



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
1997

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 29 April 1997

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 2.00 pm, and read prayers.

SENATE VACANCY

Governor's Message

Message from the Governor received and read notifying that a vacancy had happened in the representation of the State of Western Australia in the Senate.

PETITION - GUILDERTON REGIONAL PARK

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.05 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned respectfully request that the Government establish a Regional Park immediately to the south of Guilderton in order to protect the mouth and lower reaches of the Moore River and the significant dunes and coastal heathland south of the mouth of Moore River.

We request that the Government take urgent action to acquire this land before it is further rezoned or developed, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 115 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 15.]

PETITION - METROPOLITAN REGION SCHEME AMENDMENT 382/33

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [2.06 pm]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

We request the M.R.S. Road Design Concept Plans Amendment No 382/33 as proposed be deferred and the whole issue of an East West road through the Western suburbs be re-examined. The results of the re-examination then be made available for comment.

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

The petition bears 590 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

[See petition No 16.]

RULING - SPEAKER

Notice of Motion for Disallowance - Out of Order

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Notice of Motion No 7 on the Notice Paper today standing in the name of the member for Fremantle is a notice to disallow the Health (Meat Inspection and Branding) Amendment Regulations (No 3) 1997. Section 42(2) of the Interpretation Act 1984 provides that -

Notwithstanding any provision in any Act to the contrary, if either House of Parliament passes a resolution disallowing any regulations of which resolution notice has been given within 14 sitting days of such House after such regulations have been laid before it or if any regulations are not laid before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with subsection (1), such regulations shall thereupon cease to have effect, but without affecting the validity or curing the invalidity of anything done or of the omission of anything in the meantime.

In order for the disallowance to be valid, notice is to be given within 14 sitting days after the regulations have been laid before the House. While it has been a practice of this House to allow the notice to be given on the same day as the regulations are tabled, the giving of notice on a day prior to the tabling of regulations is out of order.

I therefore rule the notice out of order and in the circumstances call on the member for Fremantle, who I understand will seek leave of the House to give a fresh notice of motion.

[Mr McGinty was given leave to move a late notice of motion.]

STATEMENT - MINISTER FOR WORKS

Industrial Dispute

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Works) [2.11 pm]: As acting Minister for Energy I inform the Parliament of the facts of the effects of today's industrial action on the State's power supplies. As from 11.00 pm Western Power is expected to announce that there will be no power supplies for industry and rotated power cuts for residential customers. Coal plant operators at the Muja Power Station have been on strike since 1.30 pm yesterday and there is no guarantee of a return to work.

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union power station operators will meet tonight and it is anticipated the picket line will be sustained and the night shift denied entry. Maintenance employees commenced a 24 hour strike at 7.00 am today and are expected to return tomorrow if the picket line is removed. The coal plant operators' action has Muja currently running at only 70 per cent capacity.

At Kwinana, CFMEU power plant operators started a minimum 24 hour strike action at midnight, resulting in only two units running at Kwinana providing 220 megawatts to the system. Day workers were expected to join the rally today and return to work later this afternoon.

At Bunbury, CFMEU operators met this morning and are on strike for 24 hours along with maintenance employees. Bunbury is not generating at all today.

The situation will worsen dramatically tomorrow unless employees return to work. Western Power will keep the community and industry fully informed of the current power situation.

[Questions without notice taken.]

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST - LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Today I received within the prescribed time a letter from the Leader of the Opposition in the following terms -

Pursuant to Standing Order 82A I propose that the following matter of public interest be submitted to the House for discussion today.

This House notes the widespread opposition to the divisive and undemocratic Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill and calls on the Government to withdraw it from Parliament and engage in full and extensive consultation with the community.

The matter appears to be in order. If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter shall proceed on the usual basis, with half an hour allocated to members on my left, half an hour to members on my right, and five minutes in total to the Independent members, should they seek the call.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.47 pm]: I move the motion.

The Premier has a very big management problem today that can be broken into two parts. He has a management problem within his Cabinet, because it is obvious to any sensible observer of the situation in Western Australia that one of his Ministers is completely out of control and damaging the Government. The second management problem is with the people of Western Australia, who are increasingly seeing through the Government's rhetoric on this legislation and looking at the detail and not liking what they read. The Premier has lost control of the political process in Western Australia; the Government has fallen victim to the arrogance of power; the Minister for Labour Relations is totally out of touch with the feelings, traditions and whole concept of democracy in Western Australia,

as was shown by his comments yesterday about Asian labour relations and how their framework is better than the model we have had in our great Australian tradition.

The Premier faces a choice: Firstly, he can allow the Minister for Labour Relations to push on with this legislation, despite all the division and conflict it is creating in the community, with the inevitable result that more and more extreme measures will be needed to deal with the opposition to the legislation. We have already had a little taste of that in the form of a departmental memorandum which became public. It indicated the extreme steps being considered within the Government, one of which is to make it an offence to contemplate industrial action in Western Australia. The option to push on, have the inevitable conflict and division in our society, and then add to the equation more divisive legislation is, of course, a dead-end street which will lead to huge conflict within our society. The second choice available to the Premier is tougher for the internal dynamics in the Cabinet. It is of course the proper option of the Premier showing some statesmanship and restoring goodwill to the community, which is clearly being divided on this issue, by withdrawing the legislation and starting to talk seriously with the unions and the community about industrial relations.

That is what the Premier promised he would do. In 1995, the Premier told the unions that if there were a re-run of this industrial relations agenda, there would be full consultation with the trade union movement. Those are the options before the Government and the Premier, and that is the issue that we have placed on the agenda of this Parliament today.

The first and most obvious conclusion that can be reached from the political situation that exists in Western Australia is that either the Government completely misread the nature and the implications of the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill for politics in Western Australia, or it was sold a pup by the Minister for Labour Relations when he told the Cabinet, "This legislation is only about secret ballots. You need not worry. A few union activists will oppose this legislation, but we will win the argument and all will be fine in the end."

The Government should have known that this legislation is not just about secret ballots. It is about a range of issues that will impact upon the rights of voluntary and registered associations in our community to participate in politics and to undertake legitimate activities with regard to employers. It is also about how federal-state relations impact upon the industrial relations scene in Western Australia. A sensible Government would have seen that given the breadth and potential implications of this legislation, the community would react in a serious way, as it did in 1995, when this issue first came onto the agenda, when it expressed the clear view that this legislation was conceived in bias and prejudice.

That was bad enough in 1995, but we must add to that situation the two new elements of 1997: No 1, that there is no mandate for the Bill, and, No 2, that an attempt is being made to rush this Bill through the Parliament before 22 May. When those factors are taken into account, there is no doubt that this legislation is controversial and will cause a great deal of consternation and division within our community.

The art of government is not just to contemplate theoretical views on legislative propositions but to consider the impact of that legislation upon different groups in the community. The art of government is to contemplate the consequences as well as the intention of actions. The Government completely misread that situation, either because it did not take the matter seriously enough when it went into Cabinet, or because it did take the matter seriously and was happy to send out the Minister for Labour Relations as a battering ram to test the state of opinion to see how far it could go with this extremist legislation. That is the first and most obvious conclusion that we can reach about the situation in Western Australia today.

The second conclusion is that at the very peaceful and determined rally today were many young and elderly Western Australians, many trade unionists and non-unionists, many Western Australians who were concerned about the political and industrial implications of this Bill, many Western Australians who were concerned about the effect of this legislation on the harmony of our society, and many Western Australians who were concerned about how this legislation will affect their ability to conduct their affairs as trade unionists. The rally was very broadly based, and the Government would do well to listen to what those people said.

We have great traditions in Western Australia, and I hope that the great Australian traditions are also great Western Australian traditions. It is interesting to note how the debate about this legislation has shifted in the past couple of weeks. Early in the debate, the Government thought, "Everyone is in favour of democracy; we will sell the message of secret ballots and leave the trade union movement behind with regard to public opinion". However, the Government failed to consider the important fact that the people of Western Australia had begun to read this legislation and an important campaign had begun to give details of the legislation not only to the media but also to wider elements within the community, and people were beginning to realise that this legislation posed real questions about those great Australian traditions.

The first great tradition of our country that is threatened by this legislation is a fair go for all. That was exemplified extremely well on the steps of this Parliament during the rally when the moderator of the Uniting Church pointed out that this legislation deals with only one group in our community - trade unions - and demonstrates no apparent concern for democratic accountability for other groups in our community. Therefore, it is bound to be divisive. The Australian people believe in a fair go. They believe that voluntary associations have the right to participate in our community on the basis of equality with other voluntary associations.

All members of Parliament participated in the Anzac Day ceremonies last week, and it was interesting to note the number of diggers who raised these issues with us as members of Parliament and said, "These issues have faced our country in the past, and these are the issues that we want you to take up in the Parliament."

The second great Australian tradition that is not well understood by the government parties is the use of collective action to defend individual rights. In the past few weeks, the Minister for Labour Relations has tried to defend his legislation by saying that workers go to work to work and that is their function. He has no notion of workers being citizens with rights. The only notion that he has is of workers as functional units within the great organisation of production. That bias will never be accepted by the Australian people. That is why the arguments he put yesterday about the South-East Asian labour laws created great antagonism within the community. We will not sacrifice our Australian traditions to the views of authoritarian regimes in South-East Asia.

The third great Australian tradition is voluntary association and political participation. We are a free and an active people. We stand up for our rights. We do not have a deferential political culture. That is one of the great traditions that Australia has developed. Australia did not establish an aristocracy. Even in Great Britain today the aristocracy establishes a point of view that is deferential to authority, whereas Australia's tradition is to stand up through voluntary association and political participation when rights are being threatened. This legislation makes it very difficult for one group of voluntary associations in our country to produce political action on behalf of their members. The people saw those traditions threatened. That has resulted in a much larger group of people demonstrating today than might have been the case three weeks ago when the Government tried to sell this legislation as all about secret ballots.

The third observation on the situation is the growing and obvious division within government ranks on this matter. In the last sitting week of this Parliament the body language of the Minister for Resources Development, Energy and Education indicated only too clearly his contempt for this legislation, mainly because he is one of the Ministers who will probably have to deal with its consequences and also, I hope, because of his belief in a fair go for all. The Premier is now starting to show signs of nervousness about the legislation by indicating that the Government is willing to talk about the details if not the principles of the Bill.

We had the appalling situation last week when on talk back radio the Deputy Premier informed the public of Western Australia that he knew very little about the detail of the Bill and referred the issue to his Cabinet colleague the Minister for Labour Relations who, unfortunately, was in China at the time and was unable to comment. This is a major issue. When one is the Deputy Premier of the State one should know the detail. What went on in Cabinet? Was there a proper discussion of the issues, the constitutional implications, and the politics of this legislation before it came to this place?

It is clear that a division within the government ranks has now emerged. The Government initially misread the situation. Huge public opposition is now developing to the legislation. With the show of unity today, the show of determination, the peaceful expression of the point of view of a wide range of people in our community, we will now see divisions within the government ranks develop even further.

The bottom line is that the Government does not have a mandate for this legislation. That is the issue that I will press in this Parliament. It is a concept that should become a very important part of political language in Western Australia. The Government spoke in general terms about secret ballots during the election campaign. However, it gave no details about what was intended. Everything else in this Bill came to the political centre stage after the election. The Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill has no mandate from the election. That is the bottom line that should be foremost in the minds of government members when they consider this issue. Whenever the Government plays tricks of this sort it gets caught out. It thought it could play a trick on the people at the last election. It silenced the Minister for Labour Relations and gave every impression that the big push for industrial relations change was off the agenda. It thought that organised trade unionists and working people in this State would believe it.

The people of Western Australia have had enough of tricks. We will see in Western Australian politics this year a very important change of opinion. The Government is now on the spot. It has broken too many promises. It has not delivered on many of the commitments it gave in the election campaign. With the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill the Government is trying to use public relations stunts rather than deal with the substance of the

legislation. The legislation is undesirable and it is unwanted by the community of Western Australia. True statesmanship requires that the Premier now intervene in the situation.

In my opening comments I referred to the management issue that the Premier now faces - in managing his own Cabinet, his own team and his relations with the public of Western Australia. I will give the Premier some advice: If he wants to manage his relations with the people of Western Australia the first thing he needs to do is to cut off the Minister for Labour Relations at the pass, take this legislation out of the Parliament and start to talk seriously to the trade union movement and the community about industrial relations issues. What sort of a message would that be? First, the Premier must acknowledge that there is no mandate for the Bill. We have heard radio commentators, and observers from outside the normal party political process, emphasise that this lack of mandate is something that concerns them about this Bill, especially when they see the Government's effort to ram it through the Parliament before the new numbers come into place on 22 May. A lot of goodwill would be shown to those people involved in trade unions in this State if the Premier withdrew the Bill. They would be seen to be equal partners in the management of this State rather than people who can be ignored and trodden upon in the process of politics.

To manage his affairs with the people of Western Australia, the Premier must first manage affairs within his Cabinet a little differently from that which he has done. I am sure that many Ministers are telephoning the Premier saying, "Look, we have had enough of the Minister for Labour Relations. It is time that you backed off in this issue. We have had enough of the Minister for Labour Relations presenting the Government's position and damaging our political prospects in Western Australia." There is no question that if the Premier's course of supporting the Minister at all costs continues to be followed great damage will be done to the coalition Government in Western Australia. The choice lies with the Premier; either he presses on or he backs off. If the Premier backs off he will show true statesmanship and strength rather than the phoney strength that some of his advisers have told him to show through acting tough in relation to a community campaign.

This legislation poses a massive threat to our community. I hope the Government will have the good sense and the strength of character to reverse its position on this issue, to withdraw the legislation from the Parliament and to start to talk seriously about the matter.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [3.07 pm]: I support the motion. I ask the Government to think seriously about that part of the motion which calls upon it to withdraw its Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill and engage in full and extensive consultation with the community. What is becoming clear - the Leader of the Opposition has alluded to this in part - is that members on the government side simply do not understand the Bill. Other than the Minister and the keen interest taken by the member for Collie in some clauses, members on the government side have no understanding of the Bill. The Premier should think about what happened in Perth today. At least 30 000 people who had an understanding of the Bill beyond that of his members attended a rally in Northbridge, and many of them came to Parliament House. Reporters said they had never seen a rally of that size in Perth before. A huge number of people rallied, many of whom will forgo a day's pay.

People on low salary or middle income earners who were in that march do not forgo a day's wage lightly. They have a better understanding of the Bill than the Premier and his Ministers and they had to take action. Part of that action was the inconvenience of joining the rally today, but particularly forgoing one day's pay which those workers will need to look after their families, especially considering the extra taxes and charges which the Treasurer will inflict on the general public as a result of the recent Budget. People did not take this action lightly. They understand that the Premier is attacking their working conditions, and that this legislation will take away their fundamental right to organise through a union, to protect their working conditions and to pass on those rights and conditions to their children and grandchildren. These people understand the Bill. They know what it is about, and it is certainly not about secret ballots. We support secret ballots, despite the continual statements by the Minister for Labour Relations -

Mr Court: You did not six weeks ago, my friend!

Mr KOBELKE: Prior to the election last December the Leader of the Opposition stated the Opposition's position in support of secret ballots -

Mr Court: He supported them for six hours, and that is all.

Mr KOBELKE: The Premier's comments reflect what I am saying. He is a government member who has no understanding of what the Bill is all about. If he continues to run his silly, cheap lines trying to misrepresent the Opposition he will never understand the contents of the legislation and the reason for opposition to it. The Government has spent a lot of taxpayers' money on polling. Unfortunately, that polling puts a particular slant on the situation and serves only to handle the media. The Premier cannot seek through that polling to understand the issues and thereby develop policies to address the important issues currently facing our community. If he did that, and if

he could overcome his arrogance about government in this State, he would come to understand that the legislation will not work. The legislation is not acceptable to the overwhelming majority of Western Australians; therefore, if the Premier pushes ahead with it, he will face much industrial disputation which may go so far as flouting the law and people going to gaol. It will certainly lead to continuing turmoil. The legislation will not work. The Premier should try to understand it. He should not accept the half truths offered to him by the Minister for Labour Relations -

Mr Kierath interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: That was when the native title legislation was debated, and I told the Government that it would be thrown out of the High Court. The result was a 7-0 decision.

The matters dealt with today are of similar significance. The similarity of the significance is that the Premier does not understand his own legislation. Because he does not understand it, and because he is arrogantly pushing ahead he will bring the Government into disrepute. We do not have difficulty with that, but unfortunately he is dragging down Western Australia, because he fails to realise the havoc he will wreak as a result of this unnecessary and extravagant legislation. We do not need the provisions in this Bill. The Opposition moved two amendments to allow secret ballots but the Minister for Labour Relations would not accept them.

The Premier should withdraw the legislation, and introduce further legislation which will meet his election promise on secret ballots - nothing else. This Bill is not about secret ballots. The provisions are so convoluted and difficult and contain so many penalties that it is obvious that this is an attack on the unions. The provisions are not about providing an avenue for secret ballots that will work. That is clear to anyone who has read the legislation.

The Premier should withdraw the legislation, and return to his mandate to provide a Bill relating to secret ballots alone. We may not like it, but the Government has a mandate for that. It has no mandate for this type of legislation. The Government's only option is to withdraw the legislation. To push it through will wreak havoc in the State, and the Premier must accept responsibility for that.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [3.14 pm]: I do not support the motion. There has been some fantasising by members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition said that I have been receiving phone calls from various Ministers encouraging me to back off from this legislation. It will upset his argument, but I have not been contacted by Ministers wanting me to back off. On the contrary, I have received strong support within the party room saying that these measures are not the measures being painted by the Trades and Labor Council.

Mr Shave: I have 24 000 constituents in my electorate, and I have received only two letters against the legislation.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: The member for Nollamara said that this legislation is all about attacking working conditions. Let us get it straight: Members opposite have come around to accepting the principle of secret ballots -

Mr Kobelke: No. We accepted them last year.

Mr COURT: Members opposite fought against them in this Parliament. Even during the election campaign the Leader of the Opposition said that he had no problems with secret ballots; but someone must have spoken to him, because he backed off at a thousand miles an hour.

I have discussed this matter with Tony Cooke and briefly with Jennie George, and I will do that again tonight. There is overall acceptance of the concept of secret ballots. The question is how they will be implemented. People have said to me that we can sit down and work out how to implement secret ballots, and we have been trying to do that for four and a half years. Therefore, I do not think that secret ballots will affect working conditions.

Mr Kobelke: But this proposal does!

Mr COURT: On the question of political expenditure, is there anything wrong with a person paying union dues making a choice about to which political party he wishes to donate his money? Will that affect working conditions? It certainly will not. On the question of federal award coverage where unions must choose between a state and federal award, people cannot have a foot in both camps. They cannot move to a federal award and retain state coverage. Will that affect working conditions?

Mr Kobelke: It will, when it undermines the right of the unions to represent workers.

Mr COURT: Why would they move to a federal award if it were to undermine working conditions?

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: On the question of right of entry, the union movement has put arguments about provisions that should be in place relating to statutory declarations. We believe those suggestions may be good, and we will be moving amendments on those matters. Will the arrangement where employees and employers are able to enter voluntary collective workplace agreements to override relative federal awards, undermine working conditions?

Mr Brown: Yes, in the same way as you are now pushing people to get a job to negotiate workplace agreements at a lower award rate.

Mr COURT: The TLC is now supporting that proposal.

Mr Brown: I do not think the TLC is supporting that in its entirety.

Mr COURT: The member wants to discuss the detail, when I have read out only the main provision of the legislation. Does this attack working conditions? Let us get to the facts of the matter.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: A lot of misinformation has been spread regarding these matters. The member spoke about a mandate. I do not want to become involved in an argument about whether we have a mandate. Five years ago - and again before the last election - we released the detail of our industrial relations policies. We have made those policies clear, and we have introduced legislation to this Parliament which contains most of those provisions. We have undertaken ongoing consultation with a wide range of groups, and one can hardly say -

Mr Kobelke: This is all nonsense! You are in cuckoo land!

Mr COURT: Have we negotiated with the TLC this year?

Mr Kobelke: No. Negotiations are when people sit down and listen to other people and work things out.

Mr COURT: How can we sit down and listen to the TLC if it will not negotiate?

Mr Kobelke: You gave an undertaking that you would not bring in this legislation without talking to those people.

Mr COURT: The motion contains the words "and engage in full and extensive consultation with the community". The most interested group in the community is the TLC. The Trades and Labor Council made it clear to the Government last week that it had no intention of negotiating because it did not want to be seen to be giving any support to the legislation. Members opposite cannot have it both ways. They cannot move a motion which says that the Government must consult and negotiate when the main group involved will not negotiate.

Mr Thomas interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Cockburn!

Mr COURT: This State will be damaged if the public is held to ransom by power stoppages.

Dr Gallop: Stop that nonsense.

Mr COURT: What does the Leader of the Opposition mean by "nonsense"? Industry in this State will close down tomorrow and stoppages are occurring today.

Mr Thomas: There are no industrial problems in this State. You should withdraw that legislation; there is no need for it.

Mr COURT: Is the member for Cockburn saying that the people of Western Australia can be held to ransom if he makes a decision to turn off the power?

Dr Gallop: The Premier should get real, as they say.

Mr COURT: I was in this Parliament when we were told the world would collapse as a result of the workplace agreements legislation.

Dr Gallop: For many young people it has and you don't know about it because you don't want to listen to them.

Mr COURT: We were told that wages would be cut by 25 per cent, workers would be forced to sign or resign, state awards would be abolished, there would be no minimum standards of employment and the Industrial Relations Commission would be abolished. The list goes on. Every scare tactic was used that members opposite could think of. Now we are told by the TLC that the workplace agreements are fine and that they have become an accepted part of our industrial relations system.

Dr Gallop: They are not saying that. Who in the TLC said that?

Mr COURT: I was told on Friday that there were no problems with the concept of workplace agreements.

Mr Kobelke: Nonsense. In negotiations do you sit down with people and totally misrepresent them or don't you even listen?

Mr Cowan: I was there and I heard them say it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Obviously members have very strong feelings and views on this topic and I have allowed a fair amount of interjection. From time to time the Premier has invited interjection and I have allowed certain levels of it to occur. However, we are generating interjections beyond that point. If members are invited to interject I will allow it, but if several people interject at once, I will put a stop to it.

Mr COURT: The Opposition has moved a motion saying that the Government should engage in full and extensive consultation. I have never known more debate or consultation on industrial relations matters than have occurred in this State over the past four and a half years. We have not walked away from any debate. The door has always been open to my office, the Minister's office and the office of any other Minister where these matters could be discussed.

The Opposition has argued that the labour relations legislation will be an attack on working conditions. I have just run through the legislation and members opposite have not been able to spell out how it will be an attack on working conditions. Members would be laughed at by the rest of the world if they sought international sanctions based on the content of this legislation.

Mr Thomas interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I formally call the member for Cockburn to order for the first time.

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister for Labour Relations) [3.24 pm]: The Premier hit the nail on the head when he said that we have already heard all the arguments by the Opposition. Members opposite argued that the first wave of industrial relations reforms would have far worse effects than this latest legislation; that it would result in the end of civilisation as we know it and workers' wages and conditions would decrease by 25 per cent. However, Western Australia has experienced the highest increase in wages in the country.

All the prophecies of doom and gloom have been false. In fact, the exact opposite has occurred. We have not abolished the Industrial Relations Commission. Not one award has been abolished and we have allowed genuine choice.

I will outline to the House the process of discussions and issues in relation to the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill. In the coalition's October 1992 policy the Government proposed dispute settlement procedures for awards and agreements, secret ballots for industrial action, consent of union members for political donations and state and federal award systems to be reviewed to streamline award coverage. On 26 May 1995 at the Western Australian Labour Relations Advisory Council, of which the TLC is a member, I provided an extensive summary of the Industrial Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill. It was second read on 21 September 1995 and passed through various processes of the House. Part of the legislation was passed in December 1995. Part went before the Legislation Committee, which reported to Parliament on 8 May 1996.

It was on the Notice Paper when Parliament was prorogued in December 1996, so members knew the Government's intention. Cabinet approved in January 1997 the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill which passed through this House earlier this month.

Unions claim probity and honesty in their holding of secret ballots and that the Government's proposed system is far too bureaucratic. However, the following are some examples of the unions' behaviour: A federal review will be held into rorts in ballots after it was found that the elections for the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union had been affected by "widespread electoral fraud" which involved tampering with about 930 ballot papers. That same union received \$621 303 in grants from the federal Australian Labor Party in 1994-95.

In 1995, 1 000 discrepancies were discovered in an electoral roll for a Transport Workers Union election - a union in which officials are paid \$60 000 a year.

Another complaint about our labour relations legislation is that workers could be fined for not obeying rules. According to the rules of the Public Transport Union, if members refused to observe "a lawful ruling" from their executive, they could be fined \$100.

The State School Teachers Union claims that in passing the legislation the Government is not being fair to workers. The head of the SSTU was accused by his own general secretary of being dictatorial. The union's claim about the Government is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. That issue was between the President and the Secretary of the State School Teachers Union.

Unions complain that I will be able to control union coverage. That is wrong. Unions have been doing it for years. In 1995 a federal squabble was eroding local support for the SSTU. The Metal Workers Union and the Federal Teachers Union were spending thousands of dollars on a battle for membership coverage. They did not dream of asking their members what they wanted. The battle was not about members; it was about money and power.

According to one of the union leaders, the civil war in the AWU-FIME has cost members the best part of \$17m.

Mr Prince: That is a new high school.

Mr KIERATH: It is more than a new high school. That is why the labour relations legislation provides that unions must be financially accountable.

Last year in one Western Australian union questions arose of embezzlement and mismanagement. The Hospital and Salaried Officers' Association and the Community and Public Sector Union spent \$500 000 on a membership dispute. Is that spending money and effort looking after workers?

Mr Bloffwitch: It didn't do the workers a lot of good.

Mr KIERATH: That is right; the unions were fighting among themselves. Jim McGiveron of the TWU has been screaming about his members. Why is he worried about provisions controlling donations? What do his members think of him? One of his members said in a union election, "You need to be a mate of Jim's to get looked after. He gave away \$20 000 of members' money as political donations. Is he trying to buy himself a seat in Parliament at members' expense?"

Other accusations have been made of financial mismanagement. Finally, someone said, "Jim McGiveron doesn't realise that unions are for the benefit of members, not for the benefit of union officials." This Bill tries to achieve democracy for union members and that is why power hungry unions and their leaders fear it so much. Their membership has plummeted from 218 600 in August 1990 to 174 000 in August 1996 - 25 per cent of the work force. It means the unions have lost the gravy train provided by their mates when in government.

During the 13 years of federal ALP Government, according to a document from the Federal Parliament the union movement received \$150m of taxpayers' money. Now the unions are hurting. They are not getting that money from the Government. Union officials may also lose their cosy career paths. According to Dr Thomas Bramble of the University of Queensland Graduate School of Management, union officials are three times more likely than the average Australian to earn more than \$40 000 a year. Is that not interesting?

Throughout my ministerial career I have always consulted. I set up the mental health task force and the strata titles consultative group. I have negotiated with the TLC on workplace agreements, and there is no doubt that I talked to its members on the Government's first wave of reforms. They made 38 suggestions, of which the Government accepted approximately one-third. The TLC has advised me that the Government's acceptance of its proposals hurt the TLC publicly, and that is why it has not wanted to negotiate on the Bill this time around. I cannot negotiate with an empty chair. I am willing and prepared to negotiate but, if the other party will not do so, there is little I can do. Despite that, I am still prepared to sit down with members of the TLC today and embrace any constructive suggestions they make.

I have had telephone calls in the past week from ordinary workers saying they were too scared not to strike. One teacher who rang my office today said she would not only strike, but also take part in the march because others were checking and had threatened to blackball anyone at that school who did not attend.

If this issue is so important to the State Opposition, why did it not raise it at the last state election? They knew that people supported secret ballots but the union movement did not. The Premier and I launched the Government's policy at the Hyatt hotel, and an hour or two later the Leader of the Opposition said he supported secret ballots. Later that afternoon after the TLC had got to him, he changed his mind. I promise the member for Nollamara that I will provide him with a copy of the press reports and what was said by the Leader of the Opposition when he did a backflip within the space of one day.

The ALP said before the 1993 election that it would debate the workplace agreements Bill for four years and bring it to the minds of the electorate before the election. Its members' use of Parliament has been a disgrace; they filibustered and wasted time rather than offering constructive suggestions in the debate. That is the dilemma of the Opposition; its members have not worked it out. To be an effective Opposition, members opposite must forget the

silly wrist slashing exercises; they must be constructive, make sensible suggestions and try to get the Government to change the legislation. That is the role of a responsible Opposition. While they maintain their present position, they will be no threat to the Government.

If the TLC believes in industrial democracy, why does it not let the workers decide for themselves? Why not give them secret ballots? Why did the State School Teachers Union issue a directive to its members? At least in previous industrial disputes rallies were held and they were given some say. This time they have had no say. The TLC is scared that when it has views with which the membership does not agree, it will not succeed in winning a ballot. For example, it will not get agreement to donate to a political party or to go to the federal system if its members do not support it. I told someone yesterday that this is the hardest thing I have ever been involved in, yet I thought the ALP would support putting democracy in the decision making process by placing the power in the hands of the union membership and out of the hands of union officials. Members opposite have not learnt their lesson and do not understand their role in this Parliament, and for as long as that continues, they will be an ineffective Opposition.

I have tried to supply as much information as I can in the short space of time I have had. I sat down with members of the TLC earlier this year and indicated I was prepared to negotiate the details of this Bill with them. They asked whether the legislation resembled the previous Bill - and they have acknowledged that it does. Both the TLC and the ALP in their election campaign material said that if people voted for the coalition Government they would get the second wave of reforms. Members will find examples of that, and I am more than happy to provide them if members want those examples. In the election campaign they tried to frighten people.

Mr Kobelke: You said you were not going to do the same.

