

Legislative Council

Thursday, 18 August 1983

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF REMUNERATION (SENIOR PUBLIC OFFICERS) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. J. M. Berinson (Attorney General), read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. J. M. BERINSON (North Central Metropolitan—Attorney General) [2.51 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

The legislation proposes a temporary reduction in remuneration for senior public officers, a reduction in the public interest for a period of 12 months, and has been modelled on the Salaries and Wages Freeze Act in its application. In this regard the Bill is applied as widely as possible to senior public officers who would be entitled to "notional remuneration" at a rate exceeding \$29 500 per annum.

There is provision for the exclusion of officers who are considered in a broader context to be judicial appointments as well as the staff of identified tertiary education institutions.

This recognises the judiciary's special position under the Constitution of this State although, at the same time, the Government has accepted voluntary offers of a reduction in remuneration initiated by the judiciary. This will result in voluntary contributions amounting to about \$300 000 for the 50 or so appointments involved. The exclusion of staff at universities, WAIT, and the WA College of Advanced Education has been incorporated in the legislation to ensure that Commonwealth funds for these institutions continue at planned levels.

After taking into account these exceptions, about 3 940 Government officers are likely to be affected by the legislation.

"Remuneration" has been defined to mean "any wage, salary emolument or earnings and includes allowances, gratuities or bonuses".

The legislation also makes provision for certain allowances to be excluded for the purposes of determining "notional remuneration" in assessing the amount of temporary reduction. In general terms, the allowances excluded under schedule 1 are those related to penalties, disabilities or reimbursement for expenses arising in the course of employment.

For the purposes of assessing the amount of temporary reduction of remuneration, "notional remuneration" means the annual rate of remuneration on—

1 September 1983; or

the day before the operative date of the national wage case if it is prior to 1 September 1983.

This definition ensures that the temporary reduction does not apply to increases awarded in relation to the national wage case either in August or September 1983 and thereafter.

Subject to Commonwealth Constitutional powers, the Bill has precedence over all other legislation, including regulations, rules, orders, determinations and the like.

The amount of temporary reduction in remuneration is determined under clause 6 and schedule 2 of the Bill. The formula prescribed in schedule 2 provides for the following—

A reduction of 83.75 per cent of the difference between \$29 500 and "notional remuneration" up to a maximum of \$33 500 per annum;

where the "notional remuneration" exceeds \$33 500 per annum a reduction of 10 per cent of "notional remuneration" shall apply;

a reduction of 12 per cent of "notional remuneration" for Ministers of the Crown and the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet; and

a reduction of 15 per cent of "notional remuneration" for the Premier.

For example, a temporary reduction of \$3 350 would apply for the 12 months of the reduction period in the case of a person who has an annual rate of remuneration of \$33 500 at or before 1 September.

The amount of the reduction can increase only where a person is promoted, for example, and the

notional remuneration increases so that the temporary reduction at the higher salary level applies.

It is pointed out that the reduction provisions do not affect increases in remuneration awarded by industrial tribunals, including national wage case decisions. The special formula incorporated in this legislation has been devised also to avoid the possibility of a senior officer receiving a lower salary than an officer in a subordinate position after the temporary reduction takes effect.

The temporary reduction in remuneration is to apply in respect of every instalment of the remuneration payable commencing on the first day of the first pay period after 1 September, and ending with the last pay period ending within 12 months from commencement.

Allowances tied to or calculated in relation to the level or rate of remuneration are to be calculated at the reduced rate where applicable. For example, overtime would be calculated on the basis of the rate of remuneration after the application of the temporary reduction.

Where the temporary reduction in remuneration has caused or is likely to cause financial hardship to an "affected person", the Treasurer may—

Exempt an "affected person" from the reduction;

reduce the rate or amount of remuneration reduction; or

authorise or direct that a loan be offered to the "affected person".

The Treasurer is also empowered to exempt any class or classes of "affected person" from the temporary reduction in remuneration.

Provision is made to ensure that a court is not prevented from exercising any powers with respect to the determination of remuneration payable to a person affected by reduction in remuneration. This enables a court, such as the Industrial Commission, to determine an increase based on "notional salary" plus any other increase such as a national wage case rise.

In addition, the higher rate of remuneration arising from any increases awarded by a court exercising its powers under the Act, would not be subject to the temporary reduction. Simply, this means that increases in remuneration awarded by a court after the commencement of the reduction will not cause a Government officer to become subject to the temporary reduction if the officer was unaffected prior to the increase. The operation of this provision will be subject to the Salaries and Wages Freeze Act while it remains in force.

The Government has already announced that the Act will be reviewed as a result of the September national wage case decision. Nevertheless, the Government will ensure through the Minister for Industrial Relations exercising his powers under the Salaries and Wages Freeze Act, that all Government employees' wages and salaries are fully adjusted for the increases awarded by industrial tribunals in relation to the September national wage case decision.

The Bill provides for the maintenance of superannuation entitlements for affected Government officers. In this regard, the Government has undertaken to maintain its level of contributions based on levels of remuneration that would have applied without any temporary reduction.

