western Australia by the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation, to what extent is he or the Government relinquishing environmental management powers of the State—being a residual power according to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia—to the Commonwealth, which has no power whatsoever regarding the environment included in the constitutional enumerated powers?

Mr DAVIES replied:

I understand that there is currently no proposal by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation to review coastal management in Western Australia.

This State has now taken the lead in coastal management with the production of a series of coastal management plans for more sensitive sections of the coastline. Co-operative efforts between the various local authorities and the Department of Conservation and Environment, drawing on specialist skills in coastal erosion, dune stabilisation and coastal planning, are made in particular problem areas.

Not only has this Government no intention of handing over responsibility for coastal planning and management to the Commonwealth, but also I have encountered no serious suggestion that it should.

SOIL: CONSERVATION

Projects

863. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Would he please enumerate the reported 21 projects which will be funded in Western Australia from the newly granted Federal funds for soil conservation purposes?

Mr EVANS replied:

The projects are as follows—

Perenjori regional catchment project;

Fitzroy river frontage;

provision of professional and technical resources in Moora and Three Springs area;

development of group-based soil conservation districts;

preliminary assessment of the extent and cost of land degradation in Western Australia;

Leonora rangeland regeneration project;

secondary salinisation in the Mallee Road sump;

Cowcowing Creek catchment—stage 1;

evaluation of risk factors leading to soil destabilisation on the south coast sandplain of Western Australia;

Darling Scarp and foothills land capability study;

conservation tillage for wind erosion prone soils;

development of combined extension, education and training packages in soil conservation;

Kadathinni Hills water control project;

water erosion on vegetable growing land in the south-west of WA;

identification of minimum levels of stubble required to prevent wind erosion;

an assessment of the distribution and severity of induced non-wetting of sandy surfaced soils on the south coast of WA;

re-establishment of lucerne on old land, wind erodible acid soils on the south coast region of WA;
 provision of hose level graduated tubes to agricultural colleges;
 monitoring range condition in WA;
 rainfall runoff and soil erosion modelling in WA agricultural catchments; and,
 soil degradation in lupin-cereal rotations.

ROAD: BRIDGE

Peel Inlet

864. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Would he describe briefly what works the reported contract for construction of a bridge over the Peel Inlet contains?
- (2) When is construction to commence and when is the contractually required completion date?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The contract includes briefly a 380m long bridge providing two traffic lanes and two shoulder lanes, a lower level dual purpose footway/cycleway and a 50m long fishing platform. Pavement construction and landscaping between Pinjarra Road and the Old Coast Road on the alignment of the Mandurah Bypass are also included.
- (2) Construction will commence on or about Monday, 24 September 1984 and is due for completion by mid-1986.

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Strike: Loss of Revenue

865. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Transport:

What was the estimated loss of revenue to Westrail encountered from interstate goods and passenger transport resulting from the Eastern States railway strike?

Mr GRILL replied:

The rail stoppage in New South Wales from 23 August to 11 September 1984, inclusive, resulted in Westrail being under-budget on intersystem traffic by approximately \$300 000. Over the ensuing weeks, it is anticipated that some of this traffic will be recovered.

PLANNING: SUBDIVISION

Blackboy Hill-Greenmount: Sewerage

866. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Could he please describe the considerations for allowing development on the recently sold site in Greenmount/Blackboy Hill—being portion of Swan location 16 and being part lot 100 on plan 4584 and being portion of the land in certificate of title volume 1108 folio 206—without connecting the lots to deep sewerage?
- (2) Is it fact that the land described in (1) has clay soil?
- (3) Is it fact that the nearest sewer main capable of connection to the land described in (1) is about 200 metres away?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Conditional Town Planning Board approval to the proposed subdivision requires all lots to be connected to reticulated sewerage. The purchaser has appealed against this condition.
- (2) Yes, but of varying types and scattered throughout the site.
- (3) Yes, but it would only service about 30 per cent of the site.

ROADS

Western Suburbs: Review

867. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning:

- (1) How many submissions/comments were received on the western suburbs road review report?
- (2) What are the main contentions of these submissions?
- (3) When is it expected to have a decision by Government regarding the subject matters of the report?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Twenty-nine submissions were received from the public and one from each of the seven participating local authorities.
- (2) Half the public submissions opposed the amendment to the metropolitan region scheme, while most of the remainder were undecided and three supported it.

Two of the local authorities were opposed while the majority of the balance supported it and one council con-

sidered that the need for the route had not been adequately demonstrated.

- (3) Further submissions from two councils are awaited and upon receipt of those a report will be submitted to Cabinet.