Mr KIERATH: No, the Government did not. The Bill was on the Notice Paper. Of course, it was an initiative of this Government. Members opposite have done their best to alert the public. The Government has also alerted the public, but members opposite cannot come to grips with that because they lost the election. The ALP did not succeed in frightening people and its campaign backfired on it. A number of members on this side of the House took seats from the Opposition. The member for Burrup is a classic example; he held the fifth safest Labor seat in this State, which ranked with Girrawheen, Peel and others. He turned it into a marginal seat because of the ALP's lack of understanding of industrial relations. When the member for Fremantle was Leader of the Opposition, he was howled down at a meeting in the Pilbara when he said his party would get rid of workplace agreements. He later said he would change their name and find some other mechanism because most of the workers in the Pilbara obviously supported them. It is interesting that when he confronted the workers he finally recognised that.

I have been a member of this Parliament for nine years and the Deputy Premier is the longest serving member in this place, and during that time I do not know of a single initiative that has been subject to more scrutiny. It was the subject of two election policies and two other Bills. This is the third such Bill and it has been the subject of considerable debate and discussion. It has been examined in detail by the Legislation Committee of the upper House. It is rubbish for the Opposition to say that no-one knew about this legislation. I can accept their strong opposition to it, but they should not tell furbies and say things that are not true. I place on the record again that I met members of the TLC earlier this year and they would not negotiate on this legislation. I am prepared to negotiate with the TLC if it will make constructive suggestions, and I am prepared to take those suggestions on board.

One amendment suggested by the Opposition was accepted, another suggestion by the TLC was accepted and I understand a further change suggested after private discussions will be accepted. I was not at the meeting with the TLC on Friday but the Premier and the Deputy Premier were, and they said the provisions on workplace agreements would be accepted. They warned that they will try to import the no-disadvantage test from the workplace agreements coming from federal awards into the wider workplace agreements. The member for Bassendean is out of touch with the TLC. He should ring to get his further marching orders and instructions, so that he will be better informed.

This Government has been prepared to negotiate. It has not had negotiations with the other side but it is still prepared to negotiate on one condition; that is, they should try to change the Bill and not use it as a stalling tactic until after 21 May. The Government will not agree to that. If members opposite are prepared to make constructive suggestions, I assure them the Government will consider them very carefully, and I give the undertaking that, if at all possible, the Government will accommodate them.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [3.39 pm]: Each time the Minister for Labour Relations gets to his feet he talks about the predictions that were made prior to the introduction of the workplace agreements legislation in this place in 1993. I remind the Minister about an important prediction that was made prior to the introduction of that legislation.

In 1993 a member of this House predicted that up to 20 per cent of people on award rates of pay would receive lower terms and conditions of employment when they moved to workplace agreements. Can anyone recall the member who predicted that the legislation of the coalition Government would lead to that situation? It was the Minister for Labour

Relations. When he introduced the workplace agreements legislation in this House the Government predicted that it would lower the terms and conditions of employment of Western Australian workers. Despite having a supine, gutless Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, who camouflages the information brought to this House, the Minister's prediction is pretty right - except that it is a little underdone.

When the Opposition asks the Minister for Labour Relations or the Minister for Education whether it is true that a considerable number of cleaners employed by contractors in schools who prior to the introduction of the workplace agreements legislation would have been entitled to award rates of pay and conditions are now employed under workplace agreements, and whether it is true that they are employed on lower terms and conditions, the Ministers play Pontius Pilate and do not answer the question and pretend not to know.

We are given a series of half truths and misrepresentations in this House by the Minister and the Premier, who are trying to sell a stinking item. That item is workplace agreements, which have led to a lowering of the terms and conditions of workers in this State, as predicted by the Minister for Labour Relations - the Minister who introduced the Bill in the knowledge that it would lower the living standards and employment conditions of workers in Western Australia. That is the legacy of this Minister. The Government now wants to exacerbate that situation with the legislation it has introduced to hasten the process.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [3.42 pm]: I will correct one or two misapprehensions on the part of the Opposition.

Mr Brown: Do you take issue with the statement I made about the Minister for Labour Relations' prediction?

Mr COWAN: The Minister for Labour Relations made some predictions about workplace agreements. I will not put the slant on them that the member has. The Minister certainly indicated there would be greater flexibility and a greater opportunity for individuals to negotiate their wages and conditions with the employer. I am not prepared to concede that the member for Bassendean gets it right all the time. He does not. I have not found too many people opting out of a workplace agreement and moving back to the award.

Mr Brown: Because they don't have a choice.

Mr COWAN: The argument has always been put by people like the member for Bassendean that people do not have that option. That is nonsense.

I will make a number of other points clear. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Government did not have a united position on this legislation. I am sorry I was not in my seat when he made that claim because I think he directed that statement at me. I will take a little of the time of the House to make it clear that this legislation is supported by the Government; it is supported by the coalition. Everyone talks about people not listening in this place. I agree with that on many occasions.

A number of people are now demonstrating their lack of preparedness to listen. It has always been said that the principles behind this legislation - pre-strike ballots, the right of entry, political donations and the transfer from one union to another, or union coverage - are strongly supported by everybody in the coalition. The Minister for Labour Relations said that if someone could demonstrate that the implementation of those principles could be enhanced or improved, the Government would listen to any variation or amendment to those provisions that in our view applied those principles. The Minister for Labour Relations is right: No-one was prepared to negotiate with him or talk to him.

When I was representing the Premier last week I was obliged to honour a request to meet representatives from the emergency services unions. I met them. Outside the proposals that were put by the Opposition during the course of debate on the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill, that meeting last Wednesday was the first time somebody had come to the Government with the processes the Government must implement if it is to improve the principles it stands by. The Government took that on board.

Changes will be made to the legislation in the upper House. As the Minister for Labour Relations has said often, those changes will not change the principles of the legislation, but they may change the efficiency by which those principles may be applied. In other words, they will change the process.

Dr Gallop: What are the principles?

Mr COWAN: They are the principles associated with pre-strike ballots, right to entry, unfair dismissal, and coverage of workers by unions. It is those principles this Government supports.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (17)

Mr Brown
Mr Carpenter
Dr Edwards
Dr Gallop
Mr Grill
Mr Kobelke

Ms MacTiernan
Mr Marlborough
Mr McGinty
Mr McGowan
Ms McHale
Mr Riebeling

Mr Ripper
Mrs Roberts
Mr Thomas
Ms Warnock
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Noes (32)

Mr Ainsworth
Mr Baker
Mr Barron-Sullivan
Mr Board
Mr Bradshaw
Dr Constable
Mr Court
Mr Cowan
Mr Day
Mrs Edwardes
Dr Hames

Mrs Hodson-Thomas
Mrs Holmes
Mr House
Mr Johnson
Mr Kierath
Mr MacLean
Mr Marshall
Mr Masters
Mr McNee
Mr Minson
Mr Nicholls

Mrs Parker
Mr Pandal
Mr Prince
Mr Shave
Mr Sweetman
Mr Tubby
Dr Turnbull
Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Wiese
Mr Bloffwitch (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr Graham
Ms Anwyl

Mr Omodei
Mr Barnett

Question thus negated.

SESSIONAL ORDERS - TIME MANAGEMENT

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [3.52 pm]: In accordance with the sessional order for time management, I move -

That the following items of business be completed up to and including the stages specified at 5.30 pm on Thursday, 1 May -

- (1) Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Amendment Bill - all remaining stages;
- (2) Limitation Amendment Bill - all remaining stages;
- (3) Statutes (Repeals and Minor Amendments) Bill - all remaining stages; and
- (4) Trustees Amendment Bill - all remaining stages.

An arrangement has been made behind the Chair for the Leader of the Opposition to deliver his response to the Budget before we progress to the Bills that are the subject of this time management sessional order. The full extent of the debate on some of those Bills in another place took no more than three and a half hours. Bills such as the Limitation Amendment Bill, while important, are not expected to require extensive debate for their completion. The same could be said for the Statutes (Repeals and Minor Amendments) Bill, which was introduced into this House last August. The amendments in that Bill are minor and non-controversial and we do not expect an extensive debate to take place. However, part of that time will be encroached upon by the requirement by the Government for the bank mergers legislation to be debated on Thursday. Therefore, I want government members in their seats to ensure that we have an absolute majority to suspend standing orders for that issue to be debated. Again, I do not expect the introduction and the second reading of that legislation to consume too much time.

I am confident that we will be able to recommence debate on the Budget on Thursday. There has been some discussion, again behind the Chair, about what members can or cannot scrutinise during the estimates debate. I understand that if the Appropriation Bills Nos 1 and 2 are debated cognately, the second Bill can be the subject of questions during the Estimates Committees. I am suggesting that is an option; I cannot confirm that it will be the case. Nevertheless, to put that process into place, I will move that the Bills be debated cognately before the Leader of the Opposition gives his response to the second reading of the Bills. Then it is up to the House to determine whether it will permit that to happen to enable discussion of both Bills during the estimates debate. If the House does not permit that, members will be permitted to discuss only that which is contained in the first Bill. That is a matter for the House to determine. The Government is comfortable, provided there is a cognate debate, for that to occur.

MRS ROBERTS (Midland) [3.57 pm]: The Opposition opposes this time management motion in principle. The argument used by the Deputy Premier highlights our position on time management rather than his own. In presenting this motion, the Deputy Premier said that debate on the Bills contained in the time management motion had taken only about three and a half hours in the upper House. I have not had the time to check whether that is the case; however, assuming he is correct and these Bills were dealt with in the upper House in three and a half hours without time management or a guillotine in place, one wonders why he has moved this motion in this place. If the Government properly organised its parliamentary agenda, it would find it should not have to use this guillotine week in and week out. It could, if it took the Opposition and others on good faith and negotiated with us properly on the legislative program, progress most of this legislation without the need for a guillotine. The Deputy Premier's debate questions his own motion; these Bills can be debated properly in a reasonable time without their being guillotined. That is why it is so pointless guillotining small Bills like these each week.

I note the Deputy Premier's comments regarding arrangements being made behind the Chair for the two budget Bills to be debated cognately so that we have the opportunity to ask questions on capital works during the Estimates Committees. We welcome that opportunity. The Government previously suggested that an additional half a day would be allocated to Estimates Committees for this purpose.

We must also consider the format in which the budget papers this year were presented to us. They were arranged in an alphabetical format, and not listed according to each Minister. I hope that when we are advised of the dates on which the Estimates Committees will be held, those papers will be presented again in a different format which makes them more easily understandable when we deal with them during the estimates debate. The way in which they are presented currently does not provide information to enable comparisons to be made with the figures for past years. The Government is aware of that. In some budget areas some of our shadow spokespeople have been advised that some figures will be made available by the end of May, or thereabouts, that will enable comparisons to be made. I hope the Government does not proceed with the debates in the Estimates Committees until the figures are presented in a way that will enable us to compare easily the expenditures of previous years.

We welcome the opportunity to ask questions on capital works. However, I reiterate that we totally oppose the guillotine time management order being used routinely in this House. There is clearly no need for that, especially given the example alluded to by the Deputy Premier of this legislation being dealt with effectively in a relatively short time in the upper House with no such guillotine in place.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (29)

Mr Ainsworth	Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mrs Parker
Mr Baker	Mrs Holmes	Mr Prince
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mr House	Mr Shave
Mr Board	Mr Johnson	Mr Sweetman
Mr Bradshaw	Mr MacLean	Mr Tubby
Mr Court	Mr Marshall	Dr Turnbull
Mr Cowan	Mr Masters	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Day	Mr McNee	Mr Wiese
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Minson	Mr Bloffwitch (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Hames	Mr Nicholls	

Noes (19)

Mr Brown	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Riebeling
Mr Carpenter	Mr Marlborough	Mr Ripper
Dr Constable	Mr McGinty	Mrs Roberts
Dr Edwards	Mr McGowan	Mr Thomas
Dr Gallop	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Mr Grill	Mr Pandal	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)
Mr Kobelke		

Pairs

Mr Omodei	Ms Anwyl
Mr Barnett	Mr Graham

Question thus passed.

BANK MERGERS BILL
BANK MERGERS (TAXING) BILL

Standing Orders Suspension

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [4.02 pm]: I move -

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to allow the Bank Mergers Bill and the Bank Mergers (Taxing) Bill to be introduced without notice and to proceed up to and including the motion for the second reading at this sitting.

The purpose behind seeking to suspend standing orders is to ensure that this legislation is completed in time for it to be applied. Members will recall that a number of Bills have been introduced to this place to permit bank mergers. That seems to be an ongoing program. Rather than introduce separate pieces of legislation every time there is a merger within the private sector, it is felt appropriate that we should have legislation that will cover any event with respect to a bank merger.

I know that during the time I was acting as the Premier a letter of invitation was sent to the Leader of the Opposition and the Independent members in this place as well as to members of the minor parties in the other place, advising that a briefing would be offered. It is not our intention to have this debate completed before the opposition members and interested Independent members receive that briefing. We are not seeking to push this legislation through the Parliament without the consent of the Opposition. In due course I hope that briefing can be given to those members to enable them to make their judgment accordingly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

BANK MERGERS BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [4.08 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members will recall that over recent years a number of Bills have come before the House to facilitate specific bank integration processes. The integrations are a condition of Reserve Bank approval of the relevant bank mergers which requires the banking licence of the acquired bank to be relinquished.

Without legislation of this kind the transfer of banking business would be time consuming and expensive, with separate documentation being required for each asset and liability. The number of these can be very large; for example, the Westpac-Challenge merger last year involved more than 83 000 loan accounts and 330 000 deposit accounts.

While the benefits of legislation to facilitate bank mergers are clear, the apparent increase in the occurrence of bank mergers has raised concerns about the legislative pressures that are being generated. The requirement for all affected jurisdictions to pass specific enabling legislation is a cumbersome and costly process. The Government has already been approached in relation to two further mergers - the National Australia Bank-Bank of New Zealand, to proceed immediately, and St George Bank-Advance Bank, to proceed within the next few months. There is also an expectation that further bank mergers may occur following the Wallis inquiry.

The Bank Mergers Bill proposes to deal with these concerns by establishing a general framework which will allow bank mergers to be dealt with by either a set of case-specific regulations which will have the same effect as the previous specific legislation; an order adopting the relevant law of another State or Territory with modifications as necessary; or a combination of these two mechanisms. The Parliament of New South Wales passed equivalent legislation last year and other jurisdictions are known to be considering a similar course.

Parliament will not be excluded from the process as the regulations or orders required for each specific merger will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny in the normal manner for subsidiary legislation.

As with the previous specific Bills this Bill, together with the Bank Mergers (Taxing) Bill, ensures the State will not be financially disadvantaged by empowering the Treasurer to require payment of amounts in lieu of state taxes and charges which would otherwise be forgone. The legislation is consistent with the Government's commitment to

facilitating business efficiency in Western Australia without prejudicing the integrity of the State's revenue base. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

BANK MERGERS (TAXING) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR COURT (Nedlands - Treasurer) [4.12 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The majority of the provisions to establish a general framework to facilitate bank mergers in Western Australia are contained in the Bank Mergers Bill 1997. As outlined to members in moving the second reading of that Bill the framework created to facilitate bank mergers includes provisions empowering the Treasurer to require payment of an amount in lieu of state taxes and charges which might otherwise be forgone.

It is possible that the determination of such a payment could be seen as imposing a tax. In recognition of the requirement, in section 46(7) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, that a Bill imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation, the relevant powers for the Treasurer to impose the charge are contained in this Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No 1)

Cognate Debate

On motion by Mr Cowan (Deputy Premier), resolved -

That leave be granted for a cognate debate on the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1) and the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 2), and that the Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1) be the principal Bill.

Second Reading

Resumed from 10 April.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [4.15 pm]: This year's Budget is proving to be the most controversial of all the coalition Budgets since its election in 1993. There is a very simple reason for this: It is the first since the most recent election in December 1996. It represents a major betrayal of the commitments given before and during the election campaign. It is a Budget of betrayal. First, we see increases in taxes and charges, when every indication was given that these would not be necessary and that any new initiatives could be funded from a productivity improvement across government. Secondly, we see the inclusion of a gold royalty, when specific promises were given, particularly but not exclusively by the National Party, that it would not be the case. Thirdly, we were told that a social dividend would be applied to the major areas of health and education to ensure that they could meet the demands and challenges placed upon them in our community.

The Government paved the way for these broken election promises by blaming the Commonwealth and particularly the Howard Government. However, the major problem with that excuse is that all the cutbacks from the Commonwealth were known and factored into forward estimates prepared by the State Treasury in 1996. The deception was even more pronounced given that the Labor Opposition pointed during 1996 to the problems posed to Western Australia by the Howard strategy. When we did that the Premier scoffed at our concern. On 18 June 1996 he told the Parliament -

Some of the States will have to increase taxes and charges, and some of the States are considering introducing special levies to meet this shortfall; for example, a deficit levy on households. Western Australia will not go down that path.

At the 1996 Premiers' Conference, Western Australia agreed to assist the Commonwealth with its deficit reduction program to the tune of \$60m in financial assistance grants in 1996-97 and 1997-98 and about half of that amount again in 1998-99. Cuts of about \$30m in specific purpose grants to Western Australia were also foreshadowed in the 1996-97 Budget. Interestingly, in the 1996-97 Budget those forecast cuts for specific purpose grants did not

materialise. When the Premier presented his forward estimates in November 1996, these changes in commonwealth-state financial relationships were built into the equation. Since that time there have been no changes in commonwealth-state finances to justify the hike in taxes and charges in this Budget; indeed, the changes that have occurred since the forward estimates were presented in November 1996 have worked in both positive and negative directions for the State of Western Australia. In the first place, the specific purpose payments in 1996 proved to be greater than expected. The foreshadowed cut in 1996-97 did not occur. In the second place, the changes in relativities applied by the Grants Commission late last year and early this year mean that Western Australia will receive about \$11m more than expected when planning forward estimates in 1996. As you know, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Ainsworth), relativities are applied taking into account a range of factors.

In Australia the inflation forecasts are being lowered all the time. Lower inflation means that all indexed payments in the future will be lower than expected. As certain payments from the Commonwealth are indexed, the lower the rate of inflation, the smaller the stream of payments that come from the Commonwealth. This will mean \$22m less in payments for 1997-98 than expected. However, lower inflation also means real benefits across the Western Australian Government when purchasing goods and services. Lower inflation reduces the indexed payments to the State from the Commonwealth, and at the same time increases the purchasing power of the dollar. That impacts right across government. On the negative side, information now being received is that specific purpose payments this year may be \$15m less than expected, although that is always difficult to predict given the procedures followed by the Commonwealth. For example, in 1996-97 specific purpose payments were greater than expected.

I will conclude this analysis on what has happened with commonwealth-state finances between 1996 and the Budget of April 1997. I emphasise that, at most, Western Australia will receive \$26m less from the Commonwealth than was estimated last year when the forward estimates were presented in the election. This is hardly the basis upon which to take an extra \$250 in taxes and charges from the annual budget of the average Western Australian family, particularly when lower inflation forecasts have increased the purchasing power of state revenue collections. This is the simple fact: The Government knew last year that John Howard would implement an overall cut of something like 2 per cent in real terms in commonwealth payments to Western Australia in 1997-98. That was factored in. Nothing of significance has changed since that time to justify the Premier using commonwealth-state finances as the excuse upon which to impose increased taxes and charges on the Western Australian people. Therein lies the first and most significant broken promise in this Budget.

The bottom line is that when the Government published its forward estimates in November 1996, it presented them as its financial plan for the future. I will make an important distinction: One can present the forward estimates, on the one hand, as an estimate of what government revenue and expenditure will be if there are no changes in the system of revenue collection or in the policy framework; or, on the other hand, as a plan for the future. Through the forward estimates the Government may say - just as it does with a Budget - that it is projecting into the future and those projections are in fact its policy. Let us look at what happened. The Government's last forward estimates, published in November 1996, assumed that there would be no increases in taxes and charges and that productivity improvements in the public sector would pay for election promises. On Tuesday, 19 November an article in *The West Australian* put it this way: "Public Service pays for pledges." In his campaign speech the Premier said -

You hear a lot of talk these days about accountability in government. We don't talk - we act.

We've created history by being the first government in Australia to have their Treasury open the State's financial books at the beginning of the campaign.

This report tells us the exact state of the finances at the day of the calling of the election and the financial plan for the following four years.

Our financial plan is clear and well thought out.

There are no black holes. We are on track to achieve our fourth balanced budget in a row.

The Government was absolutely clear about this at the election. It was not talking about forward estimates but a financial plan. That financial plan had built into it an assumption that there would be no increase in taxes and charges and that the pledges that the Government was making in the election campaign would be paid for out of productivity improvements in the public sector. The Premier's plan may have been "clear and well thought out", the only problem was that he did not carry through with his plan after the election. When the people voted in the election in December they did so on the basis that state taxes and charges would not be increased by the coalition. Put simply, they were betrayed.

It is important that over the next four years when we discuss government achievements and policies, we focus not only on the policies but also upon the commitments that were given in the election campaign. The electorate has a strong desire to ensure accountability in politics, and that when they exercise a vote the utilisation of that vote means

something. That means Governments must stick by the promises they make in election campaigns. In assessing this Budget we must look not only at the measures within the Budget, but also the promises made in the election campaign. The Government has broken those promises. That has a significant impact upon the perception of the public towards the political process; it undermines democracy and creates cynicism in our community.

I will turn to the state of the Western Australian economy. In framing the state Budget the first question that should be asked by the Government is what is the state of the Western Australian economy. In answering that question the Government should ensure that it examines economic performance as broadly as possible and does not just focus on the aggregate investment and output figures. This is important because in recent years in Western Australia we have seen contradictory outcomes. Some commentators have pointed to a dual economy with positive outcomes on the investment side and negative outcomes on the consumption side.

The Opposition's view is that this lack of balance in outcomes is not just a reflection of economic variables, but also a reflection of economic policy at both the state and the federal level. We must ask whether the current state Budget will work against or contribute to this imbalance. Those of us who move around in the community know that the performance of the Western Australian economy varies according to where one is within the economy. This has a significant impact on the perception of people towards aggregate figures such as economic growth, and on variables such as consumer confidence, bank borrowing and lending; therefore, it has a significant impact on employment. Our case against the Government of Western Australia is that it has a narrow view of economic achievement. Because of that narrow view the Government does not have a broadly based strategy that can deal with problem areas in our economy, most significantly on the consumption side of the economy.

Real growth in Western Australia's gross state product continues to be two percentage points higher than the national rate. However, in the second half of last year there was a slowing in our domestic economy, so much so that according to the Westpac Melbourne index of state economic activity Western Australia entered "a growth cycle recession in April 1996".

I remember last year the interesting debate that occurred in our community between the Premier, who kept pointing to the achievements of his Government by focusing on aggregate state output, and small business and retailers who said that that was not their experience. The fact is that according to Westpac Melbourne we entered a growth cycle recession in April 1996. Retail sales fell sharply in late 1996. By the end of 1996 they were 3.1 per cent lower than 12 months earlier. Given that retail sales account for 43.2 per cent of private consumption, this impacted significantly on our economy.

Private consumption growth in Western Australia has been stronger and less volatile than in other States in the past decade thus offsetting some of the more cyclical elements of gross state product such as external demand. The experience of Western Australia over a long period is less volatility in this important factor of private consumption, which has overcome some of the volatility that attaches to our dependence on international commodity prices and external demand. However, recently private consumption has not played that role in the Western Australian economy. That is a fact this Government does not understand. In its policy framework it continues to display ignorance.

Signs now exist that Western Australia is beginning to emerge from this growth cycle recession. Residential building approvals appear to have bottomed out and employment growth is strengthening although the growth is dominated by part time jobs. Confidence levels have risen. Prior to the Budget, commentators were predicting a mild improvement in economic activity in 1997. The signs of an upturn in our economy are reflected in business confidence and employment. However, the degree to which the movement out of the slower growth of late last year will materialise into strong growth remains the question of Western Australian economics in 1997.

One might ask whether the prediction of a 3 per cent increase in consumer spending in 1997-98 is too optimistic. This Budget will bring further job losses in the public sector, which I will refer to later, which will have a highly regressive impact on citizens in this State. That will hardly promote consumer spending. The possibility of a tough federal Budget should also be taken into account.

Before he so boldly predicts a 3 per cent increase in consumer spending the Premier should weigh up the possible effects of the state and federal Budgets and how job losses and insecurity in Western Australia will affect the economy.

On top of this, is the fall in the price of gold, the higher Australian dollar and the profit squeeze on domestic gold producers. The causes of the price fall for our major export earner have been slower growth in Asian incomes, disinvestment out of gold in response to stronger equities markets, the benign world inflation outlook and investor fears of a rise in central bank sales as European Governments reduce debt to meet European Monetary Union entry criteria.

Economic commentators say that even though the gold price may improve later this year it will stay below the trading range of \$US380 to \$US415 over the next several years. Such is not the environment to be contemplating the imposition of a gold royalty, particularly given the recent revelation that regional unemployment has been growing in Western Australia.

I refer to the politics and economics of the gold royalty and to the very words the Premier and his senior Ministers used when questioned about a gold royalty before the election. On 18 September the Premier told *The West Australian* -

The Government has not got the issue of the gold royalty on the agenda.

Early in the story he said -

I have not considered it as a source of revenue and it has not been built into our forward estimates for the next three years.

The same day the Minister for Energy and Resources Development told the Parliament, in what seemed to be the most simple and straightforward language -

There is no proposal for a royalty.

The Deputy Premier has taken the betrayal of voters' confidence to new lows. On the election campaign trail in Kalgoorlie the Deputy Premier did not mince his words. He promised not to be part of any Government that broke its promise not to introduce a royalty. On 7 December he told the *Kalgoorlie Miner* -

If on the one hand there is going to be a clear statement, as there has been that a gold royalty is not on the agenda . . . then very very clearly I am not going to be a part of any government (that) having said that then breaks that commitment.

Three months after he said that he further rubbed salt into the wounds of goldmining communities like Kalgoorlie. He told the Parliament he would not withdraw the National Party from the coalition "unless it is over an issue that is far more serious than a gold royalty".

These statements from the Premier and his senior Ministers have proved to be worthless. So brazen was the coalition Government in its efforts to deceive that coalition candidates even made a feature of their deception. Members will remember that in their election campaign National Party candidates produced advertisements and posters claiming that a gold royalty was not on the agenda. I remind members of what the advertisement said -

There will be NO gold tax. This is NOT an issue. How many times do Labor need to be told?

The Government even had the hypocrisy to say it was the Labor Party that was making an issue out of the gold royalty. It is pretty obvious that it does not matter how many times the coalition Government tells us something, it does not mean a thing.

I turn to the economics of gold. The gold industry is the biggest employer in the resources sector. More than 33 per cent of the mining sector workers are employed in the gold industry. The Department of Minerals and Energy estimated that the gold industry employed slightly fewer than 14 000 workers, including contractors. The gold royalty background paper commissioned by the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies estimates that a gold royalty will see 1 800 people lose their jobs - 350 directly and 1 450 indirectly. Introducing a gold royalty will have a significant, inhibiting effect on goldmining communities. The Western Australian gold study conducted by the University of Western Australia's Economic Research Centre said -

Each one dollar of production of a new gold mining project was estimated to support another 30 cents of output and 56 cents of income elsewhere within the region. The value of the regional employment multiplier implies that for every 10 project employment jobs . . . an additional 11.3 jobs are created in the region.

The issue of the gold royalty which will come before this Parliament is regional employment. Very important facts have been put forward not just about the general impact of the royalty but about its specific impact in the current climate of low prices and low productivity.

At a recent public meeting organised in Kalgoorlie, Mr Jeff Gresham, representing the goldmining industry, made this important statement which describes the gold industry extremely well -

The gold industry in Western Australia cannot be compared to other mineral industries. It is a fragmented industry, characterised by multiple producers, ranging from large to small. It is geographically dispersed throughout the State resulting in significant input to infrastructure development in the State. It consequently

should not be compared to the larger more centralised style of mineral producers such as the iron ore and nickel industries.

Jeff Gresham went on to argue that the Government has not done its homework on either the state of the goldmining industry or the impact the royalty will have on the industry, particularly given the current state of prices and productivity in the industry. The imposition of a royalty will certainly impact significantly on gold exploration, which is estimated to have generated \$365m in 1995-96, or 71 per cent of the total exploration of minerals in Western Australia. That is a significant figure: The gold industry conducts 71 per cent of all exploration for minerals in Western Australia. Gold exploration not only leads to valuable spinoffs in the discovery of other minerals, but also adds significantly to Western Australia's geological knowledge.

The Opposition has members who represent the goldfields and who educate other members of the Labor Party about the facts of the gold industry and its role in the state economy. That education is obviously needed on the other side of the House so that government members know about the significance of the industry to regional employment and mineral exploration in Western Australia.

The Opposition's argument about the gold royalty is not only about political accountability, it is also about economics and regional development. Given the background of this issue, decency would dictate that the Government at the very least should make this matter the subject of an inquiry before it proceeds further. That certainly was the recommendation of the public meeting in Kalgoorlie on 17 April 1997.

I now turn to the much vaunted social dividend. During the election campaign the Premier promised the people of Western Australia a social dividend in the areas of health and education to follow the four years of crisis and downsizing that characterised those sectors. The health system was subject to two major administrative overhauls. Budgets were cut and a sustained program of contracting out occurred which left Western Australia with the longest waiting times for elective surgery among the Australian States. Education was disrupted by further efforts to devolve powers and a failure to consult teachers properly. On top of that disruption, the Government began to contract out cleaning services in schools. Time and money has been poured into this process, which is unwanted by school communities and for which there is little demonstrated need.

Both education and health are in no position to address the significant challenges facing them as they enter the twenty-first century in such an environment. Those challenges include the technological challenges of the information technology revolution, the social challenge of dealing with dysfunctional youngsters who are causing havoc, and the challenge to make the curriculum of schools relevant to our needs today. Health is facing huge technological challenges, including the introduction of new techniques for surgery, the ageing of the population, and consumers' expectations of the health system. But our system is unable to meet those challenges. Not only are basic hospital services falling behind, but our schools lag behind, particularly in information technology. It is no wonder that the Premier focused on health and education during the election campaign. The Government recognised the public relations and service delivery problems it created in its first four years in office. That was a significant factor when the Premier prepared his rhetoric for the state election. The Premier's rhetoric in his campaign speech included this statement -

Our major focus in the next four years will be on education and health.