All Government officers retiring during the salary reduction period will receive superannuation and retiring allowance payments at the salary rates that would have applied if the salary reductions had not been in force. The same provisions will apply in respect of payments related to termination initiated by either the employer or employee.

Provision is made for the reduction not to apply to the remuneration of Government officers on long service leave. The Bill ensures that temporary reduction in remuneration is applied consistently and, in particular, the Treasurer is empowered to ameliorate any difficulties and remove anomalies due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances.

For the information of members, the Bill was referred to the Government's tripartite council on industrial relations prior to submission to Cabinet. The council's view was communicated to the Government as follows—

The committee carefully examined the Temporary Reduction in Remuneration (Senior Public Officers) Bill and after various statements of attitude towards the principles behind the legislation, resolved that it should concern itself on this occasion not with the philosophy, but with the Government's stated needs and the effectiveness of the draft legislation to meet those needs.

The committee was of the view that the provisions of the legislation should meet the requirements of Government policy and the mechanics of the legislation should make adequate provisions for the processing of anomalies and cases of excessive hardship.

The cost cutting measures adopted by the Government, to which I referred earlier in my speech, are estimated to achieve target savings of around \$30

million, of which approximately \$11 million will accrue during the next 12 months under this Bill.

The Government recognises that the introduction of these proposals is possibly the most serious and unprecedented action taken by a Government since the 1930s. However, the decision to do so more clearly demonstrates the seriousness of this State's financial position and the Government's firm commitment to managing finances to ensure that we live within our means.

The alternatives confronting the Government amounted to various forms of expenditure curtailment ranging from the shedding of services, together with consequential retrenchment of staff, to extending the wages freeze for a further 12 months.

In formulating Budget proposals, the Government gave first priority to job security.

In the main I have confined my remarks to the content of the Bill and, in addition, an explanatory memorandum prepared and issued by the Premier is available to members to assist in their deliberations.

For the information of the House, it is my intention to place on notice certain amendments to the Bill which will accommodate undertakings given by the Premier in the Legislative Assembly. These include a minor amendment to clause 4 (5), the deletion of the provision to publish the names of exempted persons in the *Government Gazette*, and some minor amendments to schedule 1.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [3.01 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mining: Wilderness Society

HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [3.02 p.m.]: I believe the House should not adjourn until I have made a brief comment on a matter I wish to draw to the attention of the Government. This matter has been referred to already by me by way of questions addressed to the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Mines. The questions concern the activities of the Wilderness Society in Western Australia. I wish to quote from a report that was published in *The Australian* on 19 July 1983. The article is headed

"Wilderness Society sets sights on the west" and reads as follows—

THE Wilderness Society has made Western Australia its next target, and has started drawing up a hit list which includes millions of dollars worth of government developments and private enterprise mining exploration proposed for the State.

A list of large tracts of land the society wants to protect, and private enterprise and government projects it intends to investigate, is expected to be finalised within a month.

Two projects already on the hit list are the State Government's proposed multi-million dollar, international standard tourist complex near Wittenoom, 1 467 km north of Perth, and the CRA's planned mining exploration near the Drysdale River in the Kimberleys.

The Argyle diamond project on Lake Argyle Kununurra, 3 318 km north of Perth, will also be investigated, the West Australian co-ordinator of the Wilderness Society, Mr John Bailey, said yesterday.

Mr Bailey said CRA's proposed exploration and the State Government's proposed tourist development "have been given top priority" and "any mining in a wilderness area is unacceptable".

"At the moment we are trying to get an inventory together which will show what threats some wilderness areas in Western Australia are exposed to," he said.

"We are mainly interested in the Kimberley region and other large tracts of land in the State which deserve to be protected."

Mr Bailey said it was a major move by the Wilderness Society into Western Australia and one which the director of the society, Dr Bob Brown, had always hoped to get off the ground.

"Western Australia is as much under threat as Tasmania, because it has so much wilderness. Mining is this State's threat," Mr Bailey said. Feral animals such as buffalos and donkeys were also a major concern to the society because of their effects on the State's natural fauna.

"The Tasmanian dam issue has awakened many people to the needs of conservation, and we can now look to other home States," he said.

In the same edition of *The Australian*—19 July 1983—the editorial was headed "Days in the wil-

derness" and I propose to read an extract from it as follows—

The Australian landscape has always been subject to man-made change. Preceding white settlement, the Aborigines themselves used fire, so that they could live from it. Equally, white settlers for now nearly two centuries have changed the country's contours and its ecology to meet the demands of an expanding society. It is possible to argue, for example, that if a Wilderness Society had existed in the '50s, there would have been no Snowy River scheme, one of our great developmental projects and a major contribution, ultimately, to industrial and agricultural progress.

The second danger is that the recent High Court ruling on the Franklin makes it clear that any strong single issue campaign, of the kind the reborn society plans to mount against tourism and diamond mining in Western Australia, could succeed if a government can be persuaded to have the relevant areas listed as part of the World Heritage.