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Review: Steering Committee

868. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Who are the members of the recently announced steering committee to review the functions of the Department of Industrial Development?
- (2) What are the terms of reference for the committee?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The member is referred to the answer to question 811.
- (2) The terms of reference for the steering committee are to monitor the progress of, liaise with and provide direction to the project team conducting the review of the department. The steering committee will make whatever decisions are appropriate in the light of project team recommendations.

ARTS: LIBRARIES

Public Library Service: Book Input

869. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for the Arts:

- (1) What was the new book input from the Public Library Service of Western Australia for the current financial year in terms of value-percentage?
- (2) Does this percentage represent an amount which according to the Government's policy is considered satisfactory to provide to the public?
- (3) What is the anticipated input in the following two years?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) No new book input figure for the public library system for the current financial year can be calculated, either in terms of percentages or in terms of value, until the Budget for 1984-85 is brought down.
- (2) See (1) above.
- (3) This is impossible to forecast, but the Government will endeavour to meet all

reasonable demands as fully as possible and consistent with existing economic circumstances.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

Water Supply: Report

870. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Would he please table or make available to me a copy of the Binnie and Partners report on options for upgrading Rottne Island's water supply?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The report is a technical document which updates the feasibility of a submarine pipeline to Rottne in the light of recent engineering developments.

At this preliminary stage it must be treated as the technical input of an overall study. In this context it is not appropriate for public release.

However, I have no objection to the member's being confidentially given access to a copy of the report.

WATER RESOURCES

Assistance Programme

871. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Would he detail the guidelines of the recently announced Commonwealth Government water resources assistance programme?
- (2) What are the projects towards which the Government is going to utilise such an assistance programme?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Senator Hon. Peter Walsh, Minister for Resources and Energy, tabled documents setting out the Commonwealth Government's new water policy guidelines for the new Federal water resources assistance programme and its response to the recommendations of the *Water 2000* report, and made a statement on those issues in the Commonwealth Parliament on 12 September 1984.

I understand that the documents concerned are available from the library within this Parliament for perusal by the member.

- (2) In the short time available since Senator Walsh's announcement I have not had the opportunity to fully consider the manner in which the State Government can best benefit from the Commonwealth programme.

LAPORTE AUSTRALIA LTD.

Air Pollution and Noise Levels

872. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How often this year has the Public Health Department taken air pollution and noise levels at Laporte, Australind?
- (2) Are these levels taken on a regular basis, and if so, how regular?
- (3) Are the air pollution and noise levels within the standard set by the Public Health Department?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Noise levels have been measured twice on separate occasions over periods of two and three days respectively in various locations in the residential area around Laporte. Levels of air pollution have been measured 16 times.
- (2) No.
- (3) Some of the noise measurements exceeded the assigned level in the noise abatement (neighbourhood annoyance) regulations 1979 and measures to reduce these levels have been discussed with the company. Air pollution levels from the acid plant have exceeded objectives determined by the Air Pollution Control Council. In response to advice from the council the company proposes to reduce emissions to satisfactory levels by March 1985 at a cost of \$1.3 million.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTORAL: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Appointment: Applications

238. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

In the absence of absolute certainty as to whether the question should be directed to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform or the Premier as the Minister responsible for the Civil Service, I had the questions phoned, in advance, to the offices of both the Minister

and the Premier. The questions are as follows—

- (1) Were applications called for the position of Chief Electoral Officer?
- (2) Were applications called publicly, or only internally within the Civil Service?
- (3) On what date were applications called?
- (4) On what date did applications close?
- (5) How many applicants were there?
- (6) How many applicants were currently employed as public servants?
- (7) How many applicants were from outside the Government sector?
- (8) Where were advertisements placed for the position?
- (9) If advertisements were placed, how often were they placed?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (9) This question should rightly have been directed to me and, as the Leader of the Opposition informed the Parliament, he phoned the question to my office earlier today. I have not had a chance to collect fully the information sought by the Leader of the Opposition, and I will forward the information to him as soon as possible.

However, to assist members, I have a copy of information from the Public Service Board which will answer some of the questions and will be, I have no doubt, of considerable assistance to the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition generally.

Referring firstly to that part of the interviewing panel's recommendations that concern Dr Rumley, I will read from the recommendations to the Public Service Board as follows—

Dr D. Rumley, Senior Lecturer in Geography at the University of Western Australia brought with his application considerable verve and energy as well as substantial research experience. Dr Rumley was the most impressive of the external candidates and would develop the job using contemporary research to assist in redistribution and in the determination of fairness as an attribute of the electoral system. He

has some management experience through his work on the Faculty of Arts at the University and through his membership of other organisations. He has well thought out ideas about the role of Head of Department. He sees the need for an honest and independent arbiter and a person who assists and evaluates tasks for the Ministers.