The Government had done its polling. It had seen that health and education were major problems in its first four years; it produced the appropriate rhetoric during the election campaign and said that this would be its top priority. How did it perform? How does the Budget shape up in the two major areas of expenditure, which account for \$2.9b of the \$7b spent in Western Australia? The government boasts of its \$49m boost to education and its \$54m increase to health. But it is important to note that these increases are not enough to keep pace with Western Australia's forecast population growth of 1.7 per cent. The Government's forecast of population growth is 1.9 per cent, so the Opposition's analysis of 1.7 per cent is conservative. The Opposition has used Australian Bureau of Statistics figures and it has projected a 1.7 per cent increase in population.

Population growth and demographic change are key factors in determining demand for health and education services. As in most States, Western Australia's ageing population is having an impact on health and our youthful newcomers an impact upon education services. On a per capita basis health expenditure is down by 1 per cent from \$860 in 1996-97 to \$852 in 1997-98 and education expenditure is down 2 per cent from \$789 in 1996-97 to \$774 in 1997-98. That is a real per capita decrease on spending in those two major areas. For every man, woman and child in Western Australia \$15 less will be spent on education and \$8 less will be spent on health. There is no social dividend. There is simply an effort to create the impression of improvement, but in reality there will be a continuation of the problems of the past four years.

It appears that the Government almost anticipated the Opposition's criticism about its social dividend, because almost immediately after it paraded its social dividend the Premier shifted the argument to employment and pointed out in his budget speech that this would be the real social dividend for Western Australia. Let us look at employment and unemployment.

As a result of its failure to impress upon the public its commitment to a social dividend for health and education, the Government has turned to jobs. It claims that next year there will be a reduction in the unemployment rate from the current level of 7.5 per cent to 7 per cent based on expected employment growth of 3 per cent. The overall outlook for employment is one of modest growth in the first half of 1997 followed by a strengthening thereafter. But the problem lies in the extent of the growth and whether it will assist in overcoming our problem of long-term unemployment. Every member of this Parliament needs to remind himself or herself that the rate of youth unemployment increased marginally throughout 1996-97, averaging 22.6 per cent for the eight months to February 1997 compared with an average of 20.6 per cent in the eight months to February 1996. The figure increased to 24 per cent in March of this year, compared with 20.4 per cent in March 1996. Therefore, youth employment grew last year.

The long term unemployed, defined as those unemployed for one year or more, account for around 20 per cent of the total unemployed. This is a major economic issue, because we have great economic potential not being utilised, and a great social issue because of the disillusionment which occurs among the unemployed and its impact on their way of life.

In order to lower unemployment the Government has assumed a real economic growth rate of 6 per cent and an employment growth of 3 per cent for 1997-98. Let us consider those figures. "Market Insight", published by the Challenge Bank, predicts improved performance, "although not convincingly enough to suggest a return to WA's high trend levels this year". The bank predicts an improvement in employment, but not enough in terms of the trend levels Western Australia has set over some time. Even the Department of Training, in its "Labour Market Review" of March 1997, has predicted that "Over the year to the March quarter 1998, state employment is forecast to grow by 1.3 per cent." This contrasts sharply with the Treasury assumption of 3 per cent, and poses questions about whether the Government's employment target is achievable.

Add to this contradiction the revelation from the budget papers that the Department of Training budget is decreased by 4 per cent in real terms and that the reduction in unemployment in recent months has been due to a reduction in the labour market size. The Western Australian labour force participation rate fell to 65.9 per cent in March of this year, and one year ago the figure was 66.2 per cent. That is a very sad figure to report to the Parliament. It means that many low income families and work force aspirants in Western Australia are giving up the quest for work as a result of a lack of proper labour market training options and the view that their desired work cannot be obtained. I suspect that some of them calculate that the nature of available work - namely, its short term nature and applicable conditions - is such as to make life more difficult in work than out of work. If that is true, it is a very sad situation.

Tackling unemployment requires interventionist labour market policies of the sort developed by the former federal Labor Government through the "Working Nation" program. I have been trying to obtain a copy of that program, but when the current Federal Government came to office it shredded all copies of it.

Mr Court: I think they have recycled it!

Dr GALLOP: Not one copy is available. Also, the need for interventionist labour market policies is even greater in Western Australia than elsewhere as most of the growth in this State is investment driven rather than labour intensive. The one exception to that rule has been the gold industry, yet the Government proposes to tax it for no more than revenue reasons.

Little sign is evident that the Government intends to maximise Western Australian employment opportunities from the State's resources development. Not only has the State's contribution to training been reduced in the Budget, but also almost all the Government's trading enterprises will make virtually no contribution to training. For example, during the last three and a half years only 430 public sector apprentices have been recruited, which is an average of 123 a year, or 0.13 per cent of the State's public sector work force. The Government's strategy - if one could call it that - is clear: Import skilled workers from interstate and overseas to solve labour market problems. It should be unthinkable that the State should adopt such a strategy with about 75 000 of its citizens unemployed.

I turn now to taxes and charges. The Premier's pre-election claim that some gain would follow the pain of the last four years is no more exposed as a sham than in the area of taxes and charges, particularly as they impact on low income households. In analysing the impact of the Budget we must take into account not only the first four coalition Budgets in Western Australia, but also the first Howard Budget delivered last year. Let us remember that over the last four years the coalition Government introduced the \$30 AlintaGas supply charge; abolished the annual free Westrail trip for pensioners during school holidays; abolished the 150 kilolitre free water allowance; increased public

transport charges each year; reduced the patient assisted travel scheme petrol allowance for travel to Perth or major regional hospitals; and widened the application of the user pays system across the public sector, particularly in the health sector.

All these changes impact negatively on pensioners and others on low incomes. Then along came John Howard's first Budget, which was estimated by the Australian Council of Social Service to have an impact which I shall outline. Unemployed households lost approximately \$38 a week; households whose main income is disability or wife pension lost \$21.50 a week; households whose main income is Austudy lost \$15 a week; and sole parent families lost \$10.70 a week. When different households are compared, it was found that the poorer households lost twice as much as the richer households. Indeed, households with disposable incomes after tax and social security payments of less than \$200 a week lost on average 2.2 per cent or \$5.40 a week of their spending power, while the richest households lost only 0.85 per cent of their spending power.

It is in this environment - increased taxes and charges over four years, and a regressive Howard Budget - that the Western Australian Government has increased taxes and charges, for both on-budget and off-budget agencies. Undoubtedly, such measures will push many low income households, particularly pensioners, below the poverty line. I remind members that over 200 000 pensioners live in Western Australia, with nearly 150 000 households, or 28 per cent of our total households, earning less than \$20 000, and just over 100 000 households, or 20 per cent, earning less than \$16 000.

Most of these people already spend every cent of their weekly income and must cut corners to pay the water, electricity and gas charges and public transport fares. The estimated annual cost of this Budget will see pensioners losing the equivalent of one fortnightly pension payment a year, or \$6 a week. If we broaden the analysis to include average family households, we see the estimated impact of the increases in car licences, power, gas, and water charges, debit taxes, public transport fares, and road fines to be \$236 a year, or \$4.54 a week. For the lowest income households, it represents a loss of 1.4 per cent of disposal income, and for the richest households it represents a loss of 0.4 per cent. The lowest average weekly disposable income is less than \$320 and the highest 10 per cent have weekly disposable incomes of more than \$1 066.

The increase in public transport fares and the changes in the application of concession fares have been of particular concern. Not only are these changes regressive in their impact, but they will further undermine efforts to ensure that Perth is a clean and livable city as we enter the twenty-first century. I will quote from two letters about the changes introduced by this Government. One is from an age pensioner and the other is from a student on Austudy. The pensioner lives alone in Armadale and the age pension is her only source of income. Her letter reads -

I speak for all pensioners when I say that I am grateful for the various concessions we have, but what is of particular concern is that because of the new ruling, the full fare of six dollars must be paid if the age pensioner wishes to travel the train before 9 a.m.

I think it is a mean and spiteful move to make against the elderly, many of whom have very limited income, and like myself there may be pensioners who need to travel before 9 a.m. purely for medical reasons.

I myself, because of cervical cancer attend King Edward Memorial Hospital on a regular basis and must do so until at least the year 2000. My appointment is often made for between the hour of 9.30 -10.30 a.m. and as I reside very close to a railway station, I find this mode of travel most convenient. Now I will have to tender the full fare of six dollars, for to ask the hospital this time to change my appointment to later will most definitely mean a postponement of any time up to at least one month which, although the worst case scenario, could be potentially life threatening and I am sure I am not the only age pensioner in this situation.

I turn to a letter from a student who lives in my electorate in the suburb of Lathlain. This student is appalled at the glossy advertising brochures the Government is using to sell its Budget to the community and states -

Being a low-income earner I manage financially as best I can. I am currently studying and am grateful for the opportunity to do so. Things are tougher for many low-income people now more than ever before. The Federal Government Party has seen to it that tertiary education fees have been lifted making education even more inaccessible to most. Austudy have been cut to the barest minimum. Things like dry-cleaning, videos, a visit to parks and cinemas, etc, are now all luxury items and have been for some time. Consumer spending is what is needed to drive the economy. While the nouveau poor can only afford essential items and the rich will purchase the luxury items. This will mark the end of the "middle of the road" spending, already retailers bear witness to this do they not?

That is a very good question and comment on the state of the retail sector. To continue -

In this climate the State Liberal government saw in its wisdom an opportunity to place further financial burdens on low-income families and welfare recipients already cited as living below the poverty line. The latest rises in electricity, water, train fares, bus fares etc, is once again showing contempt for the older community as well as the other groups.

The correspondent goes on to ask the following question -

Why did Mr Court see a need to advise each and everyone of us that "*the state is generating impressive growth and levels of wealth*" when the voters are struggling to pay the electricity bill. If we are all being called on to use financial restraint where then is the example being set by the government in terms of their own restraint?

This view of the Government's Budget and, in particular, the transport fare rises contained therein, is consistently expressed by pensioners and students throughout Western Australia.

I turn to public sector management. Of great concern over the past four years has been the deterioration in public services and the morale of the workers who deliver them. Ever since the passage of the Public Sector Management Act there has been little interest in a vision for the public sector. The Public Sector Standards Commission concerns itself with questions of ethics and due process, but does not have the overarching role of the former public service commissioner. The Public Sector Management Office has been collecting some useful information, to which I will refer later, but it does not seem to have an agenda beyond that of the Government's narrowly perceived pursuit of downsizing and contracting out. Since the election of the coalition Government, public sector employment has plummeted from just over 97 000 in 1993 to just over 87 000 in 1996. Also, there has been a trend towards non-full time employment, with the percentage of such employees in the public sector increasing from 24 per cent in 1993 to 30 per cent in 1996. Non-full time employees include casual and sessional employees and part time employees who may be employed on a permanent, temporary, fixed term or contract basis. The modern public sector comprises a large number of public sector workers who are employed on a non-permanent basis.

I turn to the real figure which should interest all Western Australians who are interested in job opportunities for young people. Of equal concern has been the considerable decrease in the number of level 1 employees since 1993. This decrease has been accompanied by an increase in the number of employees in almost every other salary range. While the proportion of employees at level 1 decreased from 52 per cent in 1993 to 30 per cent in 1996, the proportion of level 6 employees increased from just under 5 per cent to 12 per cent and the proportion of level 7 employees and above increased from approximately 3 per cent to 9 per cent. The public sector in Western Australia is becoming top heavy as it shifts its focus to contract management and gives up its long history of providing job opportunities for young Western Australians. The Government's performance in the provision of apprenticeships has been abysmal. The Government's performance in respect of level 1 employees throughout the public sector is equally abysmal.

The Budget will continue the pattern of job losses with, at the very least, 364 fewer employees working for consolidated fund agencies. The figure is actually 2 142, but 1 778 are technical and further education employees who will be shifted by this Budget to autonomous colleges. The Opposition can certainly expect, and confidently predict, a decrease in the number of these teachers and their conditions of employment will change when they are shunted off to the autonomous colleges. This can be seen from the \$3m cut in the vocational and education training budget and the \$1m cut in employment and work based training initiatives. Therefore, the figure of 364 employees is the bottom line; it will be greater in the on-budget agencies and it will certainly be greater in the off-budget agencies.

Where is the job security for Western Australian Government employees? What signal is this Government sending to those people who have not been spending money because they no longer have confidence in having a job tomorrow? Where is the Government's strategy to create more confidence in the breadth of this State's economy? Of course, the Government does not have that breadth of vision and that is a significant problem in its budget strategy. If we add to the equation further job losses in the off-budget agencies and the reference in this year's budget papers to \$20m for agency restructuring, the prospects for the public sector in 1997-98 do not look good.

The Premier must come clean about his real agenda for public sector change. What is the \$20m in the Budget for? I suspect it is for redundancy payments to shift more public sector workers out of the public sector and into the private sector; that is, out of the award system and into workplace agreements and out of categorisation as wage employees into a categorisation of self-employed. Already, serious questions are being asked about the quality of the services that this Government's strategy has created and which are possible under the new regime of downsizing and contracting out that have resulted in a decrease in staff levels in the Coastal Shipping Commission of 83 per cent and in the Building Management Authority of 64 per cent.

Mr Court: Did you say coastal -

Dr GALLOP: I am referring to Stateships.

Mr Court: We no longer have Stateships.

Dr GALLOP: I know, and that is the point I am making. The decrease in staff levels in the State Supply Commission has been 53 per cent; in Westrail, 50 per cent; and, in the Fremantle Port Authority, 48 per cent. The Premier's budget strategy sends a simple message to the Western Australian community: More part time work, less permanency, more insecurity and less consumer confidence. There is a great danger that we will lock into this pattern of economic development, which will result in persistent long term unemployment. The conservatives do not see this problem because they are attracted to figures detailing investment and output, but the economy is much broader than that.

The electors have a right to be sceptical. The Premier said that there has been a 20 to 29 per cent improvement in the figures as a result of contracting out. If that is the case, why are there increases in taxes and charges? That is the question the people are asking. It is a good question and the Premier cannot produce an answer.

Let us consider the Government's strategy for public sector management. The managers have been allowed to manage, but we see fewer low paid staff, fewer public sector opportunities for the young and more higher level managers. Not only are alternative ways of managing the public sector absent from the Government's agenda, but also it would appear to have little chance of implementing them under its current structure. I predicted that scenario when we debated the Public Sector Management Bill a few years ago. Indeed, the only vision this Government has for the public sector is contracting out and downsizing. That is not a vision for quality public sector service delivery; it is a private sector vision driven by prejudice and a desire to undermine the quality of our once great Public Service.

I will conclude by considering the coalition's overall record and return to a theme I outlined at the beginning of my speech: The need for balance in our economy and in economic policy making. This Government is the victim of aggregates, particularly the gross state product, as the measure of progress and welfare. That approach ignores a range of factors related to the environment and quality of life, as has been explained by many analysts seeking to establish an alternative measure of progress. Time and again over the next three and half years the Opposition will return to that theme; that is, that the gross state product is an inadequate measure of progress in our State. Quality is as important as quantity; the environment is as important as growth; and our suburbs and communities are as important as the number of goods and services within those suburbs. That is the philosophy of the twenty-first century and it is one way in which we can illustrate why the Government's vision is restricted.

The Government's vision is also restricted in a narrower sense. Its defining of progress by focusing on the gross state product ignores a range of other indicators of economic health, most notably growth, employment, inflation, investment, productivity and insolvencies, and I use those terms for a very important reason. The Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry reports on the performance of the States every year. It considers those economic variables alongside other financial indicators, such as current outlays growth, net debt as a proportion of gross state product, net interest as a proportion of total revenue, the State's credit rating, taxation growth and reliance on business taxes. One could hardly say that that organisation is an agent of the Australian Labor Party. Nor would one argue that the criteria that it sets are very different from the Government's espoused objectives in this area.

The chamber's 1997 report states that in 1993, when the Government changed in Western Australia, this State topped the chart for economic performance. In other words, back in 1993 we were at the top as measured by the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Since then, Western Australia has fallen to fourth position, ahead of only South Australia and Tasmania. The 1997 report states -

Western Australia's performance continued to deteriorate relative to the other States, falling a further 6.7 percentage points this year and 26.7 percentage points since May 1993. Even though Tasmania remains the worst performing State, it has improved its overall index by 14.5 percentage points since February 1995.

Interestingly, when we focus on the six economic indicators - growth, employment, inflation, investment, productivity and insolvencies - the 1997 report shows that Western Australia's performance has dropped by 20 percentage points since the change of Government.

In 1997, we still lead the way in growth and productivity but lag badly in employment, inflation and insolvencies. I reiterate the central point: The management of the Western Australian economy should be broadly based. The Government must broaden its vision, not only of progress generally but also of economic performance. It gave every indication during the election campaign that it understood the need for that change. Thus we heard the rhetoric: The gain will follow the pain; the social dividend will come; it will be a more caring and sensitive Government; and it will try to share the fruits of progress more widely throughout our community. Of course, that was public relations rhetoric devised for the Government to get over the hurdle of the election. It was not rhetoric based upon the Government's conviction about what needed to be done in Western Australia. Like many aspects of the Government's

performance, that understanding proved to be a mere public relations exercise lacking substance and conviction. Reality has now caught up with the Government and Western Australian politics will never be the same again.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [5.19 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition has delivered an excellent exposition of the Budget from a broad perspective. I will change focus and debate aspects relating to my electorate, and particularly to the aspirations of my constituents. I will raise a number of matters of concern to individuals or groups in my electorate and I will report on a survey I have conducted about the priorities of the 1997-98 Budget.

In the past few years, I have conducted a survey throughout my electorate of constituents' expectations about the forthcoming Budget. Each year, the number of responses has increased because an increasingly large number of constituents have responded to that survey. That survey reflects the views and aspirations of people within my electorate, and I will report to the Parliament the results of that survey, as I promised to do in the letter that I sent to all households prior to the delivery of the Budget. I indicated in that letter that I was seeking constituents' answers to a number of questions that were posed in the survey, and I invited constituents to comment on other issues of importance to them and their families, or to the organisations of which they are members.

The survey looked at taxes and charges, and also at expenditure on education, health, publicity, law and order, and families. The response to the survey was excellent, and it encapsulated what I have ascertained to be the community opinion from my visits to local shopping centres on Saturday mornings, from my meetings with constituents, and from my attendance at community meetings, sporting events and the like.

I also carried out this survey to give people in my electorate a direct opportunity of being heard in this Parliament. It is one thing for a member of Parliament to try to anticipate what is in the mind of electors; it is another thing to ask people for their opinions and duly report those opinions to the Parliament. Representative democracy is all about being able to bring to this Parliament the views, aspirations and expectations of people within one's electorate, and unless one is a mind reader, the only way to do that effectively is to ask people for their opinions.

The first set of questions asked people whether they agreed that taxes and charges should not be increased above the inflation rate, and whether they agreed that there should be no increases in taxes and charges. Ninety-one per cent of those who responded agreed that if taxes and charges were to be increased, they should not be increased above the inflation rate, and 6 per cent disagreed with that view. Therefore, there was strong opposition to taxes and charges being increased above the inflation rate. The gaps in the percentages indicate the percentage of people who did not answer that question. Some 78 per cent of people expressed the view that there should be no increases in taxes and charges - that reflects the hardship that is being faced in the community - and 14 per cent disagreed.

People were then asked whether they agreed that charges should be increased by the inflation rate for water and gas usage, TAFE courses and petrol. The percentage of people who disagreed with an increase above the inflation rate was 89 per cent for water usage and TAFE courses, 93 per cent for gas usage, and 90 per cent for petrol. Around nine in 10 of the people who responded to the survey thought that increases in those charges should not be above the inflation rate. A considerable number of respondents expressed the view that charges for water and gas should be reduced. They certainly did not agree with the imposition of the 4¢ a litre fuel levy or the removal by the coalition Government, some years ago, of the free 150 kilolitre water allowance.

The survey also asked questions about expenditure. It asked people to indicate whether additional resources should be allocated to upgrading school facilities and school technology and computers, and to reducing class sizes. It is significant that 87 per cent of those who responded believed that additional resources should be used to upgrade school facilities, and only 9 per cent opposed that move. The community expressed strong support for additional resources to be allocated to upgrading school facilities and school technology and computers. The realisation that young people today need to be technologically advanced in the use of computers in order to gain employment in a variety of occupations is reflected in the survey, in which 79 per cent of respondents believed additional resources should be allocated to upgrading school technology and computers, and 15 per cent were opposed to additional resources being used for that purpose.

Class sizes was an issue during the last election campaign, when the Parliamentary Labor Party proposed that in government we would reduce class sizes for younger school aged children. The Minister for Education said during the campaign that that matter was not particularly relevant because it had not been raised with him by many people. I thought I would put that to the test in this survey. It was interesting that 76 per cent of those who responded to the survey were in favour of allocating additional resources to reducing class sizes, whereas only 19 per cent were opposed. Again, community opinion on that matter is quite decisive.

The survey asked people whether they believed additional resources should be allocated to health in four areas: Shortening hospital waiting lists, providing dental care, upgrading public hospital equipment, and increasing public hospital beds. It was interesting to see, in light of the debate in this place about public and private hospitals, whether

the survey respondents believed that additional resources should be allocated to increasing public hospital beds. I will outline the results, because all the surveys indicate that health is a major issue in the community and that there is a strong view that additional resources should be put into health. Some 95 per cent of respondents to the survey supported additional resources being used to reduce hospital waiting lists, and only 4 per cent opposed that use. That indicates almost unanimous agreement for additional resources being used for that purpose.

Eighty-six per cent of respondents supported additional resources for dental care; 12 per cent were against. Perhaps that outcome reflects two aspects: First, the Commonwealth Government has abolished funds for the dental care program; and secondly, at the state level, eligibility to obtain dental care through the Perth Dental Hospital has been significantly narrowed. A number of people who were formerly eligible to obtain dental care through the Perth Dental Hospital or through government-provided services are no longer eligible. Therefore, the survey indicates not only a concern about the level of dental care but also a strong view within the community that additional resources should be used for that purpose.

Again, the survey reflected a strong view that additional resources should be used to upgrade public hospital equipment. Ninety-one per cent of respondents supported that view and only 6 per cent opposed it. Equally, 92 per cent of respondents to the survey supported an increase in the number of public hospital beds and only 6 per cent opposed that view. It is an interesting survey following the public-private services debate in this House. I asked questions of people within my electorate and I received a healthy response. There is strong support for the public hospital system and for increasing the level of resources in the system, whether by providing dental care, upgrading equipment, increasing the number of beds or shortening waiting lists in hospitals.

The contrast relates to publicity. The Government spends millions of dollars each year on television, newspaper and radio advertising, glossy brochures and local newspaper wraparounds. I understand that \$40m to \$50m a year is spent on government advertising. These days, one need only open the newspapers, watch television, or go to the football to note more government advertisements. Indeed one would worry about the viability of the advertising industry if the Government ceased spending millions of dollars on advertising.

Ms MacTiernan: It is political expenditure from taxpayers' money.

Mr BROWN: Yes, and it is interesting to see what the public thinks. Is it convincing anyone, and is it a wise use of public funds?

Ms MacTiernan: I think the Minister wrote the advertisements himself.

Mr BROWN: Yes. Another question in my survey was whether people thought that additional resources should be allocated to government advertising or government opinion polling. The answer was a very firm no. Some 5 per cent of the people surveyed thought that government advertising was good, but 93 per cent were opposed to it. There was some support for government polling, because 12 per cent thought such polling was good. However, 85 per cent did not support the use of taxpayers' funds for that purpose. Therefore, one can note a strong view emanating from the community regarding the allocation of its resources. Next year I might put another question on the survey: Would the respondent prefer taxpayers' funds being used in the health care system or on government advertising? I think the answer would be 90 per cent for and 10 per cent against taxpayers' funds being used in the health arena or the education system instead of promoting Ministers' or government policies.

Mr Bloffwitch: Are you referring to publications that the Ministers put out? Can you give an example?

Mr BROWN: If one is an avid football follower and watches television during prime time, one can note many government advertisements during AFL matches.

Mr Bloffwitch: Or AlintaGas advertisements.

Mr BROWN: Or advertisements promoting secret ballots. They are propaganda advertisements seen in the middle of AFL matches.

Mr Bloffwitch: And WorkSafe?

Mr BROWN: No, these are advertisements about the secret ballot legislation. One sees one government advertisement after another. Sometimes one sees AlintaGas advertising the Think safe, Work safe campaign.

Mr Bloffwitch: What do you think of the AlintaGas advertisement?

Mr BROWN: Some of the government advertisements are quite good, but is this money being spent wisely? Does AlintaGas advertise against Western Power? Are these advertisements an effort to convince people to put in a gas stove instead of an electric stove? I do not know the cost of these advertisements, but the Government has spent

millions of dollars, quite apart from the amount it has spent on corporate boxes. I go to the football and look at the people in those boxes -

Mr Bloffwitch: Do you have one?

Mr BROWN: No. The member for Geraldton should line up for one, because a few of his ministerial colleagues have been in a few. They think it is good. The Minister for Energy supports money being used for that purpose. I think about \$50 000 of AlintaGas money has been spent on a corporate box. I often take a look through my binoculars at people enjoying corporate boxes. It is not their money being spent. It is paid for by Western Australian taxpayers. These people are noshing it up, enjoying the food and entertainment. Many people in my electorate -

Mr Cowan: Do you subscribe to the George Grljusich philosophy - jeans, T shirt and a pie and sauce?

Mr BROWN: No. I do not have a problem if the Deputy Premier or anyone else in this place or outside wishes to pay money from his own purse to enjoy certain benefits at a football match. If people wish to spend \$10 000 to sit in a plush chair, sip champagne and eat caviar, so be it; it is their privilege. I would not worry about that; but I object vociferously when people in my electorate - many of them battlers who do not have the financial capacity to enjoy the small luxuries in life; they went a long time ago - are required to pay higher gas charges to support a small elite enjoying those privileges. I do not see any reason for it, and neither do the people in my electorate.

Ms MacTiernan: I think we should start "Boxwatch" where we photograph people in the AlintaGas box each week.

Mr Cowan: I think we should! If you are that silly, go ahead.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ainsworth): Order!

Mr Bloffwitch: If we did that would we not negate people's right to make their own decisions?

Mr BROWN: The member for Geraldton is right. When the Government corporatised organisations, it gave chief executive officers with a monopoly situation the right to use government funds. In the metropolitan area we do not have an opportunity to swap from AlintaGas to another gas provider - unless we go to bottled gas. Most people use the service that is provided. It is a question of the Government's deciding that a corporation owned by Western Australian taxpayers, not the Minister or the coalition Government, put in a board of management which will spend money as it deems fit. The corporation has spent that money on behalf of Western Australian taxpayers. I am sure the member for Geraldton will justify that to his electorate and say that the money is being put to good use.

Mr Bloffwitch: I do not think it is.

Mr BROWN: He will say that he believes taxpayers in his electorate should be paying for corporate boxes for the CEOs and senior staff of AlintaGas. I am sure the member will support that, but I do not.

Mr Bloffwitch: I do not support it but I have no say in it.

Mr BROWN: No, the member for Geraldton supported the corporatisation and under the powers of that legislation, the Minister -

Mr Bloffwitch: It has been corporatised for years.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROWN: It has not been corporatised for years. The member for Geraldton should look at his Government's manifesto. His Government introduced it. It was corporatised in this Parliament by one of his Ministers, and under that arrangement the Minister has power to issue instructions to the board. He does not choose to do so because he is happy, in accordance with coalition policy, to allow that level of expenditure. The member for Geraldton obviously supports that legislation. I do not and neither do many of my constituents.

I return to the survey in which I asked a number of questions about law and order.

Mr Bloffwitch interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROWN: The member for Geraldton can stand and speak later. I at least take some interjections and I am not like some members on his side of the House who ignore interjections all the time. I want to report the results of this survey to the Parliament, as I promised the people in my electorate that I would do so. Having done that, I will be happy to deal with further interjections from the member for Geraldton. I asked three questions about law and order: Should additional resources be allocated for the appointment of more police officers, should there be more crime prevention measures, and should additional resources be allocated to improve road safety. It was interesting that

83 per cent of the population supported additional resources being used to employ more police, which is fewer than those who supported it in the last survey, while 16 per cent opposed it. Most importantly, on crime prevention - I appreciate there are many definitions of crime prevention - two surveys in a row indicate an extremely high level of support for crime prevention measures that do not rely on the police, but take a much broader attitude to crime. In the survey 93 per cent of the respondents supported additional resources being used on crime prevention, and 88 per cent supported additional resources being used on improving road safety.

Mr Johnson: I thought it would be higher.

Mr BROWN: I do not try to supplant my view for that of my constituents. I survey them because I recognise that opinions shift and change. One might have thought, bearing in mind that the Government made big play of the additional police officers appointed and the civilians appointed to support the police officers, that community opinion had changed particularly as the coalition said before the election that it intended to increase the number of police in accordance with population increases. We find there is a very strong call from the community for additional police.

Mr Johnson: That is quite natural.

Mr BROWN: One would not have thought so. This reflects the very high level of concern about the increasing rate of crime.

Mr Johnson: Your questions asked for a yes or no response, and it is quite predictable that 88 per cent would answer yes.

Mr BROWN: That may be the prediction of the member for Hillarys, but my way of dealing with these matters is to ask people to indicate one way or the other, or to include in the survey any additional comments they wish to make. I did that. The member will appreciate that one cannot ask 65 questions in these surveys.

Mr Johnson: I do a similar survey, and one of the questions in my survey was whether people believed the Government should introduce capital punishment and corporal punishment. On capital punishment 92 per cent said it should, and 85 per cent said corporal punishment should be introduced. On the basis of that survey the member should agree that people in my area should have what they want.