I asked a question of the Minister for the Environment the other day concerning the statements attributed to Mr John Bailey, who is the Western Australian co-ordinator of the Wilderness Society. The Wilderness Society has had recent success in relation to the Gordon-below-Franklin River dam. I do not wish to become involved in that argument. I wish to say only that the Wilderness Society is a force to be reckoned with and yet neither the Minister for the Environment nor the Minister for Mines is aware of its projects or its proposed attack on tourism and mining development in Western Australia and activities in relation to environmental issues generally.

I wished to raise this matter yesterday but I noticed that the Minister for Mines was not present, being absent I understand on Government business, so I deferred the matter until today; but it cannot be deferred any longer.

It is a matter of considerable concern that the two principal Ministers affected by these proposals should not be aware of them and it is for this reason I am drawing the Government's attention to the assaults likely to be made, in view of the remarks in that Press report. I am concerned with the statement that mining is such a threat to the State of Western Australia. Indeed it is of concern that these major projects—the proposed new town at Wittenoom and the C.R.A. exploration in the Kimberleys—are on the hit list of this society. We must take this matter seriously.

It is also of concern that neither Minister was aware of the existence of these threats and that neither Minister had either read the report or had his attention drawn to it.

In the case of the Minister for the Environment he had several days' notice of the question that I asked and his department should have informed him of it. However, he said he was not aware of it and asked me to submit a copy of the report for his benefit. It surprises me that his department was not aware of it.

In the case of the Minister for Mines I asked him a question without notice concerning this matter. The fourth part of the question I asked him was as follows—

If he is not aware of any of the above matters, will he take action to investigate and counter any such moves?

The Minister's reply was as follows—

This Government is determined to ensure that appropriate development proceeds. I am not aware of any action being taken by any organisation of which the honourable member spoke which would prevent appropriate exploration and development.

I take particular note of the word "appropriate" which appears twice in the Minister's answer. Of course that word hides a multitude of possibilities. It is a question of degree as to whether the Minister considers mining is appropriate in any particular situation.

We have before us reference to the CRA exploration in the Drysdale River area and the CRA diamond project at Kununurra. They are two different projects and whether the Minister considers it might be appropriate to allow the Wilderness Society to intervene in either of these projects remains in some doubt because of his reply. Therefore, I am concerned that the Minister charged with mining should be unaware of these threats and should give an answer which is ambiguous, to say the least.

I am not satisfied with that answer. I believe there should be no equivocation whatever in relation to such important matters for which he is responsible under his Mining portfolio. There is no room for ambiguity in his answer or in his attitude.

Passport Applications: Witnessing

HON. P. H. LOCKYER (Lower North) [3.10 p.m.]: I do not believe the House should adjourn prior to my bringing to the attention of members a follow-up to the question I asked the Attorney General today. This matter concerns the

certification and the witnessing of Australian passport application forms.

I was approached today by Mr Lester Pell, a Captain in the Reserve Army and a person who has spent 17 years in the Reserve Army, about a problem concerning the certification on passport forms.

Last month Mr Pell was presented with an application by a work colleague who wished to go overseas and who required witnessing of his passport form. This colleague advised him that he had been to a justice of the peace to have his passport witnessed only to be advised that justices of the peace are no longer eligible to witness these forms.

Mr Pell and his work colleague went through the instructions on the back of the form. I have here an application form, and I will read out to members the list of the people eligible to witness these forms. They may be witnessed by members of the Federal and State Parliament; members of the House of Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory; and members of the Legislative Assemblies in the Northern Territory and the Norfolk Islands; aldermen and councillors of municipal and shire councils; town clerks or shire clerks or secretaries; medical practitioners; dentists; judges; magistrates; clerks of petty sessions; clerks of courts; sheriffs; bailiffs; school teachers of five years' service; postmasters; police officers of the rank of sergeant and above, and officers in charge of stations; officers of the armed services; Ministers of religion designated as marriage celebrants, Federal, State, Territory, and Norfolk Island; public servants of at least 10 years' permanent service; and statutory office holders of at least five years' service.

When these two gentlemen read the instructions on the form, naturally they believed that Mr Pell, a Captain in the Reserve Army, was eligible to sign the application, and he did so. Today Mr Pell was amazed to receive back from the Department of Foreign Affairs a reprimand saying that, as he was not a full-time serving member of the Armed Forces, he was a person ineligible to witness this form. Not only that, the passport application had to be made all over again and it appears that the person concerned will not be able to take the overseas trip planned because the passport will not be available in time.

That in itself is bad enough, but it brings once again to the attention of all gathered, the ridiculous situation that has come about. I do not know whether the previous Federal Government or the present Federal Government is to blame but we should ensure justices of the peace and members

of the Reserve Forces can witness these forms. It has been explained to this House that justices of the peace are responsible citizens—people who are deemed responsible to witness all appropriate State forms. In the case of Mr Pell, he has had 17 years' service in the Reserve Force—he has risen to the rank of Captain in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. He has a certificate signed by the Governor General saying that he is an officer in the Reserve Army, and yet he is not allowed to witness a passport form. It is very wrong to allow this situation to continue.