I ask members to recall that this comes from the interviewing panel of three people. It continues—

The Interviewing Panel wishes to put the names of two candidates before the Public Service Board. These are . . .

I have left out the name of the first candidate, although I can say that he was not from within the department concerned but was on the attached list. The recommendation continues—

. . . and Dr D. Rumley. The Panel feels that either candidate would do the job well.

Referring to the other candidate, the recommendation continues—

. . . strengths are his substantial management experience and his capacity to revitalise and organise new systems including those utilising E.D.P. His general demeanour is very good.

Dr Rumley's most significant contribution to the job of Chief Electoral Officer would be in his substantial research and writing background, and his computer applications to complicated tasks of electoral organisation and setting. He has a friendly disposition and would no doubt work well with people in the organisation.

Submitted for your consideration please.

That was signed on 30 July 1984 by the three members of the interviewing panel, Mr D. B. Blight, Dr Michael Wood, and Mr F. J. Campbell.

Mr Hassell: I am interested in your information. It is interesting that you have so much to give, yet you have had this question in your hands since 10.34 this morning and you cannot give an answer to it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the Leader of the Opposition is willing to hear the remainder of the information—he has already signalled his intention of embarking upon character assassination in respect of Dr Rumley; we know that is one of his favourite practices—and if he holds his breath for a moment longer, I will read to him the advice from the Chairman of the Public Service Board to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. I am sure that will be helpful to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Hassell: I am sure it will be.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It reads—

Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer—

Mr Hassell: You have had since 10.30 to answer the question and you have not bothered.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the Leader of the Opposition does not like the answer, he should not have asked the question.

Mr Hassell: It is not the answer.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Whether or not the Leader of the Opposition understands it, this is the answer. If the Leader of the Opposition holds his breath—

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —instead of whingeing, I will give him some of the information with regard to his question.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Remember, we have now heard the results of the interviewing panel's recommendations to the Public Service Board. We move now to the advice of the Chairman of the Public Service Board to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. It reads—

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Consequent upon the retirement of Mr D. Coates, applications were invited for the Office of Chief Electoral Officer. Australia-wide interest was canvassed through advertisements in *The Australian* and *The West Australian* newspapers of 9 June 1984.

In response to those advertisements, the Public Service Board received eleven (11) applications, of which

six (6) were submitted by people outside the Public Service.

These applications were referred to a selection panel, the members of which were—

Mr D. G. Blight—Deputy Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet;

Dr M. C. Wood—Secretary for Local Government; and

Mr F. J. Campbell—Commissioner, Public Service Board.

After examining the applications the panel selected seven (7) candidates for interview. A copy of the panel's report is attached for your information.

Part of which I have already read to the House. It continues—

This report has been considered by the Public Service Board and I have also interviewed Dr Rumley again.

In the Board's view there is no doubt that Dr Rumley is the preferred applicant. Following my interview with him I am quite satisfied Dr Rumley is well aware of all that is involved in making the move from academic life and taking on the role of a Permanent Head in the Public Service. I also believe he will be able to make that transition.

I have ascertained that, if offered the appointment, Dr Rumley will seek leave without pay from his University post. However he is quite categorical that, should leave not be granted, he will resign from the University staff to take up the appointment of Chief Electoral Officer. I have also ascertained that Dr Rumley would expect to complete his teaching obligations for Third Term before taking up this appointment.

This is the crux of the case. It is a system instituted for appointments of this sort by the previous Government, not by this Government. It has been proceeded with unaltered by this Government, and has not been changed in any way as far as I am aware.

The following paragraph is the nub of the question. It reads—

I would therefore formally request that you advise His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council that, pursuant to Section 29 of the Public Service Act, the Public Service Board recommends the appointment of Dr D. Rumley to the Permanent Head position of Chief Electoral Officer for a term of five years.

The Executive Council Minute Paper to give effect to that recommendation is herewith for your endorsement and submission to Executive Council, please.

The letter is signed by K. McKenna and dated 24 August 1984.