Mr BROWN: The member can certainly report those results to the Parliament, as he is duty bound to do, and no doubt he will make a speech on that subject. I note that the Premier said he would run a referendum on those two issues. He flagged that about 10 times between 1993 and 1996. Every time the crime rate and the number of assaults increased, he said kids would be caned and people would be hanged. He said that would resolve the problem. Although he said a referendum would be held, nothing has happened. I have a question on the Notice Paper asking what influenced him. His solution to the crime rate was to introduce those two measures and he thought he had a high level of community support. No doubt the member for Hillarys will take up the matter of his survey results with the Premier. He obviously has not been very persuasive so far.

Mr Johnson: It is only a recent survey.

Mr BROWN: I thought the member said he carried out the survey every year, but now it is only a recent survey. Is it an after-election survey?

Mr Johnson: I did not say every year.

Mr BROWN: I am always confused about these things! I asked four questions in my survey about families. I asked whether people supported additional resources being used for counselling information and support services for seniors and families. The response was that 78 per cent supported it, and 18 per cent did not. On public housing, 59 per cent supported additional resources being used and 33 per cent did not. On the provision of better community facilities, 70 per cent supported additional resources being used and 22 per cent did not. On questions relating to support for those with family members who had a disability, 87 per cent supported the use of additional resources and 10 per cent did not. That gives a fairly good indication of the community views in my electorate on these issues. In addition, a variety of comments were made on the survey, but time does not permit me to report on all of them. I will run through some of the comments made.

On the question of cuts in government expenditure in a variety of departments, the comment was made that there should be a focus on service and not savings. It was said that public transport should be improved in an attempt to reduce the number of cars on the road. That was strongly supported. It was also stated that members of this House and the other place are doing exceptionally well compared with the local community, and that this Parliament should look very seriously at the benefits members of Parliament receive and place them on a fairer basis in line with other people in the community. Concern was expressed about maintenance of schools, chaplains in primary schools and counselling for children. There was some concern about programs for people who have a drug addiction and the

penalties imposed on drug pushers in the community. The question of treatment for people who suffer from drug addiction has been raised with me recently. A number of community groups in my constituency have given consideration to a comprehensive program to deal with young people with drug addiction to get them away from it and into either mainstream education or mainstream employment.

The funding for this purpose is difficult to obtain and research for the available programs is difficult to access. I have placed questions on notice about that issue. I attended a meeting a short while ago with a number of community agencies that are beginning to have some success in encouraging into programs young substance abusers who have dropped out of school. The programs aim to set those young people on their way by involving them in positive activities, getting them away from the substance abuse, developing their self-esteem, and working with them to identify their abilities. The agencies are trying to do this on a shoestring budget. Their funding is insecure and their research base is not great. I have great admiration for people involved in this project because not only are they trying to look after the welfare of the young people concerned, but if they turn many of these young people away from being substance abusers, it will reduce the worry and stress of the abusers' families. It will also have an impact on the level of crime. One knows that some crime is induced by people looking for funds to buy illicit drugs.

A variety of other concerns were raised in the survey I conducted, including concerns about privatisation, the environment, and national parks. Particular concerns were raised about the labour market programs that were cut by the Federal Government and about industry development policy and the amount of work going offshore because infrastructure capital is not being placed in Western Australia. It is unfortunate that time does not permit me to report on all the issues raised.

I have given an undertaking to my electorate to report on a number of other matters. The first relates to a concern among many constituents about the charges imposed by Princess Margaret Hospital for Children on parents who wish to stay overnight with their children. Members will be aware that those parents are now charged a fee for the use of a chair and a hospital blanket. Families who have children in hospital have already been subjected to the trauma and worry of that, but, in addition, are now subject to additional costs. Some of those families are low income families and the imposition of that charge is a burden on them. I will raise that matter again. It is of concern to a number of people in my electorate.

I have corresponded with the Minister for Transport for a considerable period about major traffic lights in my electorate. I have reported to this Parliament before about traffic light modifications that must be made at the corner of Beechboro and Benara Roads. Despite two undertakings that the matter will be resolved, constituents of mine are waiting for a reply and are about to receive information from me that the issue has still not been attended to. Likewise, other traffic signals were to be provided at the corner of Benara Road and Lord Street and modifications were to occur at the intersection of Lord Street and Guildford Road, which have not been forthcoming, despite numerous representations and petitions to the Minister.

In the last speech I made to this House I raised questions about Homeswest, particularly its customer focus. Recently I was pleased to be a member of the Lonnie committee, which looks at government department reports and judges the quality of those reports. That gave me an opportunity to read, I think, 68 reports of government departments and agencies. A number of agencies conduct surveys of customers to determine their needs and they endeavour to gear their services to meet customers' needs. The concern I raised previously about Homeswest is that its zoning policy and one offer policy do not seem to be geared to the needs of its clients - people needing housing - but, rather, is an administrative policy designed to shorten waiting lists. I raised this matter previously with the Minister for Housing through correspondence and questions in this place, and I await a response. I hope progress will be made on that issue and that Homeswest will revise its policy so it is customer focused. I hope an attempt is made to find accommodation for people in the areas in which they want to live and accommodation they want, rather than simply taking the current harsh position; that is, accommodation is offered and people can either take it or leave it. If they do not take it, they go to the bottom of the list and must wait another three or four years. Many people are being placed, but they are being placed in areas in which they do not want to live, where their family life is disrupted and where they do not have support networks. A better system could be utilised if one were to focus on what the client wanted rather than the administrative convenience of Homeswest. That will mean that in some areas people must wait longer; however, in many instances people are prepared to wait longer if they can get an area of their choice.

I also raise a matter concerning people who are in difficult circumstances. I note from a report in *The West Australian* of Thursday, 13 March that concerns were raised by Anglicare's chief executive, Ian Carter, about the axing of 120 000 employment training places across Australia last year by the federal coalition Government and their replacement with 10 000 positions under the work for the dole scheme. A number of people in my electorate are looking for employment and training opportunities. As the economy changes they are being restructured out of jobs. That is nicely called frictional unemployment; however, in reality if people are caught in that position they need training opportunities.

I referred to government advertising a little earlier. Perhaps the best example of wasted advertising is this: On 24 February 1996 the then Minister for Family and Children's Services advertised for nominations for a Youth Advisory Council. The Minister said nine people would be appointed to the council and people should submit an expression of interest to Family and Children's Services by Friday, 8 March 1996. I asked in 1996 whether the Government had appointed the Youth Advisory Council, and the answer was no. I asked a series of questions to the now Minister for Youth about the Youth Advisory Council. The Minister for Youth advised that he appointed the council on 7 March 1997; that is, almost 12 months to the day after expressions of interest closed. It appeared that a number of people who were appointed to that council in 1997 had not submitted expressions of interest in 1996 to participate on that council. The advertisements and the publicity about the appointment of a Youth Advisory Council meant nothing. When we debate youth issues - one of the areas in which the Government proclaims an interest - the Opposition will have to advise people that the Government made no attempt for 12 months to put in place that council. That indicates the level of importance given to that matter by the Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

Mr BROWN: In the few minutes left to me I will draw the attention of the House to other matters concerning my electorate. For some time in this Parliament I have been advocating for funds to be provided by the Department of Family and Children's Services for a community centre in Lockridge. I note with disappointment that, in this year's Budget, no funds have been allocated for that purpose despite support from me and, I understand, the member for Swan Hills. There has been considerable redevelopment in this area over the past few years to change the image of Lockridge. There has also been a great deal of community support for that development. However, it is unfortunate that in redeveloping the area, no funds have been set aside for a new community centre. A considerable number of community groups in that area operate out of very substandard conditions in houses and other temporary-cum-permanent accommodation which has been made available to them over the years. My constituents note that considerable funds have been made available to other areas, particularly for facilities in what might be called marginal electorates. Some people have suggested that if the electorate of Bassendean became more marginal, it might be given this facility.

Ms MacTiernan: That is not likely to happen.

Mr BROWN: That is right. That should not have any impact on the allocation of funds.

I call on the Government and, in particular, the Minister for Family and Children's Services to ensure that funding is allocated to that facility in my electorate and, now that the election is over, to give consideration to areas of need rather than areas of political expediency.

Another matter I draw attention to is the Government's decision on concessional bus and train fares for pensioners and other card holders. This has had a considerable impact on constituents in my electorate. I promised a number of my constituents that I would raise this matter in the Parliament. A number of my constituents need to travel before 9.00 am and under the new arrangements will be caught by a hefty increase in fares. Many people, particularly age pensioners and those who rely on the public transport system, believe the changes are unjust and unreasonable and call on the Government to review the decision so that they can continue to enjoy the concessional arrangements they had prior to the decision being made.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

METROPOLITAN (PERTH) PASSENGER TRANSPORT TRUST AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 April.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [7.35 pm]: This Bill is yet another Hon Eric Charlton special in a series of legislative and executive actions that we have seen the Minister for Transport take in an attempt to dismantle what was a very efficient, effective and integrated public transport system. The guts of this Bill is the change to the provisions relating to the appointment of members to the board that governs the trust. The Minister is removing from the qualifications for membership two classes of people, the first of which is a person appointed from nominations made by the Trades and Labor Council and the second of which is a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, is a user of the services provided by the trust. The Minister is seeking to remove appointees who could bring expertise from the employee ranks and also, alarmingly, to remove the consumer appointee. It is important for us to understand that these people were never, in any real sense, representatives of either of those groups. They were selected because of their expertise in those areas but once on the board had broad obligations to the board to serve the interests of the

trust as a whole. That is typical in various government agencies and is the same principle that governs the appointment of people to the boards of private corporations.

The Minister for Local Government has given us a load of collywobblers to justify his decision. He said that the purpose of the legislation is to recognise that the trust has a different role in the new post-privatisation era and the board must have greater flexibility in a new competitive environment. That fundamentally misunderstands the purpose of the government agency which, for convenience, I will refer to by its trading name of MetroBus. It is also important to understand as a matter of principle that, even in a competitive tendering environment, the fundamental responsibility of a government agency is to provide a public service. At no stage is it a government agency's purpose to maximise profit and, in the case of public transport, which we all know would never operate for profit, it should not operate to minimise cost or expense.

It is important to go back to first principles, to look at why we have public transport; what ends we are trying to serve by providing public transport. Firstly, public transport provides access for those who, by reason of age, disability or lack of financial resources, are unable to provide transport for themselves. It enables those classes of persons to move across the city, to participate in economic and social and personal life of the community. Secondly, and very importantly, it provides for the efficient movement of people throughout the city. In doing so, it reduces road congestion, particularly at peak periods. This might sound trite, but I really do think people should remember that public transport does not simply serve those who use it. In fact, public transport is a great service to all users of private transport because it reduces congestion on the roads. In fact, without a public transport system, a vast sum of money would be required to expand our road system greatly. Not only would that be very expensive, but also it would create all sorts of planning difficulties in the arrangement of the city. It is not possible to run a city the size of Perth, with 1.2 million people, without an effective public transport system and the city would grind to a halt economically.

Thirdly, public transport reduces air pollution, with one of the major causes being vehicle emissions. Already Perth has an alarming level of air pollution and special geographic factors add to our problems. It is also true that we have the highest percentage of private vehicle use and the highest per capita kilometerage of roads of any city in Australia. We must encourage public transport use to contain, to some extent, the very real problem of vehicle emissions.

To refocus: It is important to understand that public transport is provided for three reasons - first, for access for those who cannot avail themselves of private transport, an equity argument; second, the cost to provide sufficient road space if all people were to use private transport, the economic argument; and the third argument has to do with the containment of pollution.

When we look at how we should run our public transport agency - MetroBus is a public transport agency - we must go back to first principles. This is not simply an operation to either maximise profit or minimise loss; it is provided to ensure we address these three objectives, and that must always be the centre focus of a government agency such as MetroBus, which is charged with a responsibility of providing a part of our public transport network. That does not change simply because MetroBus is not the only provider of public transport. It is a government agency, and its focus must be to produce those social and economic ends, which are to the benefit of us all.

When we look at the sorts of people we want on the trust, we must take into account the sort of expertise we want on the board of management to enable it to deliver on those three objectives. When this Bill was debated in the other place, it was not mentioned to any great extent that this amendment will have the effect of removing the representative who brings the expertise of the consumer to the board. I find that absolutely extraordinary. We are looking at an operation that should have as its objective to get as many people as possible onto public transport. Yet we are saying that it is no longer relevant, for some unknown reason, to have someone who can bring to the board that first-hand experience of a consumer. No-one is saying that the board should be composed entirely of people who bring that special expertise. However, as with Parliament or any organisation that is supposed to oversee any operation, it is important to have a broad range of skills and perspectives at the helm to ensure those perspectives are being fed into the system and there is the breadth of vision that is needed to take the organisation forward to meet its objectives.

Members should be aware that the Minister for Transport, somewhat in contempt of the legislation, has not had a person appointed from the ranks of the consumers on the board for almost two years. When the previous person who was chosen from the ranks of the consumers left, the Minister decided, notwithstanding the clear words in the legislation, to leave the position vacant. That is an appalling state of affairs and might account for some of the difficulties faced by MetroBus over recent years. Again the Minister has chosen to operate as if he has managed to change the legislation before he has had the courtesy to put it before the Parliament.

Likewise the Minister is seeking to remove from the board of the trust a person who has a union background. Traditionally the person who has been appointed under that head has had strong contacts with the basic deliverers of the service of MetroBus - the bus drivers. I have made this point before, but it is important for members to

understand that that person is not a representative of the workers. That person is appointed to the position because he or she brings experience and insight into the operation, and is an alternate point of contact for the board for the issues that arise for those drivers. That person can bring that expertise and an understanding of those issues to the board.

It is also important to understand - ironically in his reply in the second reading debate the Minister alludes to this - some of the traditional difficulties that have existed between the management and the basic service deliverers in MetroBus. The Minister spoke about the way he attempted to ensure that he was getting feedback not just from management. He decided he would go around and attend each of the depots and get the good oil from the workers. He found that was important. It is important that the board also has that capacity. Appointing a person from that background brings a different perspective to the board, which is very useful in making its decisions and, in particular, to know how the service is being delivered on the ground and what problems might be overcome. The board would not be reliant on a particular slant or interpretation contained in management reports. The board is not there to rubber stamp the impressions of management. The Minister said in his second reading speech that MetroBus is to be judged on its performance in areas such as driver courtesy and knowledge of the routes. The Minister identified those two crucial areas, yet we are removing from the board those two persons who have the most capacity to bring a real insight into those areas of board decision making. The Minister proudly set out in the debate the nature of the other persons on the board. We have a senior partner in one of the big three commercial law firms in Perth, a former merchant banker, a former partner with an accountancy firm and a marketing expert. I do not say that those people do not have particular areas of expertise. However, if that is the complexion of the board, where will its expertise be on basic service delivery, which the Minister himself identified as crucial? When one looks at the composition of the board, one sees quite clearly the overwhelming focus will be on cost containment only. That is very silly. At the end of the day one wants the personnel managing the transport system to keep their eye on the ball and to keep people using public transport because that is of benefit to the entire community.

If this Bill is passed tonight, we will have a board which might be adequate if it were dealing with a purely commercial venture, but it is not appropriate or adequate for a government agency whose agenda is more extensive than finance.

The other point is that a person appointed from the union ranks is able not only to bring expertise on service delivery but also to provide another view of management/employee relationships. Unless the board has some capacity for getting direct feedback, it is at the mercy of the management's interpretation of its operation of industrial relations. The board would have no way of determining the issues. Now that MetroBus has lost responsibility for setting timetables, has been divested of its assets and is very much focused on providing a labour intensive service, it is even more important for the board to ensure it has very sound employee/employer relationships and a profound understanding of industrial relations issues in the industry. Many large corporations feel they need to have appointed to their boards people who have that special understanding and knowledge. They recognise that for labour intensive industries it is vitally important to ensure they have their finger on the pulse of their internal industrial relations.

The board has been very successful in this regard in the past. Close watchers of the privatisation process will know that in 1975 MetroBus successfully negotiated with its work force a very creative enterprise bargaining agreement. It collapsed penalty rates and gave greater flexibility for rostering to the management of MetroBus. At the same time it was structured in such a way that it preserved a fair level of income for employees. It was generally embraced by employees - some more reluctantly than others - because they were prepared to accept it in order to keep MetroBus going. They had a very real commitment to public transport and its provision by a government agency. The board has been successful under its current composition. People who know how the enterprise bargaining scheme works will know that it came about in no small part through the involvement of the appointee from the union side, who was very instrumental in ensuring that the board was moving in the right direction and that such an agreement could be struck. In Germany, Scandinavia and other countries which have been more economically successful than Australia, there has been a strong movement towards having union appointees on boards to ensure really cooperative ventures. This Bill will be a very retrograde step.

The decision is made more fascinating by the person we see now appointed as the chairman of the board, who is none other than Russell Allen, a former senior partner in Freehill Hollingdale and Page. I will read the Minister for Transport's description of Mr Allen and why he was appointed. He said that Mr Russell Allen is an industrial lawyer, whose expertise in worker/management relations is his life, not from a confrontationist point of view but to get a good organisation, because a business cannot be successful if it does not have good worker/management relations. That is a most extraordinary proposition for anyone who knows the role Mr Allen has played in industrial relations in this State over the past four years. The Minister was right when talking about Mr Allen as an industrial lawyer. After that there was a great gap between the Minister's description and the real world. Mr Allen, who has been appointed as chairman of this organisation from which we are removing the union representative, prides himself on being the architect of the first wave of industrial relations reform. We are now up to wave three. I am not sure of his

involvement in waves two and three. He sees himself as a powerful player and instrumental in the first wave of legislation. That legislation saw the introduction of workplace agreements, which overrode award conditions. That meant that workers who were required to sign those agreements no longer had the protection of awards or recourse to the Industrial Relations Commission. Mr Allen apparently says that he was instrumental in setting that system in place.

We saw massive industrial disputation over the first wave of this Government's industrial relations legislation, as we did with the second wave and now the third. Mr Allen is the architect of that legislation. However, somehow or other Mr Allen is not a confrontationist and will ensure that we will work together harmoniously. Mr Allen is directly implicated in that legislation as the senior partner responsible for the industrial law division of Freehill Hollingdale and Page. Presumably Mr Allen supervised the work of various of his solicitors who have been the subject of some very unusual adverse comments by the federal Industrial Relations Commission. Last year in a case that was taken up by the Miscellaneous Workers Union against Wesfarmers CSBP Ltd, which was effectively compelling employees to sign workplace agreements, the commissioner made some very adverse comments on the conduct of the firm of Freehill Hollingdale and Page. I do not have the commissioner's exact words here. However, he was very concerned at that firm's false representations to workers. While it was being paid by the employer that firm had attended workers' meetings and purported to give them independent advice to the effect that there was no point in their taking their workplace agreement for assessment by an independent person. Freehill Hollingdale and Page, who were the lawyers involved, were roundly condemned by the commissioner in the federal Industrial Relations Commission for this untoward conduct. This is the outfit, the leader of whom will now introduce and oversee this new regime of cooperation and honesty in workplace relations between employees and employers at MetroBus!

I note that Mr Russell Allen is obviously a great favourite with the Minister for Transport. Following the last round of industrial action after the ill-fated Len Buckeridge saga the Minister for Transport appointed this very same Mr Russell Allen to the board of the Fremantle Port Authority. He obviously sees him as useful weapon in the fight against working people in this State. The decision by this Government to remove appointees who have special expertise as an employee, a person with a union perspective or a consumer, must be seen in the context that the Government is now loading up the board of MetroBus with people whose interests are purely economic. In particular, the Government has appointed a man who is an architect of at least part of the process of deunionising the work force in Western Australia and stripping away the industrial relations protections. I have no doubt that in MetroBus a regime of workplace agreements will be introduced, and on the expiration of the enterprise bargaining agreement we will see a great deal of pressure placed on those workers who have remained with MetroBus to compel them to sign workplace agreements. I hope that in the replies to this debate tonight government members do not in any way pretend that this has not been happening right across government, in particular in the Transport portfolio.

The Minister for Transport has gone on record as saying that it is entirely appropriate to require persons to sign a workplace agreement in order to obtain a job within a transport authority or to gain promotion or transfer. No doubt Mr Allen has been placed on the board for a reason, and it is for that reason that it is important for the Minister to remove from that board anyone who has any insight into or sympathy with the situation of workers.

The purpose of MetroBus is to provide public transport, decent access for people who have no private transport, and an efficient way of moving people around the community because of the extraordinary expense that would be involved if everyone were to use private transport, and to ensure that we contain the burgeoning problem of air pollution. For a government agency to meet those objectives we need a broad-based board and not one that is full of people whose expertise is in the narrow economic arena. In the broader context of the Minister's appointments to the board, in particular Mr Russell Allen from Freehill Hollingdale and Page, the real agenda is an industrial one; it is having a further go at the MetroBus drivers.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [8.07 pm]: I support the Bill. It is essentially one that touches on the appointment of members of the new board of MetroBus, and on the name change of that public agency. One is inclined to say "not again", because we have been through the process in the past decade of seeing a number of name changes. One is entitled, in public transport and wider issues including environmental and economic issues, to ask what has been the impact on public transport services and finances of simply changing names.

I will raise a couple of issues in the course of this debate, where we might focus on some of the real imperatives that are at stake. They are not unlike some of those issues that have been raised in the course of the past half hour by the member for Armadale. I will make some observations about the patronage on the metropolitan bus, train and ferry services and refer to a report that was produced by the federal Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics in 1994 which touches not only on the broad issue of how to attract greater numbers of people to public transport, but also on the direct issue of public transport in the Perth metropolitan area. That report has come up with some most interesting findings.

In the final analysis the Bill is trying to improve efficiencies from the top to increase public patronage of transport at the bottom. If the aim of the Government and the public transport system is not to get more people using its services, I suggest they both need to go back to taws. I took the trouble this morning to check with the office of the Minister for Transport to learn just how much we collect in any given year in public transport fares. Members will be aware that people mostly travel by bus, to a lesser extent by train and regrettably in a minor way by ferry. I can see you nodding your head, Mr Speaker, because that is probably the point at which your parents catch public transport.

In those three sectors of public transport, we collect in the order of \$52m in fares. I know we are not allowed to touch on budget issues tonight, but in the budget speech delivered by the Premier \$52m was relevant because he said that it was important for the Government to increase public transport fares and to decrease public transport concessions. He said that the Government wanted to increase the scale of the percentage of fares compared with an international average. Apparently the international average is in the order of 40 per cent. The collections referred to in the Budget were in the realm of 28 per cent.

I understand from the Minister's office this morning that if we increased the fares along the lines we have talked about, this year alone they would increase from 28 per cent to 31 per cent of that factor. One could say they are the arguments in favour of increasing public transport fares.

Notwithstanding the bureau's report was published about 18 months ago, its findings are still up to date. I rang the bureau in Canberra yesterday morning to confirm that point. As the bureau saw things when it reported 18 months ago we should not be increasing public transport fares. In fact we should be considering a wholesale decrease in public transport fares. For example, in a voluminous, detailed report which required a fair amount of reading and interpretation, the federal bureau went to some pains to ascertain what would happen if public transport fares were cut by a factor of 20 per cent, 40 per cent, 60 per cent or 80 per cent. It is that 80 per cent reduction that I will deal with tonight.

The federal bureau's study of the Perth public transport scheme effectively said that if an 80 per cent reduction were imposed on public transport fares, bus patronage in the Perth metropolitan area would immediately increase by 49 per cent.

Mr Prince: Where is the evidence to back up that assertion by the federal bureau?

Mr PENDAL: The evidence comes from a study conducted by the Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics, which is part of a federal department, whose report I would be happy to table in the House for the benefit of members. I thank the Minister for Health for the interjection because it allows me to underscore an amazing deduction on the bureau's part; that is, the reduction of bus fares alone by a factor of 80 per cent would increase patronage by just under 50 per cent. Before someone suggests we are talking false economics I will explain why the federal bureau believes it would be a good thing for us to lower public transport costs rather than increase them.

The same federal bureau's report suggested that were we also to decrease train fares in the Perth metropolitan area by a factor of 80 per cent we would increase train patronage by 23 per cent.

It is probably attributable to our culture surrounding buses that a reduction in overall fares would result in a greater increase in people's patronage of the bus service vis a vis the train service.

What that factor could be for ferries I am not aware. Either the federal bureau is unaware that we use ferries in the Perth metropolitan area or they account for such a small proportion of the overall public transport system that their contribution is not worth measuring.

Ms MacTiernan: When was this report published?

Mr PENDAL: If I recall correctly it was published in 1994-95. The figures are as up to date as possible in a serious study of this kind.

Mr Prince: The arithmetic seems to be dealing with a 50 per cent patronage and 80 per cent reduction. That would still lead to a reduction in revenue of about \$35m.

Mr PENDAL: The Minister has assisted me materially in presenting my case and I am grateful to him because he is a very helpful Minister.

The bureau sought to determine the global cost of pumping more and more resources into private transport; for example, an expansion of the freeway system, a widening of facilities like the Narrows Bridge; or a widening of the causeway. What would be the ultimate cost to society if we were to always pander to the needs of the private motorist? In every capital city the outcome was different. As the Minister and you know, Mr Speaker, for a

professional or business person in Melbourne to travel home by the train is a very ordinary thing to do. Perth businessmen or women simply do not go home by train or bus. The Perth culture dictates that we all drive home in motor vehicles.

I will answer the Minister's interjection by quoting the details the bureau provided me. The outcome of reducing by 80 per cent public transport fares over the 20 years between 1995 and 2015 is estimated to result in a saving for Australian taxpayers - and, therefore, Federal and State Governments - of approximately \$8 000m. The savings for Western Australia would be roughly 10 per cent of that total figure; that is, \$800m.

Mr Prince: That does not take into account that this is a growth State with a growing population, unlike many of the Eastern States where the numbers of people stay the same.

Mr PENDAL: Those factors were taken into account. For example, the cost of hospitalisation of a person injured in an accident in Sydney and a person injured in a comparable accident in Perth is roughly the same. The Minister for Health may have superior knowledge of that, but the bureau's research was detailed.

Mr Prince: It assumes a static population. That assumption is changeable.

Mr PENDAL: Absolutely. Although I acknowledge that the report was produced in 1994-95 and that things can change, I am referring to the global figures produced by the bureau. The ever increasing dominance of the private transport system, such as that in Western Australia, is leading us down the wrong path entirely. The bureau suggests that the reduction in public transport costs will produce immeasurable bonuses for the public transport system, but that does not extend to whether we should widen the Narrows Bridge. I inform the Minister for Health and his Cabinet colleagues that unless we get on top of this problem we will have to widen the Narrows Bridge and I will be the first and the last to oppose it. Also, if the Kwinana Freeway in South Perth is to be widened, I will again be the first to oppose it and will continue to oppose it after other people have given in.

To its credit the Government is considering the impact on the South Perth, Como and Victoria Park populations of the increasing number of vehicles travelling over the Narrows Bridge and through the southern suburbs every day. That is what I want to come to grips with. We should put a stop to the mindless explosion in the number of vehicles using the Narrows Bridge. I know what that will do to my electorate and I positively refuse to allow that to happen. But the implications could be even greater. The bureau has asked me to look at the impact of urban congestion on local accident rates and the hospitalisation of people for such conditions as asthma. To most of us those things are remote possibilities. They have nothing to do with good health, with good local traffic flows or with the need to widen or not to widen the Narrows Bridge, yet all of those things are taken into account by the bureau. We are being asked to look at the short term.

I know what the Minister for Health said by way of interjection. I now inform him that we currently collect \$52m in bus, train and ferry fares. If that were reduced by the factor of 80 per cent referred to in the bureau's report, \$41.6m less would be collected. People may say that is a big thing for us to bear; it is a lot of money, yet the people who argue to the contrary are saying that over 20 years we would begin to eliminate those costs by a huge factor, because for the first time in Western Australia we would have got on top of some of the real costs.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have been enjoying the member's speech, but I am sure before he sits down he will refer to the Bill.

Mr PENDAL: I was about to say that, therefore, the Bill is missing its target. The Bill talks about how to fill the vacancies on the board of the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust - or whatever it is to be called. The name of the trust is continually changing. At least when it was the MTT I understood what it was. We are missing the target, as people so often do. The Bill will do nothing to reduce public transport debt in Western Australia. It will do nothing to encourage one more person to climb on board a train, bus or ferry. The Minister should take those things into account so that the next time similar legislation comes before the House it addresses the issues of the day. I support the Bill.

Ms MacTiernan: Will the member for South Perth table the document to which he referred during his speech?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Armadale that the member for South Perth said he was prepared to table the document but that he could not do so until I approved it. If the member for South Perth wants, he may lay the document on the Table of the House for the balance of the day's sitting, but he cannot formally table it.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [8.28 pm]: I thank the member for South Perth and ask him before he leaves the House to state whether the report shows the reverse impact of increasing fares? Does it show that increasing fares will have an adverse impact on patron numbers of 150 per cent?

Mr Pandal: I do not have the report with me, but I could try to make it available to you within 48 hours. My understanding was that the bureau's concentration was on reduction in fares and the way in which that would have a beneficial impact on increased patronage at all levels. That is for your mother in Manning in my electorate.

Mr RIEBELING: I thank the member for South Perth. A huge number of people rely heavily on bus transport in the member's electorate. I speak in this debate because some valued members of my family reside in the member's electorate and use public transport extensively. It is unfortunate that nothing that could be called public transport operates in my electorate, but that is another argument for another day - perhaps it will be raised next week in the budget debate.

This three-page legislation received a short second reading speech, the content of which led me to be very concerned about the direction in which MetroBus is headed. The speech continues to drive the privatisation theme which this Government has pursued for a number of years. The legislation intends to remove people from the board who may have some sort of orientation towards service rather than economic rationalism. This legislation will not improve the situation. It is a change, but by no means an improvement, to the system it endeavours to replace.