I am sympathetic with the Department of Foreign Affairs because I believe it is quite right that it should tighten up the conditions applying to passports. However, if one reads through the list of people who are eligible to witness passports, it is difficult to understand the difference between the responsibility of a clerk of a shire council and the responsibility of a Captain in the Reserve Army. It is difficult to see the difference between a postmaster and a justice of the peace. I cannot accept that justices of the peace and officers in the Reserve Army should be excluded from witnessing forms.

I thank the Attorney General for his advice to me on this matter. He told me to tell my constituent to contact his Federal member. I shall also contact the appropriate Federal Minister. I ask the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council also to give assistance in this area. It is well time to take up with the appropriate authorities the fact that people are being given the run-around when it comes to having passports witnessed. Until the rules were changed recently, justices of the peace were able to witness these forms, but they are no longer permitted to do that. We find it ridiculous that officers of the Reserve Army are treated in the same way also.

Liquor: Wine Tax

HON. NEIL OLIVER (West) [3.17 p.m.]: I would like to draw the attention of the House to what could be termed some good news and perhaps some bad news. Possibly in the last few days some members of the House have received a telegram from the Western Australian Hotels Association regarding the likelihood of increases in licensing fees and the effect of such an increase in the present economic climate. Of course this is not the first group to be concerned about added taxes. In order to raise additional revenue, Governments are seeking to raise taxes and charges. The telegram says—

The imposition of an increase in liquor licensing of course will seriously undermine the economic viability of the industry, create

further unemployment, stifle the development of tourism by inflation, suppress economic recovery and hit the pocket of the working man.

I know that the Leader of the Government in this House—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth): Order! I would like to draw the member's attention to Standing Order No. 84 which prevents him referring to a Bill which has been introduced in another place.

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. In connection with the concern about those taxes, I would like to refer to a matter concerning my constituents who are in the grape growing and wine production industry. My constituents are concerned about the likelihood of an imposition of a wine tax at Federal level. I would like to say that this matter is of increasing concern to the wine industry. I recall making representations on behalf of the industry to the Federal Government in 1977. The tax had been removed prior to this, but rumours were abroad that it was to be reimposed.

Mr Deputy President (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth), you are engaged in primary industry and I am sure you can understand the concern of grape growers and wine producers—in most cases the two run parallel.

If such a wine tax were imposed now, it would be at a very bad time for the industry—a time when it is suffering from the dumping of surplus poor quality wine from other States. The effect would be especially disastrous in the Swan Valley.

Many Governments seem to start off their Budget deliberations by floating leaks or floating balloons to get a reaction.

Hon. D. K. Dans: Or floating in wine!

Hon. NEIL OLIVER: The proposed imposition of this tax comes at one of the momentous times in the history of the wine industry in Western Australia. I was prompted to raise this matter because of an article which appeared in *The West Australian* this morning. For the first time in the history of the Western Australian wine industry a company in this State has won the most coveted and prestigious award; that is, the Jimmy Watson memorial trophy. That award was presented to the Cape Mentelle vineyards.

The article to which I refer indicated a WA wine had won a top award and Mr David Hohnen, one of the shareholders in Cape Mentelle, met with the Victorian Governor, Sir Brian Murray, yesterday to be presented with it.

I extend my congratulations to the Cape Mentelle vineyards on winning this coveted and prestigious award. I hope the Leader of the House uses his best endeavours to ensure the Premier of Western Australia brings this matter to the attention of the Federal Government, because the imposition of this iniquitous tax would have a disastrous effect on a primary producing industry; that is, the wine industry.

HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [3.22 p.m.]: I support sincerely the remarks made by the Hon. Neil Oliver and the concern he expressed about the proposed introduction of this tax on wine. He mentioned the Western Australian wine industry and I refer particularly to the south-west corner of the State where approximately 25 vineyards grow grapes for wine at the present time. Reference was made to the success of the Cape Mentelle vineyards and I indicate that other vineyards have had notable successes also.

The wine industry is a fledgling industry in the south-west and it is particularly important to that corner of the world. Any financial imposition at this stage of its development could be devastating.

I add my concern to that expressed by the Hon. Neil Oliver and I hope the Leader of the House will use his good offices to make representations to the appropriate authorities to ensure this industry is protected from the possible imposition of this tax.

I mention the south-west wine industry because of its value to tourism. The Busselton-Margaret River area recently has benefited enormously as a result of the establishment of the wine industry there. Anyone in the Department of Tourism or, indeed, anyone connected with the tourist industry in the south-west would confirm what I have said. Therefore, I request the Government to foster this industry as best it can.

Passport Applications: Witnessing

HON. P. H. WELLS (North Metropolitan) [3.24 p.m.]: I wish to draw the attention of the House to two points. The first relates to a matter to which the Hon. Phil Lockyer referred in connection with the ability of justices of the peace to witness the signing of passports. I ask the Attorney to make renewed representations on behalf of justices of the peace in this State who have suffered in this respect. The position of justices of the peace in Western Australia is different from that of those in New South Wales. In answer to a question I asked in relation to this issue, the Federal Minister for Ethnic Affairs indicated there were in excess of 50 000 justices of the peace in

New South Wales and it was difficult to check them out.