The Government cannot state more clearly than that the facts surrounding the appointment of Dr Rumley. The Government cannot state more clearly than read from a letter signed by the Chairman of the Public Service Board—the chairman appointed by the previous Government—in which he says that Dr Rumley was the preferred applicant. This request does not advise or do anything but the normally accepted and traditional thing, which is to request that the Governor in Executive Council be advised of the Public Service Board's recommendation. Yet, we have this Opposition hell-bent on the character assassination of one of the State's leading academics simply because it does not suit its purposes for Mr McKenna to have made this recommendation.

There was no element of political interference in the appointment of Dr Rumley. That is demonstrated—unless the Opposition is calling Mr McKenna a liar—by the letter over that man's signature.

One day, the Opposition will wake up to the fact that character assassination removes political support from its side of the ledger, not adds to its political advantage.

Mr Hassell: It is the Government's activities we are questioning—make no mistake.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Leader of the Opposition has said that he is questioning the Government's activities. What activities is the Leader of the Opposition querying? Let the Leader of the Opposition be specific. The Government

knows that he has been talking to Mr Coates.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I cannot understand the Leader of the Opposition. He has the privilege of Parliament and he just said that he is questioning the Government's activities. All I am asking, after the Leader of the Opposition's extensive consultations with Mr Coates, is that the Leader of the Opposition be specific and that he put up, or shut up.

I cannot be any more forthcoming than that. The Leader of the Opposition should put up or shut up.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me recap in conclusion.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the Opposition wants to ask questions, I am happy to provide the answers.

In conclusion, the interviewing panel put forward two names to the Public Service Board. The Public Service Board considered the two names and, pursuant to the Act, the chairman of the board advised the Minister that he should request the Governor in Executive Council to make a certain appointment.

That is the basis of the appointment of Dr Rumley. The letters have been produced. The Leader of the Opposition has failed to be specific in anything he has said. We on this side of the Chamber will not be a party to the character assassination of anyone, whether it is Dr Rumley or someone appointed from outside by the previous Liberal Government.

ROTTNEST ISLAND: DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Submission: Opposition

239. Mr BARNETT, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware of the interjection during question time last Wednesday by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in which he said—

We will make our own statement on Rottnest Island when it is good and ready to be made.

- (2) Did the Deputy Leader of the Opposition also state, in response to a question

asking why the Opposition had not lodged a submission on the interim report, the following—

Because it is not completed yet. When it is, we will make it public.

Mr Clarko: Look up *Hansard*

Mr BARNETT: To continue—

- (3) Is the Premier now aware of any submissions or reports by the Opposition on Rottnest, despite the statements by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that a submission is not yet completed and will be made when the Opposition is good and ready, and will be made public.

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) We all recall that only a week or so ago the Leader of the House, in talking about arrangements made by him and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to, and tabled, a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that completely contradicted what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said and did previously.

Mr MacKinnon: You had better read it again.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Looking at this subject the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's credibility is like one of those cheeses with holes in it, because it is shot right through. We all heard what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had to say and the member for Rockingham has quoted him correctly.

I am aware of the statements to which the member refers and it is a matter of some interest to me in view of the Opposition's tactics in the past of knocking the Government's conduct over Rottnest Island without taking advantage of genuine and constructive avenues through which to influence Government policy.

Hence, Mr Speaker, you can imagine my surprise when I received a copy of the document entitled, "Joint Opposition parties report on Rottnest Island".

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the report was not finished and that when it was finished it would be made public.

We have the report and, I repeat, it is called, "Joint Opposition parties report on Rottnest Island". When is the Government going to be able to believe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

I have a report headed, "Joint Opposition parties report on Rottneest Island", and I can conclude only that it represents the efforts of the joint Opposition parties in this Parliament. What is even more surprising—

Mr MacKinnon: How can it be?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: These people should not say these things.

Mr MacKinnon: It is not even a report. It has not been approved.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Why is it being sent to me?

Mr MacKinnon: I did not send it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have no idea who sent it to me. I thought the member would have. It is the sort of shabby document he would be proud of.

Mr MacKinnon: No.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: In any case, the point of the exercise is this: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that when the Opposition finished its report it would be made public. Now we have public reports which the Opposition does not own up to.

Mr MacKinnon: The report is not finished; it will be made public when it is.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I cannot understand what this is. I am told it is the joint Opposition parties' report, not a partly completed report, a progress report, an interim report or an initial or premature report.

Mr MacKinnon: What authorisation does it have?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have six children and I own up to every one of them. This man has a report and he does not own up to it.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What is even more surprising is that this report was not made to the Rottneest Island Board, the Government or the Parliament, I am advised it was a report to the Rottneest Society.

Mr MacKinnon: There is no such report. The report is not completed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It seems on the one hand the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is claiming that the Opposition will make a statement on Rottneest when it is good and ready.