I now refer to when the original legislation was enacted. I understand that the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust was set up because a number of areas in public transport were not satisfactory in the late 1950s. The parent legislation was passed in 1957, I understand, because the private sector had absolute control over the public transport system at the time, and a huge amount of dissatisfaction was evident about the way the service operated in the metropolitan area.

Mr Bloffwitch: I do not think that was the reason at all. I caught the buses.

Mr RIEBELING: The member will be able to refute what I say in his contribution to the debate. My understanding is not from personal knowledge as I was aged four years in 1957; however, people older than I, particularly those who lived in the Cottesloe and Subiaco areas, tell me that the operations in those days were privately owned and the routes were limited, the service did not adequately serve the community, and the buses rarely kept to timetables.

The biggest issue of all was that the bus system was poorly maintained, and the safety standards of the buses was very low. The public demanded that the Government do something about the safety issues primarily, as well as the poor routing and timetables. The Government of the day, presumably a conservative Government -

Mr Prince: It was Bert Hawke's.

Mr RIEBELING: A Labor Government in its eminent wisdom enacted the legislation the Government seeks to amend. The Act has served the community very well, and I echo much of what the member for South Perth said in this debate.

Mr Prince: He said it far more eloquently than you.

Mr RIEBELING: No doubt. I do not wish to debate the recent Budget at this stage, but I shall mention a couple of facts of which the member for South Perth may be aware. The members for Dawesville and Mandurah may be interested as well in these matters. In light of the recently announced fare increase, it appears that this legislation will encourage the continued increase in fares and penalisation of patrons rather than a service-orientated performance of MetroBus.

A Mandurah student attending Murdoch University travels through six zones, and prior to the recent fare increases paid \$2 a day. That same student now pays \$4 a day - a 100 per cent increase. I am sure that the member for Mandurah is interested to learn that students in his electorate have suffered a 100 per cent increase in transport fares. Similarly, a teenager in Dawesville who travels to a city college over eight zones is now paying \$5 a day, which is a 150 per cent increase on the previous rate.

If the comments of the member for South Perth can be applied to these examples, people suffering 100 to 150 per cent fare increases are less likely to use public transport than under the previous fare regime. If the comments of the member for South Perth regarding the study are valid, we will be turning people away in droves from our public transport system. I do not know whether the Government wants that - I doubt it - but someone in Cabinet has convinced his or her colleagues that an overall average increase of 9 per cent, as the Treasurer announced, will not turn people away from using our public transport system. However, the average of 9 per cent is not accurate as it applies to sections in our community. Those who can least afford the large increases - namely, those with concessions - have incurred the massive increases.

Mr Prince: Although the percentage might be high, \$2 to \$3 is not that much.

Mr RIEBELING: Really? What about \$2 to \$5?

Mr Prince: Percentage wise it is a lot, but \$5 is not.

Mr RIEBELING: We are talking about students travelling to university. Does the Minister think they will be able to meet these cost increases after his federal colleges increase all the costs associated with attending university, and make cuts to the Austudy allowance? We are talking about \$60 a month, which is a substantial increase in anyone's language. I will be very surprised if that does not impact on the number of people using our transport system.

This legislation will turn the clock back about 40 years to when our public system was established. The system inherited by the current Government was a very good public transport system; in fact, it was the best public transport system in Australia bar none. Members opposite would agree that the public transport system put in place by the previous Government encouraged use of that system. The Government may argue that the cost of maintaining that system is more than it is prepared to pay. However, members on this side of the House consider that people in the Perth metropolitan area will eventually demand that a greater emphasis be placed on public transport so that ease of moving around an ever expanding metropolitan area will be achieved in the most efficient manner.

It is difficult to see how the consumer will be protected by the changes to the board that the Minister is putting in place. Currently, only one consumer representative is on this board and that representative will be removed by this Bill. I do not know that the Minister is able to advise whether public consultation will occur and any feedback will go directly to the board. The simple fact is that the membership of the board will comprise people whose business experience and expertise is such that their main goal for MetroBus will be productivity and profit. I hope the Minister will shift the emphasis from delivery of profits to the standard of service that should be provided or, as the Minister may wish to put it, a reduction in losses.

The member for South Perth said the equation of costs in a public transport system cannot be gauged simply by the cost of running buses and the income generated by fares. The Government should be looking at the overall cost of the public transport system and what will happen if it is not used or the number of services is not increased. If this State continues down the path of individuals using their vehicles to travel to the city, in a few years the freeway system will need to be expanded and additional parking areas will be required. It will be an expensive business but it does not show up in the public transport system figures as a cost. These public transport costs are hidden and they should be taken into consideration when the Government assesses the actual cost to the community of the public transport system.

I cannot agree more with the member for South Perth that we should be looking at the reverse of what this legislation does. This Bill is removing from the board membership the people who should be looking at the service side of the board's deliberations and is replacing them with business people who are motivated towards profit. I do not know whether the Government considers it has a mandate for this legislation. I cannot recall its being mentioned in the last election campaign. However, there is a demand for an efficient public transport system, and reasonable fares. Most people are prepared to pay a reasonable fare.

Until recently the Government had in place a system which gave a subsidy to people who could not afford to pay fares. We find that many of the concessions have been removed. In case members opposite are not aware of the concessions which have been removed, I will outline them. Public transport concessions will no longer apply before 9.00 am. Dayrider concessions will increase by 25 per cent, not 9 per cent as the Treasurer announced. A concession ticket covering eight zones will cost \$5 a day, a 150 per cent increase. The standard fare that used to cover two hours' travel will cover only 1.5 hours.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr RIEBELING: The reduction in concessions does not assist the people whom the concessions were designed to assist. If the Treasurer had announced that other fares were to increase by 9 per cent, but concessions would remain the same, one could understand that.

Mr Johnson: We have the cheapest fares in Australia.

Mr RIEBELING: I do not know what the concession rates are in other States of Australia.

Mr Prince: Approximately half of those in Western Australia.

Mr RIEBELING: Surely the people on low incomes are the people the Government should encourage to use the public transport system. The concession rates which applied prior to the announcement of the increases definitely encouraged people to use the public transport system. When the increases are implemented many people will be unable to access the public transport system and that is a great shame. We should do all we can to make the population mobile so they can access services throughout the metropolitan area. In my electorate the cry is that there are lots of resources in the metropolitan area to which people in the bush do not have access. These changes will create a situation where people living in the metropolitan area will not be able to access various services in the

metropolitan area. I hope the Minister, who must have agreed to the increases, will have a serious look at the implications and change the fare structure as quickly as possible.

It is interesting to consider the two groups of people who have been taken off the membership of the board. One is the consumer, which I have covered extensively. It is a mistake to replace that representative with the same category of person as the other representatives. The other category of person who will be removed from the board is the union representative. I am sure the philosophical stance of members opposite is that unions have no place in the management structure of an organisation like MetroBus. Some people think it is an advantage for board members to have a union member on the board to actually give advice on the day to day operations of an organisation of the size of MetroBus. It might assist them in their work, not because of industrial links - this Government has its own view on that - but to be efficient. I am sure it would be an advantage to a board with as many employees as MetroBus to have some sort of input from the work force on changes it may wish to implement. The old adage that the managers know exactly how people work on the shop floor of industry is incorrect. Any input from the shop floor to management should be gratefully accepted. I am sure the member for Geraldton would welcome suggestions from the work force about how things can be improved in his business.

Mr Bloffwitch: We encourage that, but they are not on the management committee.

Mr Johnson: Unions are not renowned for looking for efficiencies in industry.

Mr RIEBELING: The member would be surprised that when unions and employers say that they want to achieve a 30 per cent productivity increase, which has occurred in many instances in this State, it is achieved. However, that does not occur when the increase is demanded of them. It occurs when they sit down, discuss how it will be achieved and set about doing so.

Mr Prince: That is done with the cooperation of management and the work force.

Mr RIEBELING: And the unions.

Mr Prince: That is debatable.

Mr RIEBELING: Surely the productivity increases in the prison section of the Justice Department achieved within 12 months of the Government's taking office were in line with what it wanted to achieve. That occurred as a result of negotiations and with the support of the unions.

Members should consider the situation at BHP and Hamersley Iron before they destroyed the unions. They achieved a 30 per cent productivity improvement in 12 months with the cooperation of the union movement. To say that that is not the case is wrong and the Minister for Health knows that.

Mr Prince: Look at what Hamersley Iron has done since.

Mr RIEBELING: Yes. The Minister should look at how many workers are now leaving glorious Hamersley Iron as a result of workplace agreements. More than 300 families have left in the past 12 months. About 21 families are leaving Paraburdoo in the next fortnight and only one is arriving. That is another issue.

Members should consider the targets that can be achieved if unions are utilised within an organisation. Unless the Government is saying that there will be no unions in MetroBus, which is another battle, the majority of employees will be members of a relatively strong union with efficient leadership. I do not know how many workers are employed by MetroBus but, if the union board member says that the work force can achieve X, it is much easier for that member to go back to the work force and to speak with the workers whom he or she represents.

The Minister's second reading speech indicates that some sort of conflict of interest has existed for board members in relation to their tasks. He has put that forward as one of the reasons we must have new people with the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to support MetroBus' continued efforts to operate in a competitive commercial environment. I do not know why the Minister has included the fact that there are conflicting interests.

The Minister's second reading speech contains some unusual wording. Whether the suggestion is that there was a conflict of interest in the union's or the community's having a representative -

Mr Carpenter: He does suggest that.

Mr RIEBELING: I would like some clarification of that issue. That would blacken the name of all members of the board. If someone has not been doing the right thing by the community, that matter should be cleared up. Perhaps my interpretation of the Minister's words is incorrect.

I oppose this legislation and I look forward to the member for South Perth's lodging that document.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [8.58 pm]: Members on this side of the House oppose this legislation with just cause. I must comment on the beauty of parliamentary debate as I have observed it tonight. My colleagues the members for Burrup, South Perth and Armadale have presented the broad picture in which this legislation exists. We have heard about the volume of traffic on the Narrows Bridge, the history of transport and the environmental impact of poor public policy in relation to transport. I will unashamedly concentrate on the essence of the Bill and, therefore, may not use my full half hour - we will see.

I will place my comments on this Bill in the context of my outer suburban electorate. Therefore, the quality of public transport, its timeliness and its cost effectiveness and a transport system that meets consumer needs are paramount and I will scrutinise any legislation on transport within that context.

This is a very curious little Bill. It was also a curious little second reading speech. We learnt from the second reading speech that the purpose of the Bill is to provide for greater flexibility in the appointment of board members. We learnt by inference that it is designed to provide a trust that suits the competitive culture in which MetroBus currently finds itself. We also learnt by inference that in the past board members might have been constrained due to conflicting interests, but that is highly debatable. Perhaps also by inference, the Minister has suggested that in the past board members have been lacking in the skills required to operate the trust. However, the only guidance we have in relation to the purpose of this Bill is that it will provide flexibility in the appointment of board members.

The substance of this Bill is to delete two subsections dealing with the right of the TLC and the community to nominate a representative. While the amendment does not affect the overall size of the board, it effectively provides that all members will be appointed by the Minister. Other clauses of the Bill are consequential to give effect to this key issue. Clearly, it is important to realise that the Bill is removing the right of the TLC and the community to nominate a representative on the seven member board.

The second reading speech gives no justification for the amendments. It is very thin as speeches go and is not terribly useful in helping one to understand the underlying principles. Perhaps there are not many; that is why it is a simple one and a half page Bill. However, the consequences of the Bill are significant. Therefore, it is of concern that it does not give any justification for the proposed amendments.

During the debate in the other place on 8 April, the Minister for Transport used the word "competitive" with regard not to tendering but to the quality and supply of the service. It is accepted that the environment currently facing the trust is competitive. One way in which the trust can obtain and maintain a strategic advantage in that environment is by knowing what the customers need and want. Therefore, it is rather incongruous within that context to remove from the trust the consumer representative, with no justification whatsoever.

The vision of MetroBus is that it will be the most successful provider of public transport services in Western Australia. The mission is to provide public transport and related services which exceed the expectations of customers. If that is its mission, it is rather incongruous to remove one key strategy by which it can find out the needs and expectations of customers. I am not suggesting that to have a consumer representative on the trust is the only way that MetroBus can find out what the consumers want. The organisation does undertake passenger monitoring surveys in order to get some feedback. It is interesting that with regard to one of the key indicators in the survey - passenger satisfaction with drivers' manners towards passengers - there has been a decline in the level of satisfaction. Some of the other indicators show a degree of satisfaction slightly above and slightly below that of previous years.

I am not suggesting that to have a consumer or client representative on the trust is the only mechanism available. Clearly that is not the only answer. The point is that there are, and should be, different methods of seeking customer feedback. We cannot rely on just one technique of having large scale surveys. If greater support were given to the consumer representative on the trust, that person could play a significant part in developing the strategic advantage that MetroBus must have in this competitive environment. The second reading speech implies that the appointment of a consumer representative is irrelevant. That is reprehensible. It is highly relevant to have a consumer representative in order that the trust can obtain that feedback.

The aim of the legislation is to remove from the trust both the consumer representative and the delegate or representative from the Trades and Labor Council. Both positions are currently appointed, not by the Minister but by an external body. The Minister is arguing that he wants to ensure that the trust is sufficiently independent in judgment, and that is admirable, yet he is removing one method by which independence of judgment and different points of view can be ensured and enshrined in the trust. Again, the logic is wanting in this legislation, because the Bill will vest in the Minister total power for the appointment of all the members.

The argument for removing the representative of the TLC from the trust is interesting. It gives an insight into the way the Minister views the role of the TLC on a board, committee or trust. It says that it was okay to have a TLC or consumer representative on the trust in the 1960s and 1970s when it was a bureaucratic authority, but it is now a

different ball game and such appointments are restrictive and, as I have already explored, even irrelevant. However, a TLC representative, or a person appointed by other than the Minister, does provide the opportunity for outside scrutiny and, ultimately, accountability. This external scrutiny and accountability is proposed to be removed, and that is of great concern to those of us whose desire for accountability is paramount.

Mr Shave: Trust us!

Ms McHALE: That is the problem - trust us for a range of evils and unnecessary amendments! We do not want to rely on trusting the Government. We would rather rely on legislation which is based on a socially just perspective. Sorry!

Mr Carpenter: I trust you!

Mr Cunningham: The member for Thornlie does not!

Mr Shave: She has been influenced badly by her predecessor!

Ms McHALE: The member for Thornlie wants to make some further comments on the second reading speech and to reinforce the point that the second reading speech gives no insight into the logic and rationale for the amendments. The annual report of MetroBus does not help either. According to the second reading speech the Government is trying to bring about greater flexibility, but it appears that greater flexibility to the government benches means the elimination of external scrutiny of the operations of the trust. It means removing the Trades and Labor Council and the consumer representatives. Therefore, ipso facto it means minimising customer feedback, because the intention is to remove one method for obtaining that very critical customer feedback. The Bill argues that the change -

Mr Shave: What is the relativity of TLC representation and customer feedback? It is not as if they represent all customers.

Ms McHALE: The Minister has not entirely concentrated on my earlier comments when I made the link between strategic advantage and knowing what the customer wants. I was not talking about the TLC representative in that regard, although I do not discount that.

Mr Shave: I did not want you to cloud the issue by combining the two.

Ms McHALE: I had no intention of clouding the issue. I was making the link between knowing what the customer wants which gives the advantage in the marketplace, and having customer feedback. It is a relatively simple but powerful equation.

The other argument used in the second reading speech is the changing environment. The environment is changing everywhere. It is not just in relation to MetroBus or the trust; it is a phenomenon which is occurring everywhere. Therefore, to argue that the changing environment requires the removal of the TLC and consumer representatives is a furphy. One could go even further and say that, on the contrary, the changing environment requires external stakeholders to be involved in the process. The changing environment is being used to remove these positions, but the requirements of the changing environment would lead one to consider having those external stakeholders on the board or the trust, as is done in many other large institutions, banks and other government instrumentalities.

I will comment here on having a TLC, an ACTU or a union representative on a committee. The view on the other side of the Chamber, and it is slightly redolent of ideology we have heard before, is that the TLC representative cannot contribute in the modern environment in which she or he would be operating. That is a very shortsighted view.

Mr Shave: They behave like dinosaurs sometimes.

Ms McHALE: That is a classic example of the attitude that many members opposite hold on the contributions of unions. Until members opposite can get over that intellectual hurdle they will not be able to understand the environment in which we are operating. I hope they will be able to get over the hurdle, because it is a significant one which they must deal with.

Mr Shave: It does not help having a TLC representative standing in the gallery throwing things all over the Parliament. It is not a sign of a person being in control of his behaviour.

Ms McHALE: In a perfect world, Minister, or in a less than perfect world people would not need to do that. Lots of things do not help in our lives - our children's behaviour, the Minister's behaviour and my behaviour sometimes do not help. With respect, that is irrelevant.

Mr Shave: Do you understand that it does not convince anyone?

Ms McHALE: It is peripheral to the Bill. I am happy to debate that point at another time.

We see no demonstration that the outcome of this legislation will improve the quality of service and our bus system. I return to my opening comments about my suburb and the importance of having a quality public transport system, and I ask: Does this legislation do anything for the electorate by improving the service or the delivery of the service? The answer is very clear: This legislation does not relate to the quality of service which will ultimately come out of the organisation; the purpose of the legislation is unclear; and the second reading speech does not provide a justification for it other than perhaps by inference and as an ideological base. The Bill has no connection with the ultimate objective of MetroBus which is to provide a quality service which exceeds the needs of the customers. For those reasons I oppose the legislation.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [9.16 pm]: I oppose the Bill. This legislation is not surprising, given the political bent of the Government and the anti-union stance it has taken on the legislation debated in previous weeks. The Bill simply reinforces the fact that the Government is determined to do anything in its power to minimise whatever influence or position the union movement may hold in this State. This is not a merit argument or one based on individualism. It is not based on the best interests of the trust. It is simply an ideological argument designed to undermine and remove whatever influence the union movement can have or has had in this State.

My criticism of the second reading speech is that it is dishonest in its approach. It really needs to be said, because that is what it is all about. Everyone understands that is what it is all about. That is the real agenda, but there is no capacity or integrity in the second reading speech to say that. Someone needs to have the courage to say that the coalition policy is to eliminate the unions, to eliminate the union movement, and in that way to eliminate any form of representation the unions have on boards and committees. If that were said, although I would not agree with it, there would be some integrity in the process and some honesty in its approach. At least one could say that we understand where the Government is coming from.

The second reading speech is a two page, loose leaf document. At page 2 it reads -

It is also important that trust members be sufficiently independent in their judgment, have objectivity, skills and experience and the desire to improve the trust's effectiveness and not be constrained or limited due to other conflicting interests. This policy has been consistently applied to all boards across the Transport portfolio.

The Act contains obligations for board members and the Minister. Subsection (3) of section 7 of the Act relates to membership of the trust and reads -

The Minister shall not appoint a person to be Chairman or a member under subsection (1)(b) unless the Minister is satisfied that the person has wide experience and shown capacity in transport, industrial, commercial or financial matters or in the conduct of public affairs.

The obligation on the Minister and the nomination power contained in subsection (4) - the section to be deleted - is constrained by that other requirement. That is, the Minister must have due regard to the capacity of the person to carry out the job. If the Minister is not satisfied he does not appoint the person. Therefore, it is not being said here that the individual, whoever it may be from time to time, does not have the capacity to do the job or does not bring certain skills and expertise which provide benefits for the trust. Rather, this is simply the elimination of any form of union representation from the trust. I understand why the Government wants to take this stance, although I do not agree with it. A number of the other transport authorities operating under the Minister for Transport boast that they have been able to introduce workplace agreements on terms and conditions inferior to those in current awards and they have achieved trade-offs from employees which exceed the value of those conditions. It is likely that somebody with a different viewpoint and a concern for working people would not agree with the trust going down that path. That person will have a different view and if the Government eliminates that position by removing that person from the board, it will be much easier for it. It is not a decision in the best interests of the trust, consumers or workers; it is an ideological decision to suit the Government.

Ms MacTiernan: It makes you suspicious when the Government appoints Russell Allen to the board.

Mr BROWN: Certainly, he had some involvement in drafting legislation which has not been beneficial to ordinary working people in this State. One does not need to be particularly skilled in industrial relations to know where Mr Allen sits in his values and his views on the appropriate industrial relations system in this State. One is entitled to have those different views, and to have a view on the industrial relations system which is different from that of members on this side of the House. Clearly, it is a view diametrically opposed to that of the Opposition and, given his appointment and the elimination of the Trades and Labor Council representative from the board, it is clear to see, without being a genius, where the Government wants this trust to head. It is obvious.

The other point to be made is that on most boards where there is concern about the whole of the organisation or the stakeholders as consumers and employees, or of government as the operator and owner and the taxpayers, it is wise and prudent to draw people from a wide variety of disciplines. Most good company boards draw a range of people from different disciplines. For example, a mining company may have environmentalists or those skilled in human resource management. Manufacturing companies may have people with expertise in their line of business. Good boards and committees draw people from a variety of disciplines who bring their values, judgments and expertise to the table in the interests of that organisation. I could understand, for example, if the Minister came to this place and said he thought the provisions in the Act were too restrictive in that he had the choice of only one person. If the Minister thought the provisions were too narrow and the Government wanted a wider choice and an opportunity to consult with the Trades and Labor Council to have more than a simple nominee, one might recognise a bona fide approach to a problem perhaps that nominees on the board previously had not fully participated in or attended meetings. Whatever the criticism, one could understand it if the Government expressed the view that it wanted to bring a certain level of expertise to the board. In that case, at least we would still be assured to some extent of a person bringing a flavour to the board of being particularly concerned about the employees of the trust. That is not evident either. In fact, no direct criticism has been made of the people who have filled the position on the nomination of the Trades and Labor Council. If the Minister thought the representation was poor and that those nominated had not contributed to or attended meetings, or had tried to prevent the board going down a particular path, members on this side might argue with the nature of the content but at least there would be some honesty in the approach. We see no sign of that. The Government has expressed some mumbo-jumbo about exercising an independent judgment.

I have sat on a number of boards whose members exercised independent judgment. However, underpinning that independent judgment is a value system. People have different value systems, and that makes them different. A strength of committees and boards is to draw people able to exercise judgment in accordance with what they feel are the best interests of the organisation. There is nothing in the second reading speech to indicate that has not occurred.

I am left with the impression that it is simply a continuation of the Government's anti-union agenda to remove the Trades and Labor Council's representative. It is another way of trying to demonstrate to union and non-union members alike that being a member of a union and being involved in the union movement will not provide any influence at all. Of course, that simply follows the direction of other legislation, such as the workplace agreements legislation which seeks to replace the union movement, and the minimum conditions of employment legislation which replaces the opportunity for an independent industrial tribunal to set minimum conditions of employment and provides for it to be done by the Parliament. It is contrary to the views of the former Court Government which said it should be done by the Industrial Relations Commission. It seeks to undermine the award system, and that has been apparent in the latest legislation involving interference in the operation of employee organisations. Probably in 10 or so years' time a person of some standing and independence will examine the legislation passed by this Parliament during this period, and assess its effect on ordinary working people in Western Australia. Perhaps someone will examine the way the Government has deliberately ensured its policy of seeking to eliminate as best it can the organised labour movement.

In any organisation these days important matters must be considered by the board, such as labour productivity, compliance with occupational safety and health provisions and a range of other issues relating to a service organisation. Indeed, it could be said in this area that, although there is capital in the form of buses and so on, we are dealing with a service organisation. In a service organisation the deployment of labour and other issues are most important. Nothing has been said in this debate about anybody who is nominated by the Trades and Labor Council being incapable of doing those things.

It is not as though the Government has an aversion to including in its legislation organisations that can nominate people for government boards. A lot of legislation before this Parliament has given organisations the opportunity to nominate people directly onto government boards; for example, the Swan Valley legislation. This legislation will create a class structure. Organisations that are invited to nominate people directly onto boards will tend to be organisations representing professionals or the business community. I do not object to that. It is not that the Government has a concern about writing into legislation that organisations should be debarred from appointing their representatives onto government boards and committees. Indeed, one might consider the legal costs committee, which sets the schedules of fees for legal practitioners. That committee includes three legal practitioners. One can imagine the reaction if it were said that the committee established to set the wages for blue collar workers, such as fitters, would comprise six people, three of whom were fitters and who set their rate.

Ms MacTiernan: It's like having politicians deciding their own superannuation.

Mr BROWN: Yes. It is like saying three of the six members of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal will be politicians and unless any one of the three votes, there can be no decision. It is the same with a variety of other boards. People from the medical profession, the legal profession and a range of other professions are appointed by

the Government to boards that are established in Statute and that have statutory responsibilities. Organisations such as the Law Society or the Australian Medical Association and other powerful unions are entitled to nominate people directly onto those boards that have legislative power. It is not as though the Government has a phobia about saying it is wrong for organisations, whether they be employer, employee or professional groups, to appoint people to boards. It is not as though the Government holds that ideological position. Rather, its position is that those organisations, particularly peak organisations that represent blue collar and lower paid white collar workers, should not be given that opportunity; they should be debarred from exercising that opportunity. That deliberate class structure is adopted by this legislation.

It is unfortunate that the deletion of section 7(4) of the Act will remove an obligation on the Minister to appoint a person who is a user of the services. That deletion has been an accidental casualty. That provision is in the same section as the provision relating to the TLC nominee.

Ms MacTiernan: I think you are being too generous. That position has been vacant for two years and the Minister has chosen not to fill it.

Mr BROWN: I find that amazing. I am indebted to the member for Armadale for that advice. Having just read about 68 annual reports, I was impressed by a number of government departments and agencies that professed to say that under the coalition Government they were becoming customer focused and were looking not at what they as organisations wanted, but at what customers wanted. If that position has not been filled, the trust is somewhat out of step with other government departments and agencies that profess to have concerns about customer focus, whether in reality that is the case or not.

Ms MacTiernan: That is not surprising because it is clear that the Minister is keen to see MetroBus disappear off the face of the earth.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr BROWN: That is most disappointing. I looked at the trust's annual report and I was intrigued by the foreword. It commenced by saying that it had done a great job; that it had cut back on many employees and its work force was thinner. Towards the end of the chairman's report it said it had lost a lot of contracts. Normally when an organisation loses a lot of contracts, it does not have the same employment base. I was not sure whether that was being treated as a positive up-front and a negative at the back or whether there was an inconsistency in the report's foreword.

This is just another move by the Government to ensure its biases are shown. I will be pleased if in a few years a review is conducted of legislation that has been put through this House, which shows the bias of this Government. In response the Deputy Premier, who is dealing with this matter, may say that this legislation will give the Minister discretion in appointing somebody. That is true. When the State Employment and Skills Development Authority was abolished and the Department of Training was put into place, no direct representation was made from the employer or the union. It was said that the Minister could exercise a discretion. It is true that in that area the Minister has appointed a union person. However, in these changes that is the exception rather than the rule. I am sure that in the short term an official or a representative of the union movement will be appointed to some of those positions in order to mitigate any criticism that this is an anti-union Bill. However, that will cease in the medium term and those who represent particularly blue collar workers and lower paid and service personnel will disappear from government boards that can exercise an influence over the terms and conditions of the employment of government employees.

The question arises about where the organisation will eventually finish up. Significant contracts have been awarded to private contractors who engage bus drivers on arrangements that contain wages and conditions lower than trust employees or bus operators enjoyed. Perhaps in due course few will operate from the trust.

It seems that this is also part of the Government's agenda to privatise the public transport system in Western Australia. What we have seen so far is the first stage of that; that is, allocating contracts, and allowing private operators to set terms and conditions of employment, but requiring private operators to retain certain bus routes and fare levels and to do certain things. It seems that is the first stage of the Government's moving away from a public transport system and for the State to once more go back to the system that was in operation prior to the creation of a central trust. As a very young fellow I sold papers under the West Perth subway and I remember the pretty appalling old boneshakers passing by. I think they belonged to the Scarborough Bus Company. Their condition and the frequency of their trips were also appalling. There was no doubt that the Government had to take over the public transport system because the quality of service was very poor by anyone's standards. From what I have seen from the way the Government is moving - this Bill reinforces that - this Bill is back to the future. If that is the case I am pleased to put in *Hansard* my opposition to that approach because I think that will not be in the best interests of the Western Australian community. It will also not be in the interests of the users of the public transport system and will not encourage

people to use that system. We are slowly getting more high density living in this city, although not as high density as a number of other cities around the world. There are more infill projects with more people now living in the city. The old quarter acre blocks are disappearing with many people preferring to live in unit accommodation with small gardens or no gardens at all.

As I said, Perth is becoming a high density city, which will mean we have an opportunity with economies of scale to run an effective and efficient public transport system and to encourage people to use it. That will go a long way to removing the congestion from our roads. I have noticed when travelling around the city in the past two or three years how congestion on our roads has increased. I have noticed this particularly when travelling down secondary roads on which I used to get a fairly clear run. Vehicles are now bottling up those roads. That will continue to occur unless we build more freeways and more tunnels or we encourage people onto a fast, efficient, effective public transport system. The Government should be doing that for air quality reasons, for efficiency reasons, and in the interests of saving the taxpayers an enormous amount of money because our road system will not cope if the number of vehicles on our roads continues to increase over the next 10 to 20 years and we do not provide an effective public transport system in Perth. I oppose this Bill to the extent that it undermines that system.

MR McGOWAN (Rockingham) [9.44 pm]: This Bill is a particularly petty and small-minded piece of legislation for the Government to be introducing at this time. At this time, industrial relations reforms which are before the Parliament are causing unprecedented levels of disputation, and the Government has handed down its Budget which has broken a number of promises made by it before the last State election. Those broken promises have caused significant increases in costs for households. Savage cutbacks in health, legal aid and other areas have also been introduced by the Commonwealth Government. The introduction of this Bill at this time reminds me of a story I once read about the 1917 Russian revolution in which the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church discussed the colour of their vestments while the revolution was in full swing. Those are three very significant and damaging imposts which have been introduced by federal and state conservative Governments, and now this Government has introduced this particularly petty and small-minded piece of legislation.