It appears from the information provided by local justices of the peace that a difference exists between justices of the peace who are appointed in this State and those appointed in New South Wales in terms of the way in which they are checked out, and certainly in relation to their appointment. If that is so, strong representations should be made in that regard.

However, the main reason I raise this issue is that difficulties occur in this respect in a number of ethnic communities. My attention has been drawn to this aspect by not one, but a number of requests from JPs who are members of ethnic clubs which I visit. The people who attend a club would get to know the justice of the peace, whereas they may not necessarily know very many other people. However, it occurred to me that position would obtain not only in ethnic clubs, but also in any other community clubs.

One of the requirements for witnessing is that the witness must have known the person concerned for a period. It seems likely that, if a member of an ethnic or local club is a justice of the peace, any long-term members of the club should be able to ask him to witness these types of documents.

I believe the opportunity for people, in particular, members of ethnic communities, to have passports witnessed by eligible people has been diminished. Therefore, I ask the Attorney to make further representations on this matter stressing the difficulties some people experience in this area while at the same time recognising the fine services performed by justices of the peace. I ask the Attorney to make representations to the Federal Government in order that justices of the peace may be reinstated as authorised witnesses. Such a move would be in the interests of the ethnic community and I suggest that, if various ethnic councils could get together on this matter, they themselves could make similar representations.

Mitchell Freeway: Off-ramps

Secondly, I draw the attention of the House to an issue I raised casually last night which related to the alteration to stage 5 of the Mitchell Freeway. I was told it had been decided no junction would be built at Duffy Road in my electorate. I was astounded when an interjector indicated I might be incorrect in my understanding of the position. As a result, at the earliest opportunity this morning I telephoned the engineer of my local shire. He was almost as astounded as I was when I read the answer to the question about this matter. I indicated I would like to know what was going on, particularly as I thought the local council would know the position.

The engineer said he did not know what was going on, but he would get back to me. Approximately 10 minutes later he did so, and he said, "I have just contacted the Main Roads Department and an officer there mentioned that plan was withdrawn a couple of days ago". That was approximately the time I asked the question.

It seems incredible that the very departments which are ploughing our freeways through various areas cannot even communicate with the local government authority in this regard. It was indicated another proposition would be put forward in two or three weeks and that would have to go before the council. One would imagine that if the status of the plans is changed, even if the department does not communicate with the people involved, it should let the local authority know about the change. I am quite certain the answer to the local authority will be to the effect that the letter is in the mail. It probably went via Darwin.

That is an incredible situation. About the time I asked the question, the plans which were still being distributed from the local council were suddenly withdrawn and we will have to wait another two or three weeks before a new proposition is put forward.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.28 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WATER RESOURCES

Agaton: Implementation

156. Hon. W. G. ATKINSON, to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Did the Hon. D. C. Parker, M.L.A., give a firm commitment, on behalf of the present Government, a few days before the last State election with regard to the implementation of the Agaton water scheme?
- (2) Did the Hon. D. C. Parker, M.L.A., also announce that the ALP on becoming the Government would move to have the scheme listed as a number one priority for application for Federal funds and that the first stage would be put into operation?
- (3) Why have those announced undertakings not been carried out?
- (4) If the commitment given by the Hon. D. C. Parker, M.L.A., is not correct, why has not the Government announced its intentions with regard to the Agaton water scheme?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) and (2) No. Prior to the election the Hon. D. C. Parker during a visit to Mukinbudin indicated that one of the reasons that the Agaton scheme had not gone ahead was that the previous Government had not made it a matter of priority and indeed answers to questions in Parliament had revealed that it had a fairly low priority in matters forwarded to the National Water Resources Council for their consideration. He indicated that he thought that the opening up of the north-eastern wheatbelt was a tremendously important matter and he thought that there should be a much higher priority accorded to it.

He also indicated from his observation of the scheme, the proportion which took the supply to Bindi Bindi was a socially desirable and necessary extension to the water supplies in any event and since that was stage 1 of the scheme, he could see no reason why it could not be accommodated within the normal water supply programme of the Public Works Department.

- (3) and (4) In the current financial climate, the difficulties of funding a project as large as the Agaton scheme are enormous. The estimated cost of \$60 million is well beyond the State's resources and a major contribution from the Commonwealth Government is essential.

The Commonwealth Government has already cancelled the bicentennial water programme and has recently advised the States that while it will continue the existing Commonwealth water resources programme in 1983-84, it will also be reviewing that programme during the year. In these circumstances, there appears little chance of any immediate Commonwealth finance for the Agaton scheme. Therefore, until some definite indications are received from the Commonwealth, it would be inappropriate for the Government to make any final decision on the proposed scheme.