Mr MacKinnon: We have made no report to the Rottneest Society.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: On the other hand the Opposition—

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am trying to make a genuine and serious reply to the Parliament.

Mr Hassell: No, you are not.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am only newly returned from being incapacitated.

Mr MacKinnon: You have not proved—

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is claiming that the Opposition will make a statement on Rottneest when it is good and ready, while on the other hand the Opposition is already peddling its views on Rottneest Island to the Rottneest Society. One can only speculate as to the reason the Deputy Leader of the Opposition claimed in the Parliament last Wednesday that the Opposition's report had not been completed.

Mr MacKinnon: It has not been completed. I repeat, the Opposition's report has not been completed.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Already in circulation is a 15-page report in response to the interim report on Rottneest released by the Government early this year. The Opposition's hesitancy to forward a copy of its report may well be because the report endorses much of the contents of the interim report and makes a number of suggestions which have already been taken up by the Government.

ELECTORAL: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Appointment: Selection Panel

240. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Why was Dr Michael Wood, a recent Government appointee to the office of Secretary of the Local Government Department, a member of the selection panel which recommended, via the Public Service Board to the Government, the appointment of Dr Dennis Rumley as Chief Electoral Officer?

- (2) What are Dr Wood's qualifications for being a member of the panel bearing in mind his own recent appointment as an outsider to the Public Service?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) I have had no knowledge of the question, so I can only inform the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the appointment of the selection panel was made by the Public Service Board. I will refer the question to the Public Service Board and ask why it was that it decided to include such well-known Labor sympathisers as Mr Digby Blight, Dr Michael Wood and Mr Frank Campbell. I know they are all radicals! I know the Public Service Board will have an answer. Unfortunately I had no previous knowledge of the question, and I will simply ask the Public Service Board to provide Mr MacKinnon with the answer.

Mr Clarko: Will you retrench them, too?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know what that has to do with it. Let me say simply that I will ask Mr McKenna to provide the information in response to the question by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

AGRICULTURE: QINGHAI MODEL FARM

Feasibility Study

241. Mr D. L. SMITH, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

What is the progress of the Qinghai model farm feasibility study?

Mr BRYCE replied:

Following contact between the Beijing office of the Australian Trade Commissioner service and the Government of Qinghai Province of the People's Republic of China, WAOPA was invited to discuss a proposed 46 500 ha. model farm development based on Australian broad area technology.

In January 1984, Mr Peter Booth, General Manager of WAOPA, Mr Peter Griffiths, Chamberlain John Deere, and Mr Kerry Hawley, Department of Agriculture, visited Qinghai and negotiated a jointly-funded feasibility study of the proposal.

A team of six specialists, led by Mr Hawley and including three private in-

dustry representatives, departed Perth on 19 June 1984, to undertake a five-week study.

It is anticipated that a proposal will be presented in October by a WAOPA negotiating team and that any programme agreed will be implemented in early 1985. Current estimates indicate a project value of \$4 million.

ELECTORAL: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Appointment: Recommendation

242. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

- (1) Did the Minister have any discussion with the Commissioner of the Public Service Board or any commissioners before the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer was recommended by the Board?

- (2) If so, did he indicate any preference?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) I have had many discussions with many members of the Public Service Board. When I see them I talk to them, which may not have been the practice of the previous Government. I have not made any request of that kind to anyone.

ROTTNEST ISLAND: MANAGEMENT GROUP

Terms of Reference

243. Mr READ, to the Premier:

- (1) Have the terms of reference for the Rottneest Island management group been finalised?

- (2) If so, can the Premier tell the House in brief terms what they are?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) The terms of reference have been finalised between the group and the Rottneest Island Board and are very wide-ranging. The team hopes to have a preliminary report ready for public comment by Christmas. This will take into account public comments received earlier in the year on the interim development plan for the island.

The terms of reference are—

land management, including aspects such as land capability, erosion, the impact of human access;

management of vegetation, including reafforestation, weed invasion and trial grazing damage and fire management;

management of wildlife such as quokka populations, introduced pests, and birds;

fresh water resource and aquatic habitat including the salt lakes and fresh water habitats;

marine management, including marine reserves, recreation pollution, anchorages and moorings and local marine access; and,

land uses and infrastructure associated with the settled areas; for example, waste disposal, power supply, sewerage treatment, water supply, access and transport.