Today I observed something that I have not seen before: I saw 20 000 to 30 000 people stretching from Parliament House down St Georges Terrace. I marched with them for a time and I was told that that many people had not marched in this State since the Vietnam war. The industrial legislation currently being dealt with by this Parliament has aroused real feelings in the people of Western Australia, feelings which they so blatantly expressed today. Although many of the people who marched were trade unionists, many of the people with whom I spoke - unfortunately none of them recognised me as the member for Rockingham - were not trade unionists and they indicated to me that they thought that this Bill was a threat to the role of unions in our society and that, although they were not trade unionists, they felt that unions had a legitimate role to play in our society and that they played an important role in limiting the powers and authority of government and prevented Governments from becoming tyrannical.

Although this Bill is not as important or detrimental to our society as is the industrial relations legislation being dealt with currently by this Parliament, this Bill is based on similar principles. As other speakers have indicated tonight, the Minister for Local Government's second reading speech does not say much of substance. In fact, the second reading speech would be of little assistance to a court in determining the purpose of the Bill. I will read a couple of paragraphs of the second reading speech and then put them into plain English. The speech states -

The amendment continues the implementation of the Government's transport policy to improve MetroBus' efficiency by removing unnecessary restrictions on the appointment of trust members and to ensure MetroBus can meet all necessary demands in a competitive transport operation.

For that one can read "removing the consumer representative from the trust". It states also -

It is also important that trust members be sufficiently independent in their judgment, have objectivity, skills and experience and the desire to improve the trust's effectiveness and not be constrained or limited due to other conflicting interests. This policy has been consistently applied to all boards across the Transport portfolio.

For that one that can read that the Government is determined to remove the representative of the Trades and Labor Council from the board of the Metropolitan Transport Trust.

My view is that most legislation should provide to Ministers some guidance and an indication of how they should be exercising their role. Before this amendment was put forward, this Bill gave some guidance to the Minister in the appointment of members of the board; that is, two members should be representatives of broad cross-sections of the community, the first representing the consumers, the vast bulk of the people of Western Australia who use public transport, and the other coming from an organisation that purports to represent significant numbers of the drivers on

the metropolitan transport buses. With this amendment the Minister has unfettered control of the board. I am not saying this will happen but, in effect, the board can become the Minister's lap dog, without any broad cross-section of experience on it, and without someone who will dissent from the prevailing attitudes of the Government.

What role would the Trades and Labor Council representative play? First of all, that person would give an indication of the thoughts of the bulk of the bus drivers. The majority of the bus drivers in this city are members of unions and I hope the TLC representative would give some idea of what those drivers thought about the management and administration of the trust. The person from the Trades and Labor Council would have a different range of experiences and expertise from other members appointed to the board of the trust. Historically, people serving on the board have been representatives of transport companies, and one is a partner in a law firm. Those people will bring their own skills to the trust; however, as I said, the TLC representative would bring a different range of skills and expertise. I do not deny these people have a wide range of skills and expertise that would be valuable on the board.

The amendments indicate the Government's intention not to allow anyone from that background, bent or persuasion to serve on the board of the trust. It is indicative of the view held by the Government that people from that background or who have those experiences have no role in the workings of our society. In bringing forward this Bill, the Government makes the assumption that the person from the TLC will have a range of definitive views and will give an indication of the views of the drivers. However, that does not mean it would be that person's sole concern. In fact, this representative could add a wide range of views to the running of the board.

I now turn to the consumer representative. That person brings the experience of being a user of public transport. I expect that representative would be someone who could provide feedback from those who regularly use public transport or who regularly consult in relation to public transport. I do not know this for sure, but I expect directors of major transport companies and partners in major law firms will not often use public transport. I cannot say that categorically, but in my view a person from a consumer representative organisation will have a wide range of experiences which that person can add to the running of the trust.

I will now make some wider comments about public transport which I will tie in with this Bill later. The privatisation of certain bus routes in Perth has had a dramatic effect in my electorate. Prior to the privatisation, the Government made a firm commitment that there would be no reduction in the bus services and various other functions that were provided by the Metropolitan Transport Trust. The bus route which services the electorate of Rockingham arrives at the bus station at the Rockingham City Shopping Centre. It has now been privatised and, from my meetings with the drivers, I know it has resulted in a drop in their morale and a feeling of hostility towards the Government.

More substantial effects of this privatisation have been imposed on the consumers of Rockingham. First of all, at the start of the school year the 122 service which ran through Cooloongup was closed down with a week's notice. Only one small article appeared in the local newspaper to indicate this would happen. Children arrived at the bus stop in the morning, wondering where their bus was when, in fact, it was no longer operating. This happened this year, after the Minister had promised there would be no reduction in services. This service now no longer runs through the centre of a major section of the suburb of Cooloongup in Rockingham. A high proportion of the pensioners who live in Rockingham have been denied this service. The fact that age pensioners no longer have access to this service has been the subject of news reports and has received coverage in various other places.

The second major effect of the privatisation of the Rockingham service is this: Within a week or two of the privatisation the attendant at the bus station was no longer employed. That person, who was employed by the MTT, provided information to consumers of the service and, more importantly, provided some form of security and authority at the Rockingham bus station. That person gave people who arrived to catch buses at all times a feeling of security that they would not be subjected to any form of assault or the like.

The third effect of this privatisation in Rockingham has been the loss of the school bus route; I forget the number, but I think it was the 188. This school bus ran between Rockingham and Fremantle. A number of children caught the bus to attend private schools in Fremantle. Many of the mothers of those children have come to see me because they are quite upset at the loss of this service which, of course, they were promised would never occur. Those are three dramatic effects of privatisation of the bus service which has affected Rockingham, in addition to the loss of morale among the bus drivers and the loss of their take-home income.

The Rockingham bus shelter is a dark, dingy facility located at a poorly lit end of the shopping centre. People arriving at the bus station in the winter find it a harrowing experience. This station is renowned around Rockingham as being a problem area for drugs and crime. Recently I was informed that a police officer who just happened to be at the bus station one evening arrested some people who were up to some sort of drug deals there. It was a rare occurrence for that sort of security to be around the bus shelter. Urgent attention must be given to the bus shelter in

Rockingham because it provides a major downer on anyone considering using public transport. It is a dangerous experience for them to go through the Rockingham bus station when they come home by bus late at night.

Another major problem is the times of the bus service in Rockingham. If one wants to get a bus from Rockingham to Fremantle or Perth during daytime hours on weekdays, many services are quite good. However, after 6.00 pm the services drop off extremely dramatically. Rockingham is a city of 60 000 or 70 000 people. The services are appalling from that hour of night and weekend services are virtually nonexistent. Slightly better services exist between Rockingham and Fremantle. However, to travel at weekends and on week nights between Rockingham and Perth one must have a motor vehicle. We must remedy this. I have had discussions with private contractors and have written to the Minister, but thus far there has been very little indication that services will improve; in fact, the department has categorically denied any improvement in services.

The Budget has had a dramatic effect on my electorate and on the consumers of Western Australia.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr MCGOWAN: As all of us in the metropolitan area who go to our electorate offices will be aware, pensioners and school children are greatly concerned about the loss of the pensioner concession before 9.00 am. A gentleman comes into my office every day with copies of a petition I have organised. Mr Fred Chalkley has collected hundreds of signatures on the loss of pensioner concessions. We should be very proud that in our society we provide people in need with such a service. However, in a vicious, callous and inhumane way we have taken it away from those people who use it before 9.00 am to go shopping and to things such as medical appointments, and for students going to university and children going to school in other areas. This Government had no mandate for this before the last state election.

Transfers are another area of major concern to the public transport consumers of this State. The time allowed for transfers has been reduced from two hours to 90 minutes, according to the Budget and publicly funded advertising in *The West Australian*. Someone travelling from Rockingham has a five zone trip and two hours in which to make a transfer. That is not enough. Someone on a trip from Rockingham needs 40 to 60 minutes. They would have no time to do shopping or whatever. Pensioners have just reason to be upset about it.

To put this sort of Bill before Parliament is a poor example of the use of government time, especially when so many crises are facing the State. We oppose it because we are ideologically opposed to it, but it also lines up with the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill. The members of the Government should be putting their time into other matters instead of bringing up such petty, small minded and ill advised pieces of legislation.

MRCOWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [10.04 pm]: I took the precaution of reading the debates in another place in response to this legislation. I am afraid that this House has followed precisely the pattern in the other place. There has been very little reference to the intent of this legislation and quite a lot of comment about other matters. Were it not for the licence granted by the Chair, the debate would have been concluded over three hours ago. If the member for Armadale calculated that back, she would not have started.

I will respond to some of the issues that deserve a response. I am certain, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you will grant me the licence that was granted to those who strayed from the subject of the debate. In the first instance, much of the debate was not about the composition of the board of MetroBus but about the entire public transport system, fares that might be paid, some of the policies the Government has had to set in order to recover a reasonable amount of money from the users of the service, and the quality of the service being provided. I do not want to dwell on it to any great extent, but whether or not members of the Opposition like it, public transport fares in Western Australia are the lowest in Australia. The concessional fares increases about which everybody has complained still make them the lowest at 30 per cent of the full fare. In every other State they are 50 per cent of the full fare. I place that on record to ensure some balance is put into this debate.

The Bill serves two functions: It removes the requirement for the responsible Minister to appoint a nominee of the Trades and Labor Council and removes the requirement for one of the other appointees to the board to be a representative of users of the service, or the consumer representative, which was the term used by the member for Bassendean. Given the changes to MetroBus that have taken place over the past two years and are likely to continue, changes to the composition of the board and the restrictions imposed upon the Minister are timely. The member for Armadale spent quite some time complaining about one member of the board. I do not suppose she knows who the TLC nominee is.

Ms MacTiernan: Mr Robert C. Wells..

Mr COWAN: I am pleased she knows because no doubt she will be able to tell me which union that person represents.

Ms MacTiernan: The Public Transport Union.

Mr COWAN: She is getting warmer. MetroBus has now to consider a whole range of issues in respect of the efficiency of its operations. One is the contracts which have been let by that body to private operators to provide services to a certain standard. Bearing in mind that different unions represent those different workers on the operation which MetroBus has to oversee, it is appropriate that the Minister be given greater flexibility.

Ms MacTiernan: Is the Deputy Premier saying that the Minister has greater flexibility not to have anyone with a perspective or an understanding of the employees?

Mr COWAN: One of the things I would never allow is for the member for Armadale to put words into my mouth. The Minister requires much greater flexibility in the appointment of members of the board for the simple reason that the operations of MetroBus have changed and the board requires a totally different perspective. That point was made by my ministerial colleague in another place and it deserves to be repeated here tonight. The operations of MetroBus have changed considerably, and it is appropriate for these amendments to be made to the Act.

Ms MacTiernan: The operations are no longer focused on providing services to the consumer.

Mr COWAN: Again the member for Armadale is making assumptions. That is not the case. The purpose of MetroBus is now to oversee a transport system that is quite different from that which was originally established. The board now has much broader responsibilities, therefore the Minister requires greater flexibility in the choice of board members.

I was challenged by the member for Bassendean - I assume he challenged the Government as a whole - to acknowledge that this Bill is an attack upon the union movement. That is arrant nonsense. One might expect it to come from the member for Bassendean, given his background; unfortunately, the catchcry was taken up by opposition members.

Ms MacTiernan: It is true.

Mr COWAN: This is not an attempt by the Government to attack the union movement. It is a relevant decision by the Government to give greater flexibility to the Minister in the appointment of a board. The Minister no longer believes, and I agree with him, that it is appropriate that a representative of the Trades and Labor Council -

Ms MacTiernan: He is not a representative.

Mr COWAN: - that a nominee of the TLC who comes from a particular union, and who has served on that board for a long time - he may have served reasonably well for all I know - continue to serve on the board.

Ms MacTiernan: Tell us why. You say it is inappropriate, so explain.

Mr COWAN: The member for Armadale sets a good example. The member for Bassendean demanded that the Government acknowledge - the expression he used was that we should "at least be honest" - that this is an attack on the union movement. I acknowledge that this is a provision -

Mr Brown: The Deputy Premier is acknowledging that it is.

Mr COWAN: Neither the member for Armadale nor the member for Bassendean will put words in my mouth. This is a provision to give the Minister greater flexibility. In exercising that flexibility this provision removes the constraint upon the Minister to appoint a nominee of the TLC to the board. That provision is outdated, archaic and totally unnecessary. Members opposite claim that this is duplicitous; it is not. The second reading speech states that the nominee of the TLC has a conflict of interest.

Ms MacTiernan: He does not.

Mr COWAN: He does, and that is why these amendments have been introduced into this Parliament. I acknowledge that.

Mr Brown: Why wasn't that in the second reading speech?

Mr COWAN: It is in the second reading speech. I suggest that the member for Bassendean read the second reading speech again. No-one is trying to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. MetroBus has changed its area of responsibility, and in recognising that change the Government is making certain that the board also changes. That is why this legislation is before the House. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (24)

Mr Barron-Sullivan
Mr Board
Mr Bradshaw
Mr Court
Mr Cowan
Mrs Edwardes
Dr Hames
Mrs Hodson-Thomas

Mrs Holmes
Mr House
Mr Johnson
Mr Kierath
Mr MacLean
Mr Masters
Mr McNee
Mr Nicholls

Mrs Parker
Mr Prince
Mr Shave
Mr Sweetman
Mr Tubby
Dr Turnbull
Mr Wiese
Mr Bloffwitch (*Teller*)

Noes (16)

Mr Brown
Mr Carpenter
Dr Edwards
Dr Gallop
Mr Kobelke
Ms MacTiernan

Mr Marlborough
Mr McGinty
Mr McGowan
Ms McHale
Mr Riebeling

Mr Ripper
Mrs Roberts
Mr Thomas
Ms Warnock
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr Omodei
Mr Day
Mr Barnett

Ms Anwyl
Mr Graham
Mr Grill

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Ainsworth) in the Chair; Mr Cowan (Deputy Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.**Clause 4: Section 7 amended, and saving -**

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Opposition opposes this substantive clause. The Deputy Premier mounted an admirable defence for his embattled colleague, the Minister for Transport. He recited various catch phrases such as, "the Minister needs flexibility." and "it is inappropriate that an appointee from a union background be on the board". Those issues were focused on very clearly - admittedly not by all contributors - by a number of speakers on this side of the House. The Deputy Premier did not answer those comments in any way, shape or form.

I noted with interest that the Deputy Premier also glossed over the demise of an appointee who reflected consumer interest. He kept saying that MetroBus had changed. We all know that; there is no denying it. The Deputy Premier's task was to explain that it had changed in some way that did not require input from someone from the union side or someone who will be able to provide a consumer perspective. The Deputy Premier merely asserted that changes had occurred; we agree, but the changes are irrelevant to this issue.

At the end of the day for reasons many of us set out - for example, that public transport is about providing a service not only to people who use public transport but also for everyone else who benefits from the fact that people using public transport are not using private transport - it is in the interests of the entire community to encourage people to use the public transport system as we described. Therefore it is as relevant as it ever was that MetroBus have on its board a person with a consumer perspective.

The board comprises a senior partner in a commercial law firm, a merchant banker, a former senior partner in a large accountancy firm, etc. From the comments of the Deputy Premier it is highly unlikely that any of those people are users of public transport on a regular basis. Notwithstanding the changes that took place in MetroBus it is as important if not more important today that the board have input from a person who can speak with a particular knowledge and understanding of the needs and aspirations of its consumers.

As we pointed out, in the light of the changes MetroBus no longer has control over timetabling or its assets. They have been passed over to the Department of Transport. It has become more clearly focused as a labour oriented

organisation. Therefore it is even more important than before that someone with a perspective that will improve the quality of industrial relations, particularly as Mr Allen is the chairman, be appointed to the board. The Deputy Premier has failed to provide any explanation for the changes to the board.

Mrs ROBERTS: The chief reason given for the changes in clause 4 is to allow the Minister for Transport flexibility in appointing board members. I read "flexibility" as a free hand or an unfettered ability to appoint whomever the Minister for Transport likes. The Minister's defence of this in the upper House was that when the Labor Party is in government it can appoint whomever it likes, such as TLC representatives. It is insufficient to say that when a party is in government it can appoint whomever it likes.

Generally many checks and balances are in place on government boards. In many instances representation of categories of people on boards should be specified so that Ministers do not have an unfettered ability to appoint whomever they determine. It is deemed relevant in many instances that people from particular backgrounds or expertise serve on boards. We believe it is still relevant to have both a TLC representative and a consumer representative on that board. The Minister should not be completely unfettered in whom he can appoint to the board. That representation is just as relevant if not more relevant than prior to the changes in public transport in this State. This will give the Minister too free a hand. It is unnecessary.

All boards benefit from having a cross-section of expertise and people from various backgrounds and experience. It is unfortunate that the Minister is choosing to remove from the board an automatic right for the TLC and consumers to be represented on that board.

Mr COWAN: Rather than continue this slanging match members should accept the philosophical difference between both sides of the Chamber. This clause will give the Minister greater flexibility than he has now. That does not mean that in using that flexibility he will not appoint people who have knowledge about the demands of public transport consumers or the union movement. That will be the prerogative of the Minister. I will not refer to the debates that took place in another place, but I will acknowledge that there is a philosophical difference between both sides of the Chamber.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I agree that there is a grave ideological gap between the parties on this matter, but I am interested in the justification of the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier said that the changes to MetroBus have made it necessary to change the composition of the MTT board. What change has occurred that makes it less appropriate for the consumer's voice to be heard on the board than before?

Mr COWAN: I may not provide the member for Armadale with the answer she is seeking; nevertheless, whatever the change to consumer demand MetroBus does still have 50 per cent of the total bus operation and it must be capable of responding to consumer demand. Notwithstanding everything that has been said tonight the patronage of MetroBus has increased, which must mean it is responding to consumer demand. The change is not so much in the identification of the need of users of public transport services as in the way MetroBus runs its operations. It is now facing competition and the reason for the change to the composition of the board is built around the requirement to meet that competition.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Deputy Premier's explanation has confirmed the grave concerns of the Opposition. The board will be focused totally on cost cutting and will lose sight of the reason a government agency delivers public transport in the first place. The city simply would not work if it was not provided.

Opposition members do not object to people with commercial knowledge and experience being members of any board. Such people can have a great input -

Mr Cowan: Are you talking about Mr Russell Allen?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I object to the statement of the Minister for Transport who suggested that Mr Russell Allen was a paragon of virtue in fostering positive employer/employee relationships. However, the Opposition does not object to enterprises that must be mindful of costs and competition having substantial representation from members of the business community.

As I said, the board will consist of a senior partner of one of the big three commercial law firms, a former partner of one of the largest commercial accountancy firms, and a former merchant banker. The Opposition only hopes that as part of the board's cost cutting measures the board considers the obligation of this public agency to provide public transport.

That is not the end of the story. No change to MetroBus' responsibilities should make it any less mindful of the input of people who understand consumer interests and from those people who understand such things can assist in the creation of a positive relationship between employees and employers.

Mrs ROBERTS: The member for Armadale has made some valid points. When appointing more of the same people the tendency is to overlook consumer and wider interests. If only the narrow financial perspective of a particular organisation is considered then the wider issues raised in the second reading debate, such as the substantial environmental cost and financial cost of providing additional road transport, will not be taken into account.

The Minister has told us that these changes are needed in this new, competitive environment. The Government promised better and cheaper services, yet, so far, the community has seen neither. There has been a lot promised but nothing has eventuated. The only thing that has resulted is lower wages for bus drivers.

The notion of competition is also strange. There are four operators, including three private operators and MetroBus. As the Deputy Premier pointed out, MetroBus provides half of the bus services in the State. The operators do not compete with each other; in fact they operate independently on separate routes, so competition does not exist at that level.

The Minister in the other place says competition exists because some comparison of costs can be made to assess those costs. I am concerned about the criteria by which they measure one service against another. The bottom line must be a better service and we hope a cheaper service, but, so far, neither has been achieved. These changes will not result in anything better or different.

I have no confidence that the Minister for Transport, as a result of these changes, or any of his earlier changes, will provide a better or cheaper service. There has been no expansion of public transport in Western Australia under the coalition Government. Bus services are urgently needed in expanding areas. Many services are needed in my electorate, such as in Stratton. Swan Transit is looking at that, but to achieve that it must reduce services in other areas. That is a very narrow view. I am not confident that the persons the Minister selects to be representatives on that board will improve public transport in this State.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (25)

Mr Ainsworth	Mrs Holmes	Mrs Parker
Mr Barron-Sullivan	Mr House	Mr Prince
Mr Board	Mr Kierath	Mr Shave
Mr Bradshaw	Mr MacLean	Mr Sweetman
Mr Court	Mr Masters	Mr Tubby
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Nicholls	Mr Wiese
Dr Hames	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwitch (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs Hodson-Thomas		

Noes (16)

Mr Brown	Mr Marlborough	Mr Ripper
Mr Carpenter	Mr McGinty	Mrs Roberts
Dr Edwards	Mr McGowan	Mr Thomas
Dr Gallop	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Mr Kobelke	Mr Riebeling	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms MacTiernan		

Pairs

Mr Omodei	Ms Anwyl
Mr Barnett	Mr Graham
Mr Day	Mr Grill

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILLS (3) - MESSAGES

Appropriations

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

1. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1).
2. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 2).
3. Curriculum Council Bill.

House adjourned at 10.46 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT ACT - SECTION 105 GUIDELINES

15. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have any guidelines been prepared in relation to the application of section 105 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994?
- (2) If yes to (1) above -
 - (a) who prepared the guidelines;
 - (b) when were the guidelines prepared; and
 - (c) where may the guidelines be inspected?
- (3) If no to (1) above, why not?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(3) While no formal guidelines have been issued ministerial offices were circularised on 18 October 1995 advising of restrictions applying under section 105 of the Public Sector Management Act. The circular was issued by the Chief Executive, Office of State Administration, Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet. This matter may be further considered in light of any relevant recommendation emanating from the Government's assessment of the Public Sector Management Act review undertaken by Commissioner Fielding.

SCHOOLS - CLEANING

Contract Cleaners - Performance Review

85. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister conducted a review of the performance of contract cleaners cleaning Government schools?
- (2) Has the Minister received any report or draft report from this review?
- (3) Has the Minister asked for a further draft or a new report?
- (4) If yes, why?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The "1996 Review of Cleaning in Western Australian Government Schools" was released for public comment on Saturday, 22 February 1997. A response by the Education Department will be prepared for the Minister in light of public feedback to the review.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.

SCHOOLS - LAND SALES

Government Consideration

86. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Education:

What proposals for land sales by schools are currently under consideration by the Education Department or by the Minister?

Mr BARNETT replied:

Former Warwick Primary School.
 Former Hamilton Hill Primary School.
 Proposed Blackadder Primary School site.
 Portion of Eden Hill Primary School.
 Busselton Primary School.

Port Hedland Primary School.
 Portion of Bramfield Park Primary School.
 Portion of Camberwarra Primary School.
 Portion of Como Senior High School.
 Portion of Cyril Jackson Senior Campus.
 Portion of Duncraig Primary School.
 Portion of Kewdale Senior High School.
 Portion of Noranda Primary School.
 Whiteside Primary School.
 Portion of Balcatta Senior High School.
 Portion of Cooke Point Primary School.
 Portion of Perth Modern Senior High School.

These proposals were initiated by the individual schools and no disposal of assets will proceed without the consensual support of the school and the school community and approval by the Minister.

EDUCATION - PRIORITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

School Funding

92. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Which schools are currently receiving payments under the priority schools program and what is the payment being made to each of these schools in 1997?
- (2) Will each of these schools receive at least the same payment in 1998?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) See paper No 358 - PSP Initial Funds 1997
- (2) As the new funding guidelines have not yet been received, the future levels of disadvantaged schools program funding is unknown.
- (3) Not applicable.

TRAFFIC - MAYLANDS ELECTORATE

Changes in Traffic Count

113. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the latest daily traffic counts for -
 - (i) Whatley Crescent, Maylands;
 - (ii) Whatley Crescent, Bayswater;
 - (iii) Guildford Road, Maylands; and
 - (iv) Guildford Road, Bayswater?
- (2) What are the anticipated numbers at each of these locations after the commissioning of the city northern bypass?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) Depending on the section of the road concerned the -
 - (i) Traffic volumes vary between 12 700 and 12 900 vehicles per day.
 - (ii) Traffic volumes vary between 8 700 and 22 300 vehicles per day.
 - (iii) Traffic volumes vary between 26 200 and 32 500 vehicles per day.
 - (iv) Traffic volumes vary between 21 500 and 34 800 vehicles per day.
- (2) Again depending on the section of the road concerned -
 - (i) 7 500 to 13 500 vehicles per day.
 - (ii) 13 000 to 32 000 vehicles per day.
 - (iii) 29 000 to 31 000 vehicles per day.
 - (iv) 25 000 to 32 000 vehicles per day.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - ENTERPRISE SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM

Funding

133. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) How many organisations have received funding under the Enterprise Specific Training Program?
- (2) What are the names of each organisation receiving funding under the ESTP and how much was allocated to each organisation?
- (3) Is the allocation of funds under the ESTP on the basis of the Government matching dollar for dollar the expenditure by each organisation on these particular training programs?
- (4) Were there any organisations where the funds were not on the basis of 50 per cent being paid by the company and 50 per cent as a grant under the ESTP?
- (5) What are the stated objectives of the ESTP?
- (6) What evaluation is to take place to assess the degree to which the objective of this program are met with respect to each allocation of funding?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) Twenty-seven organisations were funded in 1996; 13 have been selected in 1997.
- (2) See paper No 359.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.
- (5) To increase employer participation in vocational education and training by providing financial assistance to employers for the provision of additional training to employees.
- (6) Companies are required to submit reports prior to receiving payment. Reports must include details of modules, enrolled hours and students. The 1996 enterprise specific program was evaluated by an independent consultant.

EDUCATION - TEACHERS

Disability Training

144. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the Government intend to require all state school teachers to undertake training to better understand and cope with students with disabilities?
- (2) What will be the nature of the training provided?
- (3) When will all teachers be trained?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(2) There is no intention at present to require all state school teachers to undertake training to better understand students with disabilities. The Education Department currently employs a number of strategies designed to promote greater understanding of the needs of students and adults with disabilities. These include -

Visiting Teacher Service: Visiting teachers provide support and training to teachers and teacher aides who work with students with disabilities.

Professional Development Programs: Primary teachers, district office personnel and parents can access professional development programs through primary schools. A secondary professional development program will be available in 1998.

Induction Program: As part of the inclusion program, first time teachers will be inducted on how to better understand and teach students with disabilities.

Officers from the department are negotiating with the universities to make a unit in disabilities compulsory for all students studying to be early childhood, primary or secondary teachers.

- (3) As teachers are trained as the need arises, it is too difficult at this time to determine when all teachers will have participated in some form of training.

ROADS - FUNDING

Fix the Roads Campaign

157. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In the 1996-97 State Budget how much was allocated to the "Fix the Roads" campaign?
- (2) How much is being spent by the Government on the "Fix the Roads" campaign?
- (3) Is it true the Government contributed around \$600 000 to the campaign when the Federal Labor Government was in power?
- (4) Is it true that since the coalition won the 1996 federal election virtually no funds have been allocated by the State Government to the campaign?
- (5) How much has been allocated to the state campaign by the State Government since March 1996?
- (6) How much has been allocated by the State Government to the campaign since the Federal Government cut back on road funding in the last Federal Budget?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1)-(2) Expenditure on the campaign is ongoing and has a budget allocation of \$300 000.

- (3) Yes. Over the three financial years.

1993-94	\$210 000
1994-95	\$165 205
1995-96	\$197 547

- (4) No.
- (5) \$300 000 was allocated in 1996-97 and \$200 000 is proposed for 1997-98.
- (6) \$300 000 was provided in the 1996-97 Budget.

RAILWAYS - SUCCESS HILL STATION

Security Fences

170. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that a person committed suicide on 25 January 1997 by standing or falling in front of a train near the Success Hill Railway Station?
- (2) If so, has the Minister made any enquiries about the state of the railway fences in or in the vicinity where the suicide occurred?
- (3) Is it true the fences between the Lord Street traffic bridge and the Swan River railway bridge show signs of being breached in many places?
- (4) What steps has the Government taken to improve the fences alongside railway lines?
- (5) Does the Government intend to improve the fences along the railway lines to ensure the area is more secure?
- (6) How many people have committed suicide by standing/falling etc in front of trains in the last three financial years?
- (7) Has the Government initiated any inquiry or investigation into determining what measures can be taken to improve security to prevent this occurring?
- (8) What policies does the Government have in trying to prevent access to railway lines?
- (9) What are the current procedures that Westrail has to counsel and retain drivers of trains involved in suicides?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

I presume the member's questions refer to the suburban railway system and my answer is provided on that basis.

- (1) I am aware a person died on the railway near Success Hill on 25 January 1997. The cause of the death has not yet been determined by the Coroner.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) I am advised by the Commissioner of Railways that this is not the case.
- (4)-(5) Westrail is arranging for provision of approximately 16 kilometres of fencing to sections of the railway which are currently unfenced. The existing fencing is maintained in a satisfactory condition.
- (6) Nine, based on Coroner's findings.
- (7)-(8) It is Westrail's responsibility to minimise or eliminate the risk of accidental injury or death to persons using the rail system. As part of this responsibility Westrail installs fencing along the railway where it passes through areas which have a high exposure to pedestrian traffic such as near schools and residential areas. The member would understand the impracticality of eliminating deliberate life threatening acts on a rail system.
- (9) Professional counselling is provided to any staff member who is involved in an incident which is likely to cause trauma to that person.