EDUCATION: DEPARTMENT

Staff: Replacement Policy

175. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the WA Education Department subject to the Government's stated policy of replacing only 50 per cent of staff who have resigned or retired from the department?
- (2) How many employees formerly with the WA Education Department have resigned or retired since 1 March 1983?
- (3) How many new employees has the Education Department engaged since 1 March 1983 including those in the Minister for Education's own office?
- (4) In what areas were the staff savings mainly achieved, if any?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes, except that every effort is made to minimise effect on school based staff.
- (2) (a) Teaching staff—246;
(b) Public Service staff—25;
(c) non-teaching staff—596.
- (3) (a) Teaching staff—295

This figure includes appointments to new schools and schools with additional classes as a result of increased enrolments;

(b) Public Service staff—15;

(c) non-teaching staff—519;

This figure includes staff who will lapse at the end of second term and be replaced at the beginning of third term.

(4) The majority of staff savings have been in the Public Service staff and non-teaching staff.

FIRES

Shannon River National Park

181. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for the Environment:

Further to question No. 123 of 4 August 1983—

(1) What are the names of the people on the working group developing the strategic working plan?

(2) What are their terms of reference?

(3) How often have they met?

(4) With whom have they met?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

(1) Dr P. E. S. Christensen

Dr J. R. Watson

(2) To determine a basic access network complementary to that in adjacent areas.

To provide a basic fire protection system complementary to that in adjacent areas.

To recommend area zonation possibly in the following categories:

Wildlife sanctuaries, e.g. existing Forests Department's conservation management priority areas;

limited access areas from which vehicles are to be excluded, e.g. proclaimed disease risk areas and the Walpole National Park wilderness area;

features of interest—

settlement sites;

other developments, existing and proposed e.g. walk trails, camp sites and picnic spots etc.

(3) On 11 occasions.

(4) Chairman of the National Parks Authority; Director, National Parks; Acting Conservator of Forests; councillors,

Shire of Manjimup; senior officers of the Forests Department and National Parks Authority.

198 and 200. *These questions were postponed.*

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: STAFF

Additional: Political Adviser

201. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Lands and Surveys:

(1) Has the Minister appointed a ministerial adviser in common with the practice of the Premier and most other Ministers?

(2) If not, can the Minister explain why it is that, unlike most of his Cabinet colleagues, he is able to discharge his duties without the assistance of such an adviser?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

(1) No.

(2) The matter of appointing an adviser has been and will continue to be kept under consideration.

HOSPITALS: STAFF

Orderlies and Domestic: Wage Increase

202. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

(1) Would the Minister confirm his statement as correct on wage increases of 6.83 per cent to public hospital orderlies and domestics as reported in *The West Australian* on Friday, 6 May, which stated a total of 4 500 people benefited?

(2) Would a figure nearer 5 600 people who have benefited, be more accurate?

(3) If the figure given by the Minister is incorrect, would he amend his estimate of the cost of \$1.24 million for the 1982-83 financial year?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

(1) I did not make the statement as suggested by the member. However, the statement was based on information supplied by my department.

(2) Approximately 5 400 received the benefit of the increase.

(3) The initial costing of \$1.24 million has been revised and the final costing for the 1982-83 financial year was \$1.155 million.

HEALTH

Salt

203. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to page 1 of the *Weekend Australian* of 13-14 August and ask—

- (1) Has the Minister's attention been drawn to the report of a national health survey submitted to the National Health and Medical Research Council which calls on Australians to halve their intake of salt?
- (2) If so, does the Minister and his department accept that excessive intakes of salt have an adverse effect on the human body?
- (3) If so, will the Minister be introducing legislation to ban the advertising of salt products?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The report is being studied at the moment, but I am quite sure it does not recommend legislation to ban the advertising of salt products. What it does recommend is that salt content of packaged foods should be indicated in a way the consumer could understand if the concentration was excessive.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Perth City Council: Maintenance of Essential Services

204. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) What steps did the Minister or Government take to ensure essential services would be maintained to the public in the Perth City area when the TLC threatened to limit these services during the Perth City Council garbage dispute?
- (2) What steps did the Minister or Government take to protect the private interests of those Perth City Councillors threatened if they failed to make a decision favourable to the trade unions?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) and (2) There was no need to contemplate any action, given that the dispute

was industrial in nature and was before the appropriate tribunal. The resolution of that dispute has simply strengthened the Government's resolve to rely on the normal processes of arbitration to resolve industrial disputes.

ABORIGINES

Children: Survey of Parents

205. Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Mines representing the Minister for Youth and Community Services:

- (1) Has the Community Welfare Department recently carried out a survey of Aboriginal parents in the North West and Eastern Goldfields asking them if they preferred that their children be placed in Government-run accommodation or foster homes rather than in missions?
- (2) If so, what was the result of the questionnaire?
- (3) Why was it found necessary to have this information?
- (4) What is—
 - (a) the current; and
 - (b) proposed; Government policy?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) (a) Wherever possible all efforts are made to assist children to remain within their immediate or extended family unit. Where accommodation is required away from the family unit, either for education or welfare reasons, a decision is made in each individual case, based on considerations of the best interests of the child; where substitution care is arranged for a child all efforts are made towards enabling the child to maintain contact with and to visit the family as frequently as practical;
- (b) no proposal to change policy.