JOHN O'CONNOR: CRIMINAL CHARGES

Dropping: TLC Campaign

244. Mr COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Government support the Trades and Labor Council in its campaign to have criminal charges against John O'Connor dropped?
- (2) Has the Government discussed plans to resolve this case out of court?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) As has been publicly stated by the Government, and as I now restate publicly, there is absolutely no role for the Government in the matter of the charge or charges preferred against Mr O'Connor.

In fact, had the member for Nedlands an elementary knowledge of the law, he would understand that the matter rightly rests with the Police Department and the officer, as an individual, who has preferred charges against Mr O'Connor. There is no scope for the Government to interfere nor would it seek to interfere under any circumstances, with the exercise by that officer of his responsibilities under the Act under which he operates.

That is the first matter.

The second matter is that until there is—

Mr Hassell: Is that why the member for Pilbara's motion at Caucus today was withdrawn?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition has bugged the Caucus room—

Mr Pearce: He bugs me!

Mr Burkett: Good one, Bob! That's why you are Minister for Education: You are so smart!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The converse of that is that the Leader of the Opposition is dumb!

Let me say as clearly as I can that we see no role for Government intervention.

Mr Hassell: The member for Pilbara does.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have personally informed the Trades and Labor Council that there is no role for the Government in this matter. Further than that, I have informed the TLC that its current campaign is likely to be counterproductive in the interests of Mr O'Connor, and I have said, under all the circumstances, there is no role for Government to play in the matter.

I cannot conceive of any situation in which the Government would seek to interfere; so that is where it stands.

It has been said publicly before, and I say it publicly again now, that we see no place whatsoever for Government action in respect of the matter that will be heard by the judiciary in due course; that is, the charge against Mr O'Connor.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: PUBLIC SERVICE

Relationship: Government

245. Mr BATEMAN, to the Premier:

As a public servant for some 25 years before coming into this place, I ask—

- (1) Is the Premier aware of media reports that the relationship between the Government and the Public Service has deteriorated since the change of Government and that the Government has a dislike of the Public Service?
- (2) If so, will he outline the Government's attitude to the Public Service?

Mr Blaikie: The Forests Department does not like the Government either.

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, I am aware of these reports and I am most concerned at the sugges-

tion that the Government is opposed to the Public Service.

Mr Blaikie: What about your political advisers? They have taken over the role of civil servants.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I believe that the Western Australian Public Service has coped very well with the necessary changes undertaken by a new Government.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I refer back to the comments made publicly by the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps the member for Vasse will check with the Leader of the Opposition as to his objections to the recently announced implementation of the functions review committee, because the Leader of the Opposition has publicly supported the Government's position. Does the Opposition want to backtrack from its leader's public position, because that is what the member for Vasse is doing; the member for Karrinyup is also appearing to backtrack on his leader's stated position. The member for Karrinyup said, "You carve them up every day".

The Leader of the Opposition is on record publicly as saying that he supports the Government's decision in respect of the establishment of the functions review committee. Does he support it or does he not?

Mr Hassell: Subject to some qualifications which I stated, yes.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Leader of the Opposition supports it, subject to qualifications! He is either walking out of the Chamber or subjecting himself to qualifications.

Mr Clarko: Who will be hit next?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: What does the member for Karrinyup mean by that interjection?

Mr Clarko: You do hit one a day, don't you? Then you make a grand promise that you will halve the recruitment rate. You say that, for every two that are wasted, you will only employ one, but you don't do that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not understand these people. The Leader of the Opposition is on public record as supporting the activities of the functions review committee, while those who surround

him are pulling him down in his debilitated form, at least survey-wise, as we all watch. The Leader of the Opposition has had the courage to support the Government on this occasion. Why cannot members of the Opposition stand firm beside him?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: When the Government was elected, I assured the Public Service that a State Labor Government would be responsible, moderate, and cautious in its attitude to change, and that change would occur only after close consultation with relevant professionals.

Mr Clarko: You did not consult on the 10 per cent pay cut, did you?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the member wants to know, I did consult on the 10 per cent pay cut.

Mr Clarko: No, you did not. You told them what was going to happen. That is not consulting; that is giving them a directive.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not know where the member for Karrinyup has been, but he certainly was not with me when, during the period in question, I consulted with senior public servants about the 10 per cent pay cut.

Mr Clarko: Your industrial policy says that you will abide by—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Karrinyup is making the answers to the questions longer.

Mr Clarko: He has been up all day!

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I have been on my feet answering questions from the Opposition.

Mr Clarko: He is giving one of his Fagan-like speeches.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have asked many times for interjections to cease during question time. The previous Speaker in this House threatened to terminate question time if interjections continued while the Premier or a Minister was answering a question. If members want that to happen, I can accommodate them.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: One is tempted to believe it is a sudden attempt by the member for Karrinyup to sabotage question time to the disadvantage of the Opposition.