RAILWAYS - FREIGHT SERVICE

York-Quairading - Closure

215. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Why has Westrail closed the York-Quairading rail freight service?
- (2) What is the expected duration of this closure?
- (3) Will this closure become a regular seasonal event?
- (4) Has consideration been given to the costs imposed on the local authority by virtue of the additional wear and damage to local roads as rail freight is moved onto the roads?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) Westrail has not closed its York-Quairading line for rail freight services. Grain transport from the York - Quairading area is currently being undertaken by road transport as part of an initiative to benefit grain growers. This year's record harvest of almost 10 million tonnes exceeded the expected harvest of 8.4 million tonnes by around 1.6 million tonnes or 20 per cent. To maximise returns to grain growers by selling grain at premium prices, almost 1.5 million tonnes of grain was shipped from Western Australian ports during the month of March. The 1.5 million tonne program is 50 per cent above the previous record shipment of 1 million tonnes for a single month. The combination of a record harvest and an unprecedented shipping program has resulted in a land transport task larger than Westrail's normal available train capacity. Westrail has responded by hiring additional resources to increase its train capacity. To further optimise the tonnages moved by rail, as part of the program to ship 1.5 million tonnes in March, train movements have been concentrated in areas to maximise the tonnages moved by rail. This has been achieved by operating trains on lines where maximum train loads can be achieved and where Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd loading facilities are the most efficient for rail transport. The additional resources plus the optimisation program has resulted in the weekly capacity of rail transport increasing from around 170 000 tonnes to around 220 000 tonnes. Rail transport has been supplemented by road transport to take some grain direct to port, but more particularly, to relocate grain to locations where train tonnages and loading rates are the most efficient, maximising the use of rail transport. The unprecedented shipping program is being driven by the Australian Wheat Board and was jointly planned by the Australian Wheat Board, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd and Westrail, aimed at achieving maximum returns to the grain growers of Western Australia. Australian Wheat Board estimates indicate that this initiative will realise an additional \$6m to grain growers. The road movement of grain from the York-Quairading area is part of the overall initiative.

Westrail expects to transport almost 6.2 million tonnes of the 1996 grain harvest compared with 3.7 million tonnes five years ago. By the year 2005 it is expected that rail will be required to transport between 7 million and 7.5 million tonnes per year, and Westrail is developing plans to ensure that it has the capacity to meet that future demand.

(2)-(3) Not applicable.

(4) The use of road for grain transport from selected areas is a temporary arrangement, and in view of the relatively low tonnages involved, any associated damage to roads is expected to be minimal.

RAILWAYS - YORK-QUAIRADING

Repairs

228. Mr TRENORDEN to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the York to Quairading railway line to be closed?
- (2) What is the condition of this line?
- (3) Are repairs proposed to the line and, if so, to what value and at what time?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) There are no plans to close the York-Quairading section of the railway. Grain is being transported by road to meet the significant increase in this season's production.
- (2) The line is in operational condition.
- (3) Maintenance to the value of around \$1m is scheduled to commence in September 1997. To maximise returns to grain growers by selling grain at premium prices, almost 1.5 million tonnes of grain was shipped from Western Australian ports during the month of March. The 1.5 million tonnes program is 50 per cent above the previous record shipment of one million tonnes for a single month. The combination of a record harvest and an unprecedented shipping program has resulted in a land transport task larger than Westrail's normal available train capacity. Westrail has responded by hiring additional resources to increase its train capacity. To further optimise the tonnages moved by rail, as part of the program to ship 1.5 million tonnes in March, train movements have been concentrated in areas to maximise the tonnages moved by rail. This has been achieved by operating trains on lines where maximum train loads can be achieved and where Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd loading facilities are the most efficient for rail transport.

The additional resources plus the optimisation program has resulted in the weekly capacity of rail transport increasing from around 170 000 tonnes to around 220 000 tonnes. Rail transport has been supplemented by road transport to take some grain direct to port, but more particularly, to relocate grain to locations where train tonnages and loading rates are the most efficient, maximising the use of rail transport. The unprecedented shipping program is being driven by the Australian Wheat Board and was jointly planned by the Australian Wheat Board, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd and Westrail, aimed at achieving maximum returns to the grain growers of Western Australia. Australian Wheat Board estimates indicate that this initiative will realise an additional \$6m to grain growers.

ROAD SAFETY - CYCLISTS

Databases

246. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the Australia-wide proportion of cyclists amongst hospitalised road crash victims as reported by the Federal Office of Road Safety?
- (2) What is the proportion of cyclists actually admitted to hospital as a result of vehicle crashes in Western Australia in 1995 who are recorded in the Main Roads database?
- (3) What is the best estimate of the number of cyclists per year requiring medical attention for injuries in crashes in Western Australia?

- (4) What is the average annual number of cyclists requiring medical attention for injuries received in crashes, according to the Main Roads reported crash database?
- (5) What is the approximate proportion of cyclists actually injured in crashes who are recorded in the Main Roads crash database?
- (6) What are the reasons for the difference between the "best estimate" of cyclists receiving medical attention for crash injuries and the equivalent figure in the Main Roads reported crash database?
- (7) What are the reasons for differences (relating to the numbers of hospitalised road users) between the Main Roads reported crash database and the hospital admission database maintained by the Health Department?
- (8) Which database is currently used by Main Roads for the allocation of Black Spot program funds in Western Australia?
- (9) What proportion of the current Western Australian Black Spot road safety program funds were available for the treatment of sites, length or areas on the basis of an official road safety audit report, rather than a benefit cost ratio derived from reported crash history?
- (10) Was BikeWest asked by Main Roads to submit a list of projects to Main Roads for inclusion in the 1996-97 Black Spot program?
- (11) Were representatives of both the Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia and the road transport industry invited to participate in the Western Australian Black Spot consultative panel which allocated the Black Spot funding?
- (12) Were representatives of BikeWest or cycling user groups invited to participate?
- (13) If not, why not?
- (14) Will the Government take steps to improve the reliability of the Main Roads reported-crash database, and to include information from the Health Department hospital morbidity database to increase the proportion of road funding devoted to providing safe bicycle facilities?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) The latest available figures from the Federal Office of Road Safety report that 1 082 cyclists were admitted to hospital Australia-wide in 1994. This represents 4.9 per cent of hospitalised road users (22 154).
- (2) 4.26 per cent in 1995-96.
- (3) The only estimate of the number of cyclists requiring medical attention for injuries received in crashes in Western Australia is from a paper by Hendrie and Ryan, of the UWA Road Accident Prevention Research Unit (Roadwatch). The paper estimated that 39 982 cyclists were injured across all levels of severity in 1988.
- (4) 252.4.
- (5) Data not available. See (3).
- (6) Not all crashes are reported to the Police. The level of under reporting of crashes involving cyclists is thought to be more than that for other road user categories.
- (7) Not all bicycle crashes which are hospitalised and hence recorded in the Hospital Morbidity database, are reported to the Police.
- (8) Police/Main Roads database.
- (9) 20 per cent.
- (10)-(11) Yes.
- (12) BikeWest and cycling user groups are represented through the Department of Transport (Office of Road Safety) representative.
- (13) Not applicable.

- (14) Main Roads is researching cyclist hospitalisation data for the period 1986 to 1996 inclusive through the Police, Main Roads and Health Department databases. This work is expected to be completed in July 1997.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - PREMIER

Refurbishment

251. Mr RIPPER to the Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Public Sector Management; Federal Affairs:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Premier's office since December 1993?
- (2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
- (3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Premier's Office was relocated from the 19th floor to the 24th floor of 197 St Georges Terrace in 1995.
- (3) The relocation and fit out of the Premier's new office on the 24th floor was paid for by the building owner as part of a lease package negotiated by the Government Property Office. The lease allowed for a fit out incentive of \$500 000. New furniture and fittings totalled \$343 594.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - DEPUTY PREMIER

Refurbishment

252. Mr RIPPER to the Deputy Premier; Minister for Commerce and Trade; Regional Development; Small Business:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Deputy Premier's office since December 1993?
- (2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
- (3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)-(3) Refurbishments and renovations have included -
 - (a) alterations to conference room - cost \$10 656;
 - (b) installation of fire sprinklers in three offices - cost \$1 725;
 - (c) partitioning to change office configuration - cost \$1 849; and
 - (d) office furniture - cost \$7 271.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

Refurbishment

255. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Minister's office since December 1993?
- (2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
- (3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2)
 - (a) Provision of sign at entrance door relating to use of door handle;
 - (b) provision of lockable door at rear of reception area, to form physical barrier;
 - (c) modification of duress alarm;
 - (d) installation of exit signs;
 - (e) fit security eyelet (in door);
 - (f) change of signage and repainting of wall;
 - (g) minor alteration to one office in order to enable two officers to occupy.

- (3) Total cost of work undertaken was \$5 367.46.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Refurbishment

256. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Minister's office since December 1993?
(2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
(3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1)-(3) The office which I occupy on Floor 10, Dumas House was established as a ministerial suite approximately two years ago. Since occupying the suite on 9 January 1997 no major refurbishment or renovation has been undertaken. Minor works including some additional furniture and painting have been requested. The cost is not available at this time.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - MINISTER FOR LANDS

Refurbishment

258. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Minister's office since December 1993?
(2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
(3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mr SHAVE replied:

Since 18 January 1997, when this office was established, no refurbishments or renovations have been undertaken.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Refurbishment

260. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Local Government; Disability Services:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Minister's office since December 1993?
(2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
(3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1)-(3) The Minister's office was relocated to the 11th Floor, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street West Perth in May 1994. The fit out contract was tendered as a combined client fit out including all contracts, fees etc associated with the building works, services, furniture items and relocation costs for the Ministerial Offices of the Minister for Water Resources; Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Housing and the Building Management Authority. Indicative costs for my office fit out were \$150 000.

MINISTERIAL OFFICES - MINISTER FOR WORKS

Refurbishment

263. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Works; Services; Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs; Youth:

- (1) Have any refurbishments or renovations been undertaken to the Minister's office since December 1993?
(2) If so, what was the nature of the change/s?
(3) What was the cost of the work undertaken?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) The Minister for Works; Services; Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs; Youth moved into the Ministerial premises previously occupied by the Minister for Resources Development of 14 January 1997, and is not

aware of any refurbishment or renovations undertaken before that date. Since 14 January 1997, previous signage has been removed, a wall patched and painted, and new signage installed.

- (2) Signage as per (1).
- (3) \$675.50.

SCHOOLS - SECONDARY

Eastern Goldfields Senior High - Enrolments

297. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many students are currently enrolled at the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School?
- (2) How many students are enrolled in each of the years 8 to 12 at EGSHS?
- (3) What were total enrolments for each of the years 8 to 12 at EGSHS for the years 1994 to 1996?
- (4) Does the Minister support the concept of a senior college for EGSHS?
- (5) If so, what steps will be taken to implement the proposal?
- (6) If not, why not?
- (7) Does the Minister acknowledge that there is overcrowding at EGSHS?
- (8) What are the five largest country schools and their total student numbers?
- (9) Are there proposals to establish community colleges or senior colleges in other regions (including metropolitan) and, if so -
 - (a) where; and
 - (b) what educational institutions will be affected?
- (10) Are there any existing community college proposals?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) In February 1997 there were 1302 students enrolled at Eastern Goldfields Senior High School.
- (2) The number of students in each year level at Eastern Goldfields Senior High School in February 1997 were:

	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12
1997	342	311	298	236	115

- (3) The enrolments for each of the year levels 8 to 12 for the years 1994 to 1996 are:

Year	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Total
1994	296	274	261	214	132	1177
1995	260	275	258	207	127	1127
1996	315	288	279	199	123	1204

- (4)-(6) The Education Department of Western Australia is currently developing a regional and local area education planning framework, which applies a number of curriculum, cost and facilities indicators to groups of schools in regional or local areas to determine the best organisation of schools in that area. When the Framework is established, planning for secondary education provision in the goldfields district will be a priority. During the planning process, a senior college will be investigated as one of a number of possible options. There will be extensive consultation with the community in this planning process.
- (7) No. In addition to the permanent facilities, only five temporary classrooms are required.
- (8) The five largest country government secondary schools and their total student numbers are:

Geraldton Secondary College	1 913
Eastern Goldfields Senior High School	1 302
Mandurah Senior High School	1 191
Australind Senior High School	1 100
Busselton Senior High School	911

- (9)-(10) There are no proposals to establish senior colleges or community colleges in Western Australia in 1997 for 1998. Proposals post 1998 will be subject to the regional and local area education planning framework. The Town of Albany is in the process of reviewing the delivery of secondary education but no decisions have been made. The towns of Esperance and Manjimup are considering the development of integrated education precincts involving school, TAFE and university provision.

UNIVERSITIES - ENDOWMENT LANDS

Proposal

301. Mr PENDAL to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the coalition committed to providing endowment lands to all universities in Western Australia, similar to those granted the University of Western Australia many years ago?
- (2) If so, what is the present status of the proposal?
- (3) Which department, agency or committee is facilitating the project?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(2) The coalition is committed to examining the feasibility of providing endowment lands to the other universities in Western Australia along the lines of those provided to The University of Western Australia when it was the only university in this State. Because of the inherent difficulties in providing substantial land endowment, active consideration is also being given to other forms of assistance to the universities.
- (3) Department of Commerce and Trade and Department of Education Services.

COMMERCE AND TRADE - EXPORTS

Jarrah Sleepers

309. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

What volume of jarrah sleepers were exported annually from Western Australia in the last five years?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

Information provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is:

1991-92	8 148	cubic metres
1992-93	7 945	cubic metres
1993-94	2 772.56	cubic metres
1994-95	1 724.20	cubic metres
1995-96	Information not yet available.	

PEARLING - RESERVES

Lease Conditions

331. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister for Environment:

- (1) Does it require an Act of Parliament to change the lease conditions of a recreational reserve?
- (2) Did Cossack Pearls Pty Ltd make formal application for a land based facility on the B class reserve, Dolphin Island?
- (3) If they did make application, was it tabled in Parliament?
- (4) Did Parliament approve the application?
- (5) If they did not make application, why didn't they?
- (6) Did Pilbara Pearls make formal application for a land based facility on the recreational reserve, West Lewis Island?
- (7) If they did make application, was it tabled in Parliament?
- (8) Did Parliament approve the application?

- (9) If it hasn't been approved by Parliament, who gave the Department of Conservation and Land Management the authority to issue Pilbara Pearls a licence to establish a land based facility on the recreational reserve, West Lewis?
- (10) When did Cossack Pearls Pty Ltd establish the land based facility on Dolphin Island?
- (11) Did they have approval to do so?
- (12) If yes, who gave them permission to do so?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not required.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) No.
- (8) Not required.
- (9) The Department of Conservation and Land Management has the power to issue a licence under Section 101 of the CALM Act with the approval of the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and the Minister.
- (10) Prior to September 1993.
- (11) No.
- (12) Not applicable.

COMMITTEES AND BOARDS - COMMERCE AND TRADE

Membership

357. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

- (1) With reference to your answer to question on notice 27 of 1997, who are the current members and chairpersons of the following -
 - (a) Technology and Industry Advisory Council;
 - (b) State Funding Advisory Council;
 - (c) Western Australian AusIndustry Committee; and
 - (d) Western Australian Trade Advisory Council?
- (2) When was each member appointed and for what period of time?
- (3) How much remuneration is each member paid?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1) (a) Membership of the Technology and Industry Advisory Council:
 - Mr John Thompson
Chairman
Managing Director
Scientific Services Ltd
 - Mr Rex Baker
TIAC Member
Manager of Mines
Alcoa of Australia Ltd

Dr Lesley Borowitzka
TIAC Member
General Manager
Western Biotechnology Ltd

Dr Mike Carroll
TIAC Member
Mike Carroll and Associates
Consultants

Ms Leslie Chalmers
TIAC Member
Associate Director
Coopers & Lybrand

Ms Angela Frodsham
Minister's Representative
Deputy Premier's Office

Professor John Maloney
TIAC Member
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Monash University

Mr Rob Meecham
TIAC Member
Associate Director
Indian Ocean Centre

Mr Bruce Sutherland
Departmental Representative
Chief Executive Officer
Department of Commerce and Trade

Mr Tony Tate
TIAC Member
Managing Director
South Metropolitan College of TAFE

Mr Lloyd Zampatti
TIAC Member
Chairman
Barron Entertainment Limited

Under Section 30 Schedule 2-1.(2) of the Technology and Industry Development Act 1983 - "An appointed member of the Council, unless he sooner resigns or is removed from office, shall continue in office until the successor comes into office, notwithstanding that the term for which he was appointed may have expired".

(2)	John Thompson	May 1993, 4 years
	Rex Baker	May 1995, 3 years
	Lesley Borowitzka	May 1995, 3 years
	Mike Carroll	May 1995, 3 years
	Leslie Chalmers	May 1995, 3 years
	Angela Frodsham	N/A
	John Maloney	May 1994, 3 years
	Rob Meecham	April 1996, 3 years
	Bruce Sutherland	N/A
	Tony Tate	Nov 1993, 3 years
	Lloyd Zampatti	May 1995, 3 years

Membership appointments are at present before Cabinet for endorsement.

- (3) The Chairman of TIAC receives a remuneration of \$40,000 per annum.

Each Non-Public Service Member of TIAC receives a remuneration of \$800 per meeting. Public Service Members receive no remuneration. There are ten Council meetings per annum.

- (b) The State Funding Advisory Council:

Mr Bruce Sutherland (Chair)
Chief Executive Officer
Department of Commerce and Trade

Mr Ken Perry
Director General
Department of Minerals and Energy

Dr Des Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
Department of Resources Development

Dr Graeme Robertson
Director General
Agriculture Western Australia

Mr Peter Browne
A/Chief Executive Officer
Department of Education Services

Mr John Thompson Chair (TIAC)
TIAC representative

Mr Lloyd Zampatti
TIAC representative

(2) Dr Des Kelly was appointed in 1996, with all other members being appointed in 1992.

(3) No remuneration is paid to members.

(1) (c) The Western Australian AusIndustry Committee:

Mr P Viney
A/State Director
Department of Industry
Science and Tourism (A/Chairperson)

Mr P Ferguson
Assistant Manager
Department of Industry,
Science and Tourism

Ms C Gwilliam
Executive Director
Department of Commerce and Trade

Mr B Macfarlane
Manager
Marketing & Policy
Department of Commerce and Trade

Mr C Green
Executive Officer to the AusIndustry Committee Western Australia,
Department of Commerce and Trade

(2) The effective date for appointment of members was 28 June 1995. There is no set period for the duration of the membership.

(3) No remuneration is paid to members.

(1) (d) The Western Australian Trade Advisory Council:

Mr Harold Clough
Chairman
Clough Engineering (Chair)

Mr Bruce Sutherland
Chief Executive Officer
Department of Commerce and Trade (ex officio)

Mr Ross McLean
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr Ken Court
Chairman
Resource and Industry Pty Ltd

Prof Steven Schwartz
Vice-chancellor, Murdoch University

Mr Graham Laitt
Managing Director, Peters (WA)

Mr David Crawford
Corporate Affairs Director
Wesfarmers

Mr Wilson Wu
Senior Business Manager
Citibank

Ms Jenni Ballantyne
Director,
Second Skin

Mr Graham Shepherd
Executive General Manager
Wesfi

Mr John Wragg
Chief Executive Officer
E G Green and Sons

Ms Danielle Blaine
General Manager
Gosh Leather (represents the Australian Institute of Export)

- (2) All members are provisionally appointed for 3 years. Membership commencement dates are as follows:

Mr Harold Clough	July 1993
Mr Bruce Sutherland	July 1993
Mr Ross McLean	July 1993
Mr Ken Court	July 1993
Prof Steven Schwartz	April 1996
Mr Graham Laitt	July 1993
Mr David Crawford	May 1994
Mr Wilson Wu	August 1995
Ms Jenni Ballantyne	November 1995
Mr Graham Shepherd	November 1995
Mr John Wragg	November 1995
Ms Danielle Blaine	September 1996

- (3) No remuneration is paid to members.

EDUCATION - CURRICULUM

Aboriginal Studies

369. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Government considered including a unit of Aboriginal Studies in the core curriculum for all schools?
- (2) What training in Aboriginal studies is provided for trainee teachers in this State?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The Education Department has developed an Aboriginal Studies curriculum for years K-10, which provides students with an avenue for understanding and appreciating Aboriginal history, culture and values that reflect an Aboriginal perspective. The curriculum materials are non-compulsory and may be implemented as a separate subject, as a discrete component within each learning area or integrated across the curriculum.
- (2) Western Australia's universities distinguish between courses of study in "Aboriginal Studies" - the study of Aboriginal culture and history - and "Aboriginal Education" - pedagogics appropriate for Aboriginal students. The universities have advised that, as of 1997, all trainee teachers compulsorily undertake studies in Aboriginal Education. Courses of study in Aboriginal Studies are optional.

EDUCATION - LANGUAGES

Tertiary Entrance Examination

370. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Education:

Which -

- (a) government;
- (b) non-government,

schools offer -

- (i) Greek; and
- (ii) Vietnamese,

to tertiary entrance examination level?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (a)-(b) (i) At present neither government nor non-government schools offer Greek to tertiary entrance examination level students. Greek gained TEE status only in 1996. However, some external students study Modern Greek as a TEE course through after hours ethnic schools programs.
- (ii) Vietnamese is not a tertiary entrance examination subject.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Funding

401. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of an article that appeared in *The West Australian*, on 13 March 1997, which quoted Anglicare chief executive, Ian Carter, criticising the Federal Government for axing 120 000 employment training places last year and replacing them with 10 000 positions unlikely to result in jobs this year?
- (2) Has the Minister and/or the State Government made any representations to the Federal Government about the Federal Government's 1996 budget decision to cut federally funded employment training places in Western Australia?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Has the State Government made any representations to the Federal Government on its proposed work for the dole scheme?
- (5) Does the Minister agree with the comments made by Mr Carter that the \$15m allocated to the work for the dole scheme is not enough to buy training or materials needed for proper community infrastructure projects?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1)-(2) Yes.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Until such time as guidelines are available it is not appropriate to comment on Mr Carter's assertions.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Reasons

407. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Has the reduction in interest rates assisted employment growth in Western Australia?
- (2) To what extent has the reduction in interest rates boosted employment growth?
- (3) Is Western Australia's employment growth over the last four years primarily due to -
 - (a) increasing demand for the State's natural resource;
 - (b) high levels of entrepreneurial flair;
 - (c) State Government policies; or

- (d) Federal Government policies?
- (4) To what extent, in terms of the actual number of increased jobs, does the State Government claim credit?
- (5) Is it true that Western Australia has had -
 - (a) lower unemployment; and
 - (b) higher employment growth,
 than the Australian average since 1987, with one exception?
- (6) If not, during which years since 1987 was Western Australia's -
 - (a) unemployment rate higher; and
 - (b) job growth rate lower,
 than the Australian average?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) It is anticipated that the Western Australian construction industry will benefit directly from the Reserve Bank's interest rate cuts, aided by additional market driven reductions in housing interest rates. Lower interest rates are also expected to contribute to growth in the economy through increased discretionary disposable income and lowered cost of financing business investment. As a result an improvement in employment can also be expected.
- (2) It is not possible to quantify the specific extent to which the reduction in interest rates has resulted in increased employment growth. There has, however, been an increase in total employment of 8 500 persons in the last six months since the first reduction in interest rates.
- (3) A multitude of factors has influenced employment growth in Western Australia in recent times. However, the continued strength of the state economy is being underpinned by the resilience of high levels of business investment, strong net exports and a strong and relatively stable level of private consumption expenditure exports.
- (4) The State Government has created an environment which is conducive to the private sector growing, thereby increasing the opportunities for employment and we can remain confident that Western Australia will continue to experience strong employment growth relative to the national average in the medium term.
- (5) No.
- (6) (a) Western Australia's unemployment rate has consistently remained below the national rate since October 1992. However, prior to this date, the State's unemployment rate exceeded the national average in the following periods: January and February 1988; April to July 1988; November 1988; September and October 1989; December 1989 to April 1992; and August to October 1992.
- (b) Western Australia recorded lower annual employment growth than the national average in the following periods: January, March, May and July during 1987; May 1989 to August 1990; October to December 1990; February to April 1991; January 1992; March, June and September 1994; February, August, November and December during 1995; January 1996; and March to June 1996.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - SALE

414. Mr BROWN to the Minister for the Environment; Employment and Training:

- (1) How many State Government assets of the value of \$200 000 or more have been sold by each of the departments or agencies under the Minister's control in each of the last four financial years?
- (2) What is the total value of the assets sold?
- (3) What have the moneys realised from the asset sales been used for?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

Department of Training:

- (1) Departmental records show that one asset has been disposed of in October 1996. The asset in question, a Computer Expansion Unit, at the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, was purchased in 1984.

(2) \$1 - depreciated value.

(3) Not applicable.

Conservation and Land Management:

(1)	1992-93	Nil.
	1993-94	Nil.
	1994-95	Nil.
	1995-96	Twelve assets.

(2) \$6 771 500.

(3) The moneys have been used to retire debt.

Kings Park and Botanic Garden:

(1)-(3) Nil.

Perth Zoo:

(1)-(3) Nil.

Department of Environmental Protection:

(1)-(3) Nil.

Office of Censorship:

(1)-(3) Nil.

SCHOOLS - SCHOOLS IN HOUSES PROGRAM

Location

443. Mr MacLEAN to the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a decision been made regarding the expansion of the very successful schools in houses program?

(2) If so, where are these unique schools to be located?

Mr BARNETT replied:

(1) The Education Department has identified the potential for up to 24 additional schools in houses or similar, and has commenced negotiations with various land developers to determine the feasibility of these interim schools.

(2) It would be inappropriate to identify specific locations at this stage due to the preliminary nature of discussions. In some cases interim schools may not be feasible and it would not be prudent to raise community expectations until these matters have been thoroughly investigated.

PARKS AND RESERVES - NATIONAL

Yanchep Inn

481. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

(1) Further to question on notice No 2037 of 1996, has -

(a) a final plan been compiled, and;

(b) a lease agreement been signed with YNP Developments Pty Ltd to redevelop and manage Yanchep Inn?

(2) If yes, when did this take place?

(3) If no, when will they occur?

(4) Will the Minister outline the general conditions of -

(a) the lease;

(b) the plan?

(5) When will Yanchep Inn reopen for business?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) (a) The conservation plan was completed on 31 August 1996.
- (b) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) As soon as CALM is satisfied with the financial arrangements put in place by YNP Developments Pty Ltd and management issues have been finalised with the company.
- (4) (a) The lease when executed will be tabled in Parliament as required by the CALM Act.
- (b) A copy of the conservation plan can be made available to the member.
- (5) Maintenance work on Yanchep is scheduled for completion at the end of May and it is envisaged the inn will reopen shortly thereafter.

ROAD SAFETY - MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

Fatalities

491. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many deaths were recorded due to motor vehicle accidents on Western Australian roads in the 1996 calendar year?
- (2) How many of these people killed on our roads in 1996 were actually involved in the course of their work or employment at the time of their fatal accident?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) 247.
- (2) This information is not available.

COMMITTEES AND BOARDS - CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership

536. Ms McHALE to the Minister for the Environment:

Can the Minister advise -

- (a) who are the current members of the Canning River Regional Park Community Advisory Committee;
- (b) when each member was appointed and for what period of time;
- (c) how many expressions of interest were submitted in response to the advertisement in *The West Australian* 13 July 1996?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

(a)-(b) Name	Appointed	Term
Hon G. Kierath MLA Department of Conservation and Land Management representative - currently R. Towers	June 1994	Indefinite
B. Mason	June 1994	3 years
S. Faulds	June 1994	3 years
J. Stone	June 1994	3 years
M. Hipkins	August 1995	3 years
B. Ranford	August 1995	3 years
K. Davis	August 1995	3 years
J. Blake	September 1996	3 years
A. Bellman	September 1996	3 years
B. Hayes	September 1996	3 years
(c) Four.		

MOTOR VEHICLES - LICENSING

Private Testing

540. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Is the Government considering the introduction of accredited private testing of motor vehicle licences?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

Introduction of accredited private testing of learner drivers is one of the options which is being considered by the Department of Transport as part of a major review of its licensing operations. The department will be reporting to the Minister for Transport in May 1997 outlining preferred strategies for driver testing.

DRIVERS' LICENCES - PRACTICAL TEST

Non-Australian Drivers

541. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are drivers who take up residence in Western Australia and who have drivers' licences issued overseas required to undertake a practical driving test?
- (2) If no, why not?
- (3) Are any attempts made to examine the practical examining standards of non-Australian jurisdictions before accepting those licences?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1)-(3) The Road Traffic Act requires that all applicants for a driver's licence have a knowledge of the road laws and demonstrate their ability to control a motor vehicle. Prior to 1986, overseas licence holders were required to undertake a practical driving test upon transferring their licence to a Western Australian licence. Some exemptions were granted where it had been established that testing procedures were equivalent or of a higher standard than those required for a Western Australian licence. In December 1986 a decision was made to accept all overseas drivers' licences as evidence of a person's ability to control a vehicle. These persons are still required to pass a theory test on the road rules.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS - TELSTRA

Charges - Timed Local Calls

579. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Disability Services:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that passage of the Telstra Bills through the Federal Parliament will allow timed local calls for "data calls"?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that this may result in Internet service providers being charged for receiving modem calls from their customers?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that such charges are likely to be passed on to customers?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that "data calls" are an important communication tool for disabled people?
- (5) If so, what is the anticipated impact of the changes?
- (6) Does the Minister support Telstra establishing a fee structure based on timed local calls for "data calls"?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Telstra advises that it does not intend to charge timed local calls for "data calls" at the present time.
- (3) Not applicable.

- (4) Yes.
- (5) If Telstra actually introduces charging, it will result in all people who use the Internet, including people with disabilities, being charged timed calls for data access.
- (6) I do not support a Telstra fee structure that disadvantages people with a disability who use the Internet as an essential communication tool.