TOURISM: TOURISTS

Number and Spending

206. Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Tourism:

I refer to the Australian Tourist Commission Annual Report of 1981-82 wherein it states "... visitor arrivals in 1981 totalled 936 727 spending \$1 090 million". Of these figures, what was the West Australian share—both visitor arrivals and spending?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Western Australia's share is estimated at 135 800 (14 per cent) spending \$105.5 million.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Balingup

207. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Education:

When was the last repair and renovation done on the Balingup primary school?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

The school was constructed in 1968 and continued preventative maintenance has kept the buildings in good condition.

"INDICES TO LEGISLATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA"

Second Edition

208. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Attorney General:

- (1) With reference to the foreword to the pilot volume issued on 1 August 1956, which contains indices to the Statute Law and Ordinances of Western Australia and Others, does the Minister consider that it is now expedient to publish a second edition of this volume?

- (2) If not, why not?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) I refer to the reply given to question number 224 on 16 September 1980.

The situation is unchanged.

209. *This question was postponed.*

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Government Initiatives

210. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Employment and Administrative Services:

Further to my question No. 155 of 16 August 1983—

- (1) Who is on the State employment task force?

- (2) What are the terms of reference?

- (3) What jobs have been created specifically by the job creation unit?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) The State employment task force is comprised of a Director, Dr J. C. Wood, and four research officers.

In addition, there are three support staff and a graduate research assistant.

- (2) The State employment task force has been established to review existing State administrative machinery pertaining to employment and training and to develop employment and training policies for the Government.

- (3) The job creation unit is responsible for the implementation of Commonwealth and State Government employment initiatives. Under the Federal wage pause Programme, 143 jobs have been created to date. Further processing of wage pause moneys submissions is under way. In addition to administering the wage pause programme, the job creation unit will also administer the community employment programme.

STATE FORESTS: PINE

Planting: Catchment Areas

211. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Forests:

Has the Forests Department had any consultation with the Public Works Department on planting pines in catchment areas to reduce salinity?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Yes.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Shannon River: Additional Staff

212. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Forests:

Further to my question 152 of 16 August 1983 to the Minister for the Environment, how many extra staff have

been allocated to the Forests Department to manage the Shannon basin as if it were a national park?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

None. An application has been made for Commonwealth employment creation funds for this purpose.

RAILWAYS

Bowelling-Wagin: Reopening

213. Hon. W. N. STRETCH, to the Minister for Mines representing the Minister for Transport:

With reference to question 65 of 2 August 1983—

- (1) Does the Government support the statement made by the present Minister for Agriculture at Duranillan before the 1983 election, that the Bowelling-Wagin railway line would be re-opened?
- (2) When can the House expect a decision on the previously acknowledged report which included recommendations on the Wagin-Bowelling railway line?

Hon. PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) In the light of advice contained in the Commissioner of Transport's report, that the Bowelling-Bokal section should be closed, the Minister is seeking further advice with a view to doing everything possible to see rail services re-commence on the line.
- (2) An announcement will be made as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTES

Government Intervention

60. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

I refer to the Minister's answer to question 204 in which he said that resolution of the dispute with the Perth City Council had strengthened the Government's resolve to rely on the normal processes of arbitration. Would the Minis-

ter agree that the Government's involvement in the MTT dispute overrode the arbitrator, and that the SEC and Perth City Council disputes involved the Government's going above and beyond the arbitration system, or certainly becoming involved in the system? Is this not in conflict with the answer he just gave?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

I do not mind answering questions but it is almost impossible to answer statements or speeches. The actions taken in the three cases the member mentioned were well within the law.

PASSPORTS

Applications: Witnessing

61. Hon. P. H. LOCKYER, to the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the Attorney aware that as well as justices of the peace not being able to sign application for passport forms, serving officers in the Reserve Forces also are unable to sign the forms although the form states that serving officers in the Australian Armed Forces are eligible to witness signatures and certification of the application?
- (2) If he is aware of this, will he take it up as a matter urgency with his Federal counterpart to correct what seems to be a ludicrous situation?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) The capacity to witness passport applications is a matter quite outside my authority, although I have previously commented on it in respect of the position of justices of the peace. I am not precisely sure to whom the member is referring as my Federal counterpart. If it is the Federal Attorney General, he has no role in this matter, either.

Hon. P. H. Lockyer: I meant the person concerned with passports.

Hon. J. M. BERINSON: The appropriate course of action in this case is for the member or his constituent to approach the responsible Federal Minister directly—the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Bishopsgate Insurance Australia Ltd.