While crushing financial constraints, not totally apparent at that time but subsequently thrust upon the Government, called for a shared sacrifice—but only on the part of those best able to make it—I believe those assurances have been honoured in the spirit in which they were made.

Equally natural, on looking back, was the apprehension among public servants that the Government's appointment of ministerial advisers and other contract workers was, in some way, a threat to their careers or promotional opportunities.

I believe there is now a general acceptance that this practice has not threatened a single job or a single promotional opportunity for any mainstream public servant.

The experience and expertise of career public servants has been fully utilised in the reorganisation of departments which followed the change of Government.

The only tasks which have not been allocated to public servants in these new structures are those outside the functional and ethical work areas for which public servants have traditionally been responsible.

The new general acceptance by the Public Service of the Government's initiative in this area, and the harmony with which contract and Public Service staff are working together to further improve the functioning of Government is a source of great satisfaction to me and my ministerial colleagues. I am sure it will continue to be.

The Western Australian Public Service has a long record of efficient service to the Government of the day.

The last 18 months have left me greatly impressed by its great capacity and expertise and infinitely more confident about the future of good government in this State.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Transport Workers' Union: Premier's Adviser

246. Mr HASSELL to the Premier:

Given that the Premier has acknowledged that there is absolutely no role for the Government in relation to

the prosecution of charges against Mr John O'Connor, I ask—

In relation to the proposed industrial action by the Transport Workers' Union, what action does the Premier propose to take and what directions does he propose to give, or has he given, to his political adviser in relation to industrial relations (Mr Tom Butler) towards the settlement of the strike and non-interference in the judicial process?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I could crave your protection, Sir, by referring to the hypothetical nature of the question, but far be it from me to seek your shelter when it is not needed.

Industrial laws govern the industrial relationships within our society. I do not know whether the Transport Workers' Union intends to mount a strike, stop-work meeting, black ban, or go slow.

Mr Hassell: Is there no role for Mr Butler in this case?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I shall answer the Leader of the Opposition's question according to my own lights, not according to his. In this sort of process, the Leader of the Opposition asks the questions and I answer them. I would not seek to try to frame his questions, because I could not improve on them; so he should not seek to try to frame my answers.

Mr Hassell: I wasn't actually. I was asking a question in relation to the issue.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: It is really quite tiresome, Mr Speaker. Industrial laws govern behaviour of parties to industrial relationships according, I suppose, to the laws of legislatures from time to time. Those industrial laws, regardless of Mr Butler, Uncle Tom Cobbley, or the people in the Press gallery, will apply to industrial situations that beg their application. That is the situation. Mr Butler cannot change laws with a wave of his wand.

Mr MacKinnon: What does he do?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: He certainly does not attempt to change laws with the wave of a wand.

Mr MacKinnon: What does he do?

Mr Hassell: He doesn't help to solve strikes either, apparently.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: So we can put it on the parliamentary record, Mr Butler was responsible in respect of preventing a strike at Muja power station which would have cost this State about \$6 million.

Mr Hassell: We have heard about this \$6 million.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The man saved many times his own wages with one action and the Opposition does not want to hear about it. I would have thought the Opposition would have moved a motion of appreciation for the great savings made by Mr Butler.

Mr Hassell: It was never true, apparently. However, we will keep hearing about it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If and when there is any action by the TWU—

Mr Hassell: Is that all he has ever done?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —or by any industrial organisation, employee or employer, the matter will be handled by the Minister for Industrial Relations, and I suppose in some instances he may have recourse to Mr Butler who may advise me as to the current state of play.

Mr MacKinnon: When the strike is under way.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Finally, in respect of this whole matter, no matter how the Opposition attempts to tempt the Government to commit itself, we have publicly said there is no role for the Government in what is essentially a police matter, initially at least, and which subsequently may become a matter slightly different in character. I repeat that there is no role for the Government in that matter. We do not see a role; we do not seek a role, nor will we play a role.

Mr Hassell: What about the special adviser? No role this time? He is out promoting the strike.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Hassell: I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker.

EDUCATION: TERTIARY

Research Funding: Tax Concessions

247. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Minister for Education:

Can the Minister explain to the House what possibilities exist for increased research funding in Western Australian

tertiary institutions through the extension of tax concessions to any such funding?

Mr PEARCE replied:

I appreciate the question asked by the honourable member, who has taken a great interest in education in this House; in fact she has personally taken more interest in education than has the whole of the Opposition for most of this year. I see a great advantage in the suggestion—

Mr Clarko: That was a slimy remark.