POLLUTION - WOOD STOVES

Non-compliance - Legislation

590. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Does the Minister intend to honour the promise given by her predecessor to ban the sale of wood heaters which do not comply with Australian design standards?
- (2) If so, when does the Minister intend to introduce legislation and will it be passed in time to prevent the use of non-complying wood stoves during autumn and spring when haze pollution is at its worst?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that the Australian Woodheating Association was advised it would be involved in the drafting of legislation?
- (4) Will the Minister respond to letters from the Australian Woodheating Association regarding this matter?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) The Department of Environmental Protection is currently seeking legal advice as to whether a ban on the sale of wood heaters which do not meet the emission standards under Australian Standard 4013-1992, is able to be set in regulations under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. If regulations are unable to achieve this aim then other means will be pursued.
- (2) In view of the answer to (1), it is unlikely that legislation will be introduced to prevent the installation of non-complying wood stoves prior to autumn and spring this year.
- (3) No. The Australian Woodheaters Association will, however, be invited along with other relevant stakeholders, to comment on proposed legislation relating to this matter, prior to that legislation being introduced.
- (4) Yes.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS - CONSUMER CREDIT LEGAL SERVICE

Closure

597. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Is the Minister aware the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc will have to close down this year unless it receives ongoing financial support from the State Government?
- (2) Does the Government intend to provide that financial support?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) Does the Government intend to establish an agency or service which would provide the same range of services as currently provided by the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) Can the Minister advise whether government or non-government agencies can provide the same service currently provided by the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc?
- (7) Can the Minister advise if such other agencies have spare capacity to handle the nature of the matters currently dealt with by the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc?

Mr SHAVE replied:

Refer to question 598.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS - CONSUMER CREDIT LEGAL SERVICE

Closure

598. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Is the Minister aware the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc will have to close down this year unless it receives ongoing financial support from the State Government?
- (2) Does the Government intend to provide that financial support?
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- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) Can the Minister advise whether government or non-government agencies can provide the same service currently provided by the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc?
- (7) Can the Minister advise if such other agencies have spare capacity to handle the nature of the matters currently dealt with by the Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1) The Consumer Credit Legal Service has made a submission for funding to my office which is currently under consideration.
- (2) Discussions are presently ongoing between Government and the Consumer Credit Legal Service as to the future funding of the organisation. A number of options are under consideration to enable the continuation of appropriate services to consumers of credit in Western Australia.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The current evaluation of possible funding options for the service being jointly undertaken by Government and the Consumer Credit Legal Service will hopefully avoid the need for the establishment of another agency.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6)-(7) While the Consumer Credit Legal Service is a specialist organisation dealing solely with consumer credit, the Ministry of Fair Trading also provides advisory and conciliation services in the area of consumer credit and related matters. There are also agencies such as the Aboriginal Legal Service, the youth legal service and various community legal centres which provide legal advice, representation and other complementary services in a range of fields. It is premature to consider whether other agencies might deliver services in place of the Consumer Credit Legal Service. In any event information would first be required about the number of clients accessing the Consumer Credit Legal Service and the nature of services accessed. Such information would only be available from the service itself.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - LEASING

Cost

611. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Resources Development; Energy; Education:

- (1) How many vehicles does each department and agency under the Minister's control lease?
- (2) What is the monthly amount each department and agency pays for leasing the vehicles?
- (3) What was the amount each department and agency paid for leasing the vehicles in February 1997?

Mr BARNETT replied:

Department of Resources Development:

- (1) 23.
- (2)-(3) \$2 503.50.

Office of Energy:

- (1) 29.
(2)-(3) \$5 100.

AlintaGas:

- (1) None.
(2)-(3) Nil.

Western Power:

- (1) None.
(2)-(3) Nil.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES- LEASING

Cost and Number

614. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) How many vehicles does each department and agency under the Minister's control lease?
(2) What is the monthly amount each department and agency pays for leasing the vehicles?
(3) What was the amount each department and agency paid for leasing the vehicles in February 1997?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|
| (1) | 320
5
4 | Family and Children's Services
Women's Policy Development Office
Office of Seniors Interests |
| (2) | \$62 000
\$1 606.48
\$643.23 | Family and Children's Services
Women's Policy Development Office
Office of Seniors Interests |
| (3) | \$61 142.14
\$1 606.48
\$643.23 | Family and Children's Services
Women's Policy Development Office
Office of Seniors Interests |

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - LEASING

Cost and Number

616. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

- (1) How many vehicles does each department and agency under the Minister's control lease?
(2) What is the monthly amount each department and agency pays for leasing the vehicles?
(3) What was the amount each department and agency paid for leasing the vehicles in February 1997?

Mr SHAVE replied:

LandCorp:

- (1) None.
(2)-(3) Not applicable.

Department of Land Administration:

- (1) The Department of Land Administration leases 44 vehicles.
(2) Average monthly lease cost for 1996-97 is \$9 700.
(3) \$8 222.

Western Australian Electoral Commission:

- (1) The commission leases three vehicles.
(2)-(3) \$1032.85

Ministry of Fair Trading:

- (1) The Ministry of Fair Trading leases 26 vehicles.
- (2) Approximately \$3 200.
- (3) \$3 200.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES - LEASING

Cost and Number

618. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Local Government; Disability Services:

- (1) How many vehicles does each department and agency under the Minister's control lease?
- (2) What is the monthly amount each department and agency pays for leasing the vehicles?
- (3) What was the amount each department and agency paid for leasing the vehicles in February 1997?

Mr OMODEI replied:

Local Government:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|------------|
| (1) | Department of Local Government | 7 |
| | Minister's Office | 2 |
| (2) | Department of Local Government | \$2045.11 |
| | Minister's Office | \$443.91 |
| (3) | Department of Local Government | \$2 069.57 |
| | Minister's Office | Nil |

Disability Services:

- (1) 278.
- (2) \$73 325.
- (3) \$74 435.

POLLUTION - OMEX SITE

666. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

When will the Government release details of the next stage of work at the Omex site?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

The DEP has only recently provided me with a report on the various options which are available for treating the Omex site; the report was delayed somewhat by the need to consider all of the submissions made during the public consultation period. I am presently considering the report and will make a decision on the way forward within the next few weeks.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT - WOODCHIP EXPORT ANNIVERSARY

Representation

701. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Did any representative of the Government or the Department of Conservation and Land Management attend the recent celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the export of woodchip from Western Australia?
- (2) If so, at whose expense did they attend?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It was a function funded by Bunnings Forest Products Pty Ltd.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - FLEXIBLE REMUNERATION PACKAGING

726. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Services:

- (1) With regard to the successful tenders for the Design, Development and Implementation of a Remuneration Packaging System for Government Agencies (Tender No 044A1996) which Government agencies use the services of McMillan Shakespeare for provision of flexible remuneration packaging?
- (2) Which government agencies use the services of Remunerator for provision of flexible remuneration packaging?
- (3) How many employees in each agency are utilising these services?
- (4) What processes does each agency enter into to enable -
 - (a) McMillan Shakespeare; and
 - (b) Remunerator,
 to make payments on their behalf?
- (5) Which Government agencies have opened trust accounts jointly with either service bureau?
- (6) Which Government agencies use bank accounts rather than trust accounts?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet.
Treasury.
Family and Children's Services.
Homeswest.
Secondary Education Authority.
East Perth Redevelopment Authority.
Conservation and Land Management.
Office of Energy.
Commerce and Trade.
Aboriginal Affairs.
Department of Training.
Disability Services.
Department of Resources Development.
Department of Land Administration - as advised by McMillan Shakespeare.
- (2) Ministry of Sport and Recreation.
Lotteries Commission - as advised by Remunerator Australia.
- (3) The number of employees utilising these services will need to be requested from the relevant Ministers.
- (4) Agencies deal directly with the service providers to determine their individual requirements.
- (5) All agencies using McMillan Shakespeare - detailed in (1) - have opened business management accounts jointly. Agencies using Remunerator are required to establish a salary packaging account in their own names.
- (6) Ministry of Sport and Recreation and the Lotteries Commission.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - FLEXIBLE REMUNERATION PACKAGING

727. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Services:

- (1) With regard to the two successful tenderers (McMillan Shakespeare and Remunerator) of the Design, Development and Implementation of Remuneration Packaging System for Government Agencies (Tender No 044A1996) what is the extent of government funds tied up in -
 - (a) trust account arrangements; or
 - (b) bank account arrangements?
- (2) Under both -
 - (a) trust account arrangements; and
 - (b) bank account arrangements,
 does the service provider, or the Government, retain the interest on the accounts?

- (3) If the answer to (2)(a) and (2)(b) above indicates the service provider retains the interest on these accounts, what is the estimated interest retained in a full financial year?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) (a) \$45 118.95 balance as at 11 April 1997 with McMillan Shakespeare.
(b) Nil at this stage.
- (2) Interest credited to the bureau account is applied as follows -
In McMillan Shakespeare's case - firstly, to the payment of any fees and charges payable in respect of the bureau account; and secondly, to the consultant.
In Remunerator's case the interest earned is retained by the agency.
- (3) An accurate estimate cannot be provided as it can vary depending upon the number of employees who have signed for the packages in each agency and the level that is packaged and the flow of funds through the account.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - FLEXIBLE REMUNERATION PACKAGING

Trust and Bank Account Arrangements

728. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Services:

- (1) With regard to the two successful tenderers (McMillan Shakespeare and Remunerator) of the Design, Development and Implementation of Remuneration Packaging System for Government Agencies (Tender No 044A1996) how much money does -
(a) McMillan Shakespeare; and
(b) Remunerator
have in trust accounts for the government agencies which utilise their services?
- (2) How much money does -
(a) McMillan Shakespeare; and
(b) Remunerator
have in bank accounts for the Government agencies which utilise their services?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) (a) \$45 118.95 balance as at 11 April 1997 - McMillan Shakespeare.
(b) Remunerator does not operate on a trust account basis.
- (2) (a) McMillan Shakespeare does not operate on a bank account basis.
(b) Nil at this stage.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - FLEXIBLE REMUNERATION PACKAGING

Cost

729. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Services:

- (1) With regard to tender No 044A1996, is it Government policy that Remuneration Packaging Systems for government agencies must operate at no additional cost to the agency?
- (2) Is it a requirement that each service provider supplies monthly statements to the agency and/or the employee?
- (3) Is the salary packaging for each employee to be within the parameters of total employment cost?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Arrangements are individually determined between the agencies and the service providers. McMillan Shakespeare - a monthly report is provided to the employer and a quarterly report to the employee. Remunerator - monthly reports are provided to employee and employer.

- (3) Yes. No additional salary funding will be required by agencies to provide this service.

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES - FLEXIBLE REMUNERATION PACKAGING

Workplace Agreements

730. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Services:

- (1) With regard to tender No 044A1996, how many government employees have opted for work place agreements?
- (2) How many government employees on a work place agreement have opted to enter into an arrangement of salary packaging in the following salary brackets -
- (a) under \$30 000;
 - (b) \$30 000 to \$40 000;
 - (c) \$40 000 to \$50 000;
 - (d) \$50 000 to \$60 000;
 - (e) \$60 000 to \$70 000;
 - (f) \$70 000 to \$80 000; and
 - (g) \$80 000 and above?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1)-(2) Individual agencies would need to be approached to determine how many employees have opted for workplace agreements.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EAST PERTH REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY - CHAIRMAN

Nomination by Minister for Planning

199. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning:

I refer the Minister to his answer to a question on notice of 10 April in which he stated that he nominated Richard Lewis for the position of the Chairman of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority; yet on 12 March in an interview with the chief political reporter of *The West Australian*, Anne Burns, he stressed that someone else had nominated Mr Lewis. Has the minister misled the Parliament or has he misled the public through his comments to *The West Australian*? Is this not yet another compelling reason why Western Australians cannot believe anything he says?

Mr KIERATH replied:

If the member for Maylands had asked me privately, I would have given her a straight answer. Although somebody else discussed his nomination with me and put forward his name for consideration, I officially nominated Richard Lewis for that position. The fact is many people put forward names for that position. Some people wrote to me and nominated themselves; others contacted me either in writing or by telephone and nominated other people. When someone contacted me and nominated Richard Lewis as chairman, I thought it was a very good suggestion and I put forward the nomination. That is the simple explanation and if the member had bothered to ask me directly instead of playing silly games, I would have given her that answer.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - UNIONS

Protection of Workers

200. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

I draw the Minister's attention to the claim that the union movement is essential in protecting workers, especially those who are young or casual, from unscrupulous employers. Is the Minister aware of cases where this has not been borne out?

Mr KIERATH replied:

It is fascinating to note what members opposite did in government when these sorts of situations were brought to their attention. In light of the industrial action I went back through a number of newspaper articles. I found an article

about a Labor Party Premier, Peter Dowding, threatening to introduce essential services legislation in the late 1980s. During the last term of the Labor Government a newspaper article was written about a union facing attack in the youth wages row. For the past four years members opposite have said that awards were the sacred cow and that the coalition was trying to undermine them. Members opposite went so far as to say the Government would try to abolish them. They knew the Government was telling the truth when it said it would not. No wonder the people of Western Australia rejected the Labor Party twice at an election. The article estimated that young casual workers were underpaid by \$5m over a five year period. That was when the Labor Party was in government in 1989-1993. The article stated it was because the federal Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union used the 1979 agreement instead of the award. The article accused the union of agreeing to underpayment in exchange for getting union dues from the employees, whether workers were members of the union or not. The point I am trying to make -

Ms MacTiernan: It is a stupid point.

Mr KIERATH: No, it is a good point: The union was prepared to make money out of workers being underpaid. That was okay so long as the money was going to the union; it was not okay under any other circumstances. I do not think even Arthur Daley would sink as low as something like that. I remind members opposite that the Government is serious about workers' rights. We are not prepared to stand by and see members of the Labor Party sell off workers' rights. The group of people to whom I referred were among the lowest paid people in the State - and because the union was getting union dues, that was okay.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING - EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Departmental Forecasts, Inconsistency

201. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

The Budget, handed down this month, forecast employment growth in Western Australia of 3 per cent for the following year, yet the Department of Training in its March update forecast employment growth of only 1.3 per cent. How could two government departments make such radically different forecasts on employment growth? Which forecast is the official government figure?

Mr COURT replied:

I am not aware of the forecast by the Department of Training. However, since the Leader of the Opposition has raised the matter, I will find out what the forecasts are and the basis on which those forecasts were made. In the past four years Treasury has been accurate in its forecasts on both employment growth and unemployment figures. As the member knows, the Government is having difficulty bringing unemployment to below 7 per cent. We would like to get it below that figure.

AGRICULTURE - CONDITIONAL PURCHASE AND PERPETUAL LEASE FARMS

Native Title Claims - Impact on Production

202. Mr AINSWORTH to the Minister for Primary Industry:

Will the Minister outline the impact on agricultural production in Western Australia of native title claims on farms that are conditional purchase and perpetual lease?

Mr HOUSE replied:

Over the past few days a number of native title claims were accepted over conditional purchase and -

Mr Ripper: Are you a Borbidge man or a Fischer man?

Mr HOUSE: What does it matter to the member?

Mr Ripper: I am interested.

Mr HOUSE: Is the member really interested? I reckon they are both good. I can tell the member that they are both better than he, and they are both in government, which he is not.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs Roberts: Are you too embarrassed to say?

Mr HOUSE: I said that I support both of them; they are both very good men.

Mr Carpenter: You supported Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Mr HOUSE: I did; he is a fine Australian. The member for Willagee supported a few people too whom he may not want to recognise right now.

We could take this a little further, but I return to the serious issue of the determination which must be made about native title claims over perpetual lease and conditional purchase lease land. Claims are now made over 700 properties in rural Western Australia, which means that 700 farmers face a great deal of uncertainty in the next few months. That uncertainty puts at risk their investment and their commitment to invest in the future of rural Western Australia. In my view, and that of members representing rural Western Australia, that uncertainty can be removed in only one way; that is, for the Prime Minister to make a very clear determination to legislate to remove native title claims over perpetual lease and conditional purchase lease land. I know that the Premier has had discussions with the Prime Minister about those issues in the last day or two. I urge the Prime Minister to take that action, which should be supported by all members of the Parliament. We cannot allow that uncertainty to continue.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - CHINA

Minister's Statement

203. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Labour Relations:

- (1) I refer to the Minister's media statement issued on his return from China, particularly the following claim -

During my visit last week I found our Asian neighbours are keen to adopt our safety standards but not our union problems.

Is the Minister aware of the United States State Department's 1996 human rights report? This states -

Independent trade unions are illegal in China;

the right to strike was removed from China's constitution in 1982; and

workers have been jailed recently for circulating or signing petitions calling for the right to strike and the right to organise unofficial trade unions.

- (2) Does this explain why the Minister is now such a fan of the Chinese industrial relations system?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1)-(2) I despair at the calibre of the Opposition. I went to China because this State Government has become very successful in promoting our safety standards throughout South-East Asia. The South-East Asian chambers of commerce accepted our safety standards as those which should operate throughout that region. Most of these countries come from a development base which has lagged behind our safety standards as we have some of the best standards in the world. In fact, we have set the goal to have the safest workplaces in the world by 2000, and we are simply sharing that information with our Asian neighbours. Interestingly, China, along with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, has welcomed our safety standards. All those Governments are concerned about, and want to ensure, the safety of their workers, and they have welcomed our initiatives with open arms. In fact, the State Government has been placed on the accreditation card in those countries for reaching certain standards in rigging and for crane drivers. The Indonesian and Malaysian Governments have our state department's name on their accreditation cards in recognition of our safety standards. I am prepared to share that information with our Asian neighbours for two reasons: First, it helps those countries and builds bridges of friendship between the nations and, secondly, and more importantly, it provides Australian assistance right at the workers' level.

As far as the industrial relations situation is concerned, I was merely trying to point out in that statement that China is a major competitor in our international markets. We must ensure that we lift our game and become more productive. If Chinese wage rates are one-tenth of ours, we must be ten times more productive to compete with that country. I thought the Opposition would understand that point and join with the Government in its endeavours to increase the number of Western Australian jobs rather than see them exported. I thought the Labor Party would provide its support, and not make a ridiculous attack.

SMALL BUSINESS - PRICE DISCRIMINATION

204. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the differences between the American antitrust laws and this State's trade practices law and the price discrimination that is rampant against small business?

- (2) What are his intentions in this regard?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for raising this question. The member for Geraldton will be aware that this issue was raised during a grievance debate some weeks ago. I advise the member that the Ministry of Fair Trading and I have considered the matter and it is my intention to set up a committee to investigate it. I have put a proposition to my staff that the member for Geraldton be involved in looking into these matters on my behalf. The reason I did that is that in his business career the member for Geraldton represented one of the buying groups which represents a large number of small retailers. When people think about the number of people employed by a large conglomerate such as Coles Myer, they forget that small business is the backbone of business in Western Australia. The reality is that the majority of people in the private sector are employed by small business and small business partnerships, many of which employ between 10 and 20 people.

Mr Graham interjected.

Mr SHAVE: The member for Pilbara raised a question about the committee which will be set up. It will not be a parliamentary committee; it will be a committee set up within the Ministry of Fair Trading. I have no objection to the Opposition having input into that committee. I would not have a problem with the Opposition nominating a representative to that committee.

GLOBAL DANCE FOUNDATION - BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Membership

205. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

I refer to the funding of the World Dance Congress.

- (1) On the date of the signing of the agreement with the Global Dance Foundation - 26 May 1994 - which saw \$215 000 handed to Mr Reynolds, how many members were on the board of management of the Global Dance Foundation?
- (2) On 1 July 1994, when another \$215 000 was sent to Mr Reynolds, how many members were on the board of management of the Global Dance Foundation?
- (3) How many meetings of the board of management of the Global Dance Foundation took place in 1994?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. Some parts of the member's question are wrong, but I know what he is alluding to. I have answered parts of this question previously.

- (1) I think the member meant 26 May 1995, not 26 May 1994. The date of signing of the agreement was 26 May 1995. The initial payment of \$215 000 was not handed to Mr Reynolds at the signing of the contract. In answer to a previous question I said it was paid on 13 June 1995. The chairman of the board of management advised the Western Australian Tourism Commission that there were six members on the board of management at the date of the signing of the agreement.
- (2) The chairman of the board of management advised the WA Tourism Commission that on 1 July 1995 there were six members on the board of management.
- (3) The contract does not require the foundation to provide the information on how many meetings it held.

HEALTH - MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

Report - Swan Hills Community

206. Mrs van de KLASHORST to the Minister for Health:

Will the Minister please advise what steps are being taken to meet the needs of the Swan Hills community, and indeed the wider community, as expressed in the report of the Mental Health Task Force?

Mr PRINCE replied:

The member for Swan Hills and I have just returned from Midland where I had the privilege of opening the new Swan Valley Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, which is one tangible example of the implementation of the state mental health plan. I remind the House that the plan was prepared in conjunction with the work done by the Mental

Health Task Force which was set up by my predecessor, the member for Riverton. The task force reported approximately one year ago. The state mental health plan was also released at that time. Considerable work has been done in that 12 months. In the last week I have had the pleasure of opening a mental health facility in refurbished nurses' quarters in Busselton. That facility provides long needed mental health facilities for the people of that area. Today I opened the child and adolescent mental health service in Midland.

The Public Health Association of Australia estimates that, at any one time, about 16 per cent of the population suffers from a treatable mental disorder. However, between 10 and 15 per cent of children and adolescents are diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Of that number of children and adolescents, 3 per cent have severe impairment and need assistance from a specialist child and adolescent mental health service. In the past, people living in the Swan Valley and in Kalamunda and suffering from disorders have had to go to Warwick or to Victoria Park, which are excellent clinics but which are a long way from where they live or where they may go to school. Therefore, the establishment of this service in Midland is a most appropriate bringing of services to the children. It is in Spring Street in the centre of Midland and is very accessible to everybody. It cost a quarter of a million dollars to set up, is staffed by qualified professionals, and is an excellent example of the implementation of the mental health plan.

TOURISM - ELLE RACING

Funding - Cabinet Decision

207. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

On Thursday, 1 April, the Premier was asked if a decision to fund Elle Racing went to Cabinet. He informed the House that he did not know but that he would find out. I now ask -

- (1) Did the decision to fund Elle Racing go to Cabinet?
- (2) If the decision did not go to Cabinet, who gave the approval for the funding and who now carries the responsibility for that decision?

Mr COURT replied:

That question is different from the one of which I was given notice.

- (1) The decision did not go to Cabinet. The member asked that question previously and I said I would get the answer. The first part of the program - \$500 000 - came out of the Tourism Commission's budget. The second lot of moneys, which I understand are yet to be paid, have been authorised by me as Treasurer.

Mr Brown: Who authorised the first part?

Mr COURT: As I said, it came out of the Tourism Commission's budget.

- (2) I have said that the \$500 000 came out of the Tourism Commission's budget.

LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Time and Wages Records - 48-hour Provision

208. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Labour Relations:

The former Opposition spokesperson on industrial relations claimed recently that certain provisions in the Labour Relations Legislation Amendment Bill would enable employers to break the law. Where were those provisions taken from and what effect will they have on employers?

Mr KIERATH replied:

The former Labor opposition spokesperson on labour relations said on radio that the 48 hours provision in the legislation would allow employers to cook the books. Can members believe that person was a spokesperson for the Labor Party? I have never heard such nonsense uttered with a straight face. Where did we get the 48 hours from? Are there any prizes for guessing? We got them from that sacred cow, those provisions of perfection called awards! Awards include a provision that 48 hours is okay - that is the time provided to make time and wages books available. What do we have from the Opposition? Forty-eight hours in awards is okay. However, if we put that in our legislation, it is some horrible thing that does not stand up to scrutiny! It is the same 48 hours that all employers in this State have to produce records when requested by the industrial inspectorate. I will concede that if employers can cook the books in 48 hours, with modern computers they can probably cook them in five minutes.

We simply adapted the same notice that is contained in the awards. The member did not mention the enormous penalties involved and the fact that most employers are neither crooked nor stupid; most would not cook their books

because it is not worth it. Any employers found guilty of underpaying their employees will be dealt with very severely. Since 1994-95 the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations has recovered nearly \$1m from award breaches and has effected 13 prosecutions. Any employers found cooking their books will be in very hot water indeed.

TOURISM - ELLE RACING

Sponsors, and Yacht Launching

209. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

- (1) Can the Premier inform the House of the names of the sponsors, apart from the taxpayers of Western Australia, of the Elle Racing entrant in the Whitbread yacht race?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Can the Premier also advise whether the syndicate's yacht is still under construction in Sydney; and, if so, when it will be launched in Fremantle?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(3) No; I cannot. That is the responsibility of Elle Racing Pty Ltd which is putting the syndicate together. I am advised that the yacht is under construction in Sydney, but I have not been advised of the date on which it will be finished.

PINJARRA HOSPITAL

Future

210. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:

What progress has been made with regard to the future of the Pinjarra hospital?

Mr PRINCE replied:

I have been asked about the future and the planning for the Pinjarra hospital. As those opposite should be only too well aware - I have made this point on a number of occasions - the Mandurah hospital, which was far too small when it was built, is being rebuilt and expanded to accommodate a mixture of 120 public and private beds. That means there must be a close, long and hard look at what will happen to the Pinjarra hospital. The construction of the hospital in Mandurah is under way. The Pinjarra hospital is a much older building. A planning and strategy group has been set up. It will be chaired by the chairperson of the Peel Health Services Council, which runs the services for both hospitals and elsewhere, and will comprise local government representatives and others. This group will engage in a series of community consultations beginning in a few weeks, and I understand nine meetings are planned.

Arising out of that and also some expert studies about what is appropriate, I expect to receive some advice from this group later this year. I expect it to confirm the estimate I have already that a new accident and emergency facility will be necessary in Pinjarra to meet the needs of the surrounding population. The other needs that may be identified and how they may be addressed are matters for the planning and strategy group. I expect this group to look at whether the existing building - that is, the Pinjarra hospital - is capable of partial or, if appropriate, full refurbishment, to meet other needs, or whether it might be more appropriate to build a completely new facility.

GRACETOWN TRAGEDY

Accident Site - Responsibility

211. Mr McGOWAN to the Premier:

I refer to the Gracetown tragedy and ask, firstly, why, seven months later, neither the State Government nor the Augusta-Margaret River Shire Council has accepted responsibility for the land where the accident occurred; and, secondly, who has responsibility for that land.

Mr COURT replied:

Maps are available which explain who has the responsibility on what land. Surely, with an inquiry taking place, it is appropriate that it be allowed to carry out its task. It was a tragedy.

Mrs Roberts: Don't you know?

Mr COURT: The member opposite sits there and says that; this is a pretty serious question.

Dr Gallop: Have you read page 3 of *The West Australian* today?

Mr COURT: Yes. We have been asked about the shire land, and all of that information has been provided. It is appropriate that the inquiry -

Mr Brown: The father asked you, Premier, and you ignored his letter. He wrote to you and you ignored his letter. It is disgraceful.

Mr COURT: I take exception to that.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr COURT: It is appropriate that the inquest be allowed to carry out its responsibilities and any information -
Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: There is a factual answer about the land and it has been given to the respective parties.

DRUGS - HEROIN

Overdoses - Budget Allocation

212. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:

I refer to the surge in heroin related deaths in Western Australia - an increase of 506 per cent since 1991 -

- (1) What new money has been allocated in the Budget to reduce the number of deaths from heroin overdose?
- (2) What new initiatives have been considered by the drug task force to stop this shocking waste of life?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(2) I am very concerned about the trends in the past -

Mr McGinty: What are you doing about it?

Mr COURT: If the member were to allow me to answer the question -

Mr McGinty: Just as you did the last one.

Mr COURT: We are very concerned about the trend that has occurred in the past six months -

Mr McGinty: It is more than the past six months; it is more like the past six years.

The SPEAKER: The member for Fremantle will come to order.

Mr COURT: I mention the past six months because in that time there has been a rapid increase in the number of heroin related deaths. I am informed that that is the result of a very high grade of heroin being available. A drug task force has identified the extent of the problem in this State. The Government has been working constructively with a wide range of people, including parents, children, medical authorities, the Police Service and service organisations around the State.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: If members opposite had attended some of the public meetings, seminars and launches that the Government has organised in relation to these programs they would be very impressed with the work taking place. The area that concerns us is the detection of drugs coming into the country and the ability of the Australian Federal Police to carry out its responsibilities.

Mr Graham: How many police do we need?

Mr COURT: The AFP has cut its funding and the number of officers involved. It is a great concern.

Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: We have increased our numbers considerably.

The Government is concerned about the lack of charges successfully laid against people involved in the heroin trade. However, if the member who asked the question is serious about getting answers, I can have him briefed by members of the task force.

DRUGS - HEROIN

Overdoses - Budget Allocation

213. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:

- (1) What new money has been allocated in this year's Budget to address this shocking increase in the number of people dying from heroin overdose?
- (2) What new initiatives have been undertaken? I do not want the Premier's usual glib, throwaway answer.

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) If the member wants details about what is in the Budget, we are about to conduct the Estimates Committees and I will provide them at that forum. If he were serious about the question, he would have given me notice and he would have received a detailed answer.

STATE BUDGET - AGENCY RESTRUCTURING

Purpose

214. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Last week I asked the Premier to give details about the \$20m allocated in the state Budget for "agency" restructuring. On what will that money be spent?

Mr COURT replied:

I have provided that detail to the member's office.

Dr Gallop: I did not receive it. Can you provide an answer now?

Mr COURT: No, not off the top of my head. The member wanted the information and I provided it.

GLOBAL DANCE FOUNDATION - FUNDING

Tourism Commission Advice

215. Mr BROWN to the Premier:

With regard to the Premier's decision to approve the upfront payment of \$430 000 to Mr Peter Reynolds of the Global Dance Foundation -

- (1) Did the Premier receive a memorandum dated 21 October 1994 from the Chief Executive Officer of the Tourism Commission saying that a payment upfront to Mr Reynolds was "not acceptable"?
- (2) Was the Premier informed that the government-appointed tourism commissioners did not support an upfront payment to Mr Reynolds?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) All of the information on these matters has been provided to the member. If he wants to know whether I know the date of each document in the two inch thick set that was provided to him, I do not. If he is serious about an answer, if he gives me the detail, I will provide it to him.

The SPEAKER: Members, that ends questions without notice. We have had a little extra time. We have had 16 questions, plus a supplementary.