62. Hon. GRAHAM EDWARDS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

- (1) How many employers currently having workers' compensation policies with Bishopsgate Insurance Australia Ltd will be affected by its failure?
- (2) What is the approximate cost of claims likely to result from the failure?
- (3) What source of funds would be available to meet claims from the failed insurer?
- (4) Who contributes to these funds?
- (5) Does the Government have any policy proposals which would obviate a repetition of this situation?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

- (1) 337.
- (2) The amount could possibly range between \$1 million and \$2 million or even higher. A more accurate assessment cannot be made until the liquidator provides further information.
- (3) The most obvious method of meeting this cost would be by use of the employers' indemnity supplementation fund established to meet claims from the failed Palmdale insurance company.
- (4) The fund is provided by a 1 per cent levy on all employers' workers' compensation policies.
- (5) Unlike our predecessors, who have no credible policies in the area of workers' compensation and can talk only in terms of nationalisation and socialisation, when the Government implements its policy on a sole management authority for workers' compensation, this impost on employers will not be repeated.

DEFENCE

Advisory Group: Meetings

63. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Inter-Governmental Relations and Defence Liaison:

This is supplementary to question 163 regarding the defence advisory group.

- (1) To which Minister does the defence advisory group report?
- (2) Has the defence advisory group met with the appropriate Minister since

the Burke Labor Government was elected?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) I am the Minister responsible in this area.
- (2) The first meeting between the group and me has been arranged for, if not tomorrow, some time in the next week.

DEFENCE: HMAS "STIRLING"

Home Porting: Representations

64. Hon. NEIL OLIVER, to the Minister for Inter-Governmental Relations and Defence Liaison:

I refer to the recent publicity regarding representations made to the Federal Government for the designation of HMAS *Stirling* as a home port and for various vessels to be stationed there. Were the representations based on a recommendation from the defence advisory group, or alternatively was an opinion sought from the group?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

The opinion of the group was not sought in this matter, which reflects the policy of the Government as expressed both before and since the recent election.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION:

Sole Insurer Scheme: Premiums

65. Hon. I. G. PRATT, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

To what extent does he expect premiums will rise under his proposal for a sole insurer for workers' compensation?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Firstly, it is a sole management authority. If the experience of Queensland—where it was put into operation at the express request of the employers, and implemented by the Queensland Government in about 1976—is followed in this State, we will see a reduction in premiums. If we were not to invest as much money in local government works as does the Queensland sole compensation board—it has \$16 million invested—the premium rate would drop even more sharply, and the 70 per cent rebate that goes to most insurers in Queensland could possibly be increased in Western Australia.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Sole Insurer Scheme: Benefits

66. Hon. I. G. PRATT, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

Under his proposed sole insurer scheme, to what extent does he expect the benefits paid to workers will be lowered?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Not by one cent.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Sole Insurer Scheme: Experience Elsewhere

67. Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

While investigating the experience in Queensland, has he also investigated the experience with a single insurer in New Zealand, Canada, and other parts of the world?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

I have made the statement that I am not interested in adopting the "Qantas syndrome" which the previous Minister for Industrial Relations adopted before he introduced his new industrial arbitration legislation. The Canadian scheme was drawn to my attention as one worthy of consideration by Sir William Knox who, I notice, resigned from the Queensland Cabinet today. I have been invited by the Hon. Jim Bolger, the Minister for Labour in New Zealand, who lauds the New Zealand scheme greatly, to visit New Zealand and investigate that scheme. It is a no-fault scheme.

I am not in a position to implement a no-fault scheme, given the population base of Western Australia. However, the New Zealand scheme is alive and well in New Zealand, and they have no intention of changing it. I have received a very good position paper from CSR Limited; and that company has urged me not to go for a sole management authority but to join with other States and move into a no-fault scheme immediately.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Sole Insurer Scheme: Queensland Scheme

68. Hon. I. G. PRATT, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

He has said that if we adopt the Queensland scheme, the premiums will not rise. Are the current benefits paid under the Queensland scheme comparable with those available to workers in Western Australia?

Hon. D. K. DANS replied:

Taken across the board the current benefits paid under the Queensland scheme are comparable with the benefits paid in Western Australia.

"INDICES TO LEGISLATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA"

Second Edition

69. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Attorney General:

With reference to his answer to question 208 about the Statute law and Ordinances being reprinted, in which he refers to the answer given to question 224 on 16 September 1980, and claims that the situation is unchanged, it seems to me that, as three years have passed, it would be a good idea to give members of Parliament, the legal profession, the Clerks, and other people dealing with the Statutes a fair go, by authorising the publication of a second volume.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Is that a question?

Hon. A. A. Lewis: Two questions, but I did not put them separately.

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

As the answer to question 224 three years ago was given to the Hon. Sandy Lewis, I would have expected him to remember the details of it. Had he done so, he would have recalled it was not proposed to continue the particular form of index to which his question referred due to the institution, at about that time, of an annual index of Statutes. He will

find them available in the Library, and elsewhere in the House.

**"INDICES TO LEGISLATION OF WEST-
ERN AUSTRALIA"**

Second Edition

70. Hon. A. A. LEWIS, to the Attorney General:

I asked the question because I remembered that many Statutes need re-

printing in one volume rather than many volumes. That is my point. Could we have a reprint even if it is in loose leaf form?

Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

I must confess that I might have misunderstood the nature of the volume to which the honourable member referred. I am quite happy to check it further.

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