Mr MacKinnon: As evidenced by all the speeches she has made on education?

Mr Clarko: And answers to all the questions.

Mr PEARCE: We are still waiting for the Opposition's response to the Beazley report. Everyone apart from the Opposition has responded to it. Before the system is put into place will we have an indication of whether the Opposition is in favour of it? With regard to the member's question, I was quite intrigued by the suggestion made by the Director of the Western Australian Institute of Technology (Dr Watts) that a pattern, particularly of funding in regard to research and education that was oriented towards industry, might be financed by tax concessions that were negotiated between institutions and industry and, of course, supported in the tax concession area by the Commonwealth. That is a mechanism which operates particularly well in some well-advanced countries in an industrial and technological sense, and I think a great deal can be said for it.

The major advantage is that it will ensure that research dealing with technology is done in co-operation with industry, involves not only staff but also students, and also of course that it has an immediate application to the industrial development of our country rather than being research which is merely theoretical and not particularly useful. It will ensure that industry will have a say in the areas where research funds are spent because the main way of spending will be by tax concession and not by way of direct grant. I am quite excited by those possibilities. I will be travelling to Canberra shortly to discuss a range of matters to do with tertiary education

with the Federal Minister, Senator Susan Ryan. I will certainly discuss with her this proposition and will indicate to her most strongly that it has support from Western Australia and that we would like to see the establishment of some such system in the near future.

GRAIN POOL

Government Guarantee

248. Mr EVANS (Minister for Agriculture):

In reply to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition last Thursday in which he inquired whether I could advise the House of some details of a recent transaction—namely, a guarantee by the Government of a financial arrangement of \$150 million involving the grain pool—

Mr Hassell: I think that question is now on notice for tomorrow.

Mr EVANS:—I point out, in the interests of the House, that it was not a transaction but the normal arrangements under which the Grain Pool arranges its finance to make the first advance payment to the 7 000 grain growers who deliver to the pool under the Grain Marketing Act. Several changes have occurred in the light of the Campbell and Martin reports, with the result that the rural credit departments of the Reserve Bank are to be closed. The Grain Pool has forestalled this situation by making its own arrangements to ensure that there is a consortium from which funds are available. There has been no actual transaction and, even if somebody interjected from the other side of the House and said, "another Khemlani deal" or words to that effect, it was the normal course of funding being put into place to enable the Grain Pool to perform its normal function.

PARLIAMENT WEEK: POSTER COMPETITION

Winners: Notification

249. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform:

My question relates to the conduct of Parliament Week and in particular to the Parliament Week poster competition. I preface my question by indicating to the Minister that he would be aware that

the prizes for the poster competition were announced at a reception held at Parliament House on Saturday, 22 September at 3.30 p.m. where you were to present the prize. Now, the situation at Carnarvon—

The SPEAKER: Excuse me; who is "you"? Is the member addressing me?

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, Mr Speaker, in your capacity as Speaker. I presume that took place, Mr Speaker. I wanted to indicate to the Minister prior to asking him my question that a student at the Canarvon Primary School, a Miss Julie Tapper, was one of the winners. She won first prize in one of the sections of the Parliament Week poster competition.

The SPEAKER: The member must ask a question.

Mr LAURANCE: I ask the Minister whether he is aware that the advice to the school of the winners of this competition, in a letter dated 13 September, arrived at the school on the afternoon of Thursday, 20 September, and that the student was advised by the school on the morning of Friday, 21 September. The letter to the school indicated that the winners would be advised separately by letter and invited to the function on 22 September. That letter arrived at the student's home in Carnarvon on the afternoon of 21 September. The parents were very happy for their daughter—

The SPEAKER: The member must ask a question.

Mr LAURANCE:—and they made arrangements to travel to Perth by bus overnight—

Mr I. F. Taylor: Grievances!

Mr LAURANCE:—and the student did arrive here. I ask the Minister—

- (1) Does he acknowledge that the matter was very badly handled?
- (2) Will he apologise to the student, the parents and the school?
- (3) Will he reimburse—and he would need to check with his office about this because some contact has been made through my office—all or part of the bus fare for the mother and

her daughter to attend the function
in Perth?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) to (3) One of the delightful things about
the poster competition was that three of
the four winners came from the country.

I noticed one was from Carnarvon, one
was from Gnowangerup and one was
from Busselton. I am very disappointed
if in fact this has happened. I will make
inquiries and will contact the member in
due course.

